

Remembrance

I stand here in need of God's mercy and grace. May I speak in the name of the God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Remember. Remember the cost of prejudice. Remember the cost of hate. Remember the cost of violence. Remember the cost of war. Remember, and work for peace, justice and reconciliation.

Remembering the cost of prejudice, hate, violence and war is not easy. These are not good memories. These are the kind of memories we'd rather forget, because they are full of pain, fear and shame. It is not easy to remember war and what got us there. It is easier to forget. It is so much easier to forget and let prejudice, hate, violence and war creep back in. It is not easy to do what the people of Nineveh did in our reading from Jonah today. Confronted with their wrong doings, with the injustices and violence that were born out of their prejudice and hate, they repented. They faced their shame and remembered before God, that they had done wrong.

Remembering, through history, long ago and more recent, the prejudices and hatred that lead to violence and war is not easy. Remembering the prejudice and hatred that are stoked and used by people to gain power and to lead peoples and nations into war is difficult and painful. But unless we remember and face the pain and suffering of the past, we are doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past, stuck in a vicious cycle of prejudice, hate, violence and war.

Remember, and work for peace, justice and reconciliation. That's the work of God's Kingdom. In our reading from Mark today we heard of

how Jesus called Simon, Andrew, James and John to follow him and “fish for people”. A slightly strange phrase I would say, but I guess a concept that made sense to the two fishermen. Simon, Andrew, James and John went on for the rest of their lives to make known to people the good news of God’s Kingdom, through their words and actions. Jesus would preach a whole lot about God’s Kingdom, a world in which God’s will is done. A world of justice and peace, healed from the wounds of prejudice, hate, violence and war.

And as Jesus called the disciples to follow him and make known God’s Kingdom, so Jesus continues to call us. To make known God’s Kingdom, where God’s reign of love brings justice, peace and healing for all.

The world we live in is not peaceful, there is much war and violence, hatred and prejudice. There are too many people in power, who use prejudices and hatred for their own goals and are too willing to risk the tragedies of violence and war. Looking at the news and the world around us, it can have us despair.

But we are not powerless. We can choose to follow Christ in making known God’s Kingdom through our words and actions. We can remember, and work for peace, justice and reconciliation. We can try and have a conversation with someone so different from us, that we’re not sure we can trust them. We can choose to forgive a wrong, instead of letting it fester. We can build relationships across differences and we can choose not to listen to those who want to stir up our fears, prejudices and hatred of anyone who is different from ourselves. We can remember, and work for peace, justice and reconciliation. And by the grace of God, it will make a difference. Amen.