

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. 2 Timothy 2.8.

November is the month of remembering, isn't it?

Hallowe'en (the ancient All Hallows or All Souls) was when the dead were remembered, to be followed the next day by All Saints. Then it's 'remember, remember the 5th of November', Guy Fawkes night. (Guy Fawkes was born in York, but for a while lived in Knaresborough, at Scotton). And today, of course, it's Remembrance Day, when we remember all those who have fallen in war for Crown and country to defend our freedoms.

About ten years ago there was serious talk of our gently dropping these big Remembrance events, because it was all a long time ago, and meant very little to the younger generation. How things have changed! With so many of our soldiers now in Afghanistan, remembering the fallen is a very live issue for our country. And it is the youngsters who are bearing the brunt of it. They are the ones who were sent to Iraq, and who are now in Afghanistan. Only last week I had a young Junior Soldier about to leave the AFC for his phase 2 training who told me he is really scared. It's beginning to be real for him. He's only 17. It is the youngsters back home who are worried to death about their partners serving in a war-zone. It's the youngsters visiting their wounded loved ones in hospitals back home. No wonder the people were so outraged by FIFA's decision not to let the footballers wear their poppies.

And in the middle of all this heightened sensitivity the lowlifes come along, and their only contribution is to steal the metal plaques off the war memorials to make a couple of quid. It beggars belief, doesn't it? Did these thousands upon

thousands of men die just to win the freedom for scum to desecrate our war memorials? Is nothing sacred?

It's easy for us to get very self-righteous about all this, but we actually created it. Ever since the 1960s with clever, clever undergraduates lampooning the establishment with such TV programmes as *That was the week that was*, satirical papers like *Private Eye* (which is 50 years old this year), and so-called 'edgy' comedy which makes fun of everything, nothing is now given any respect. How can you expect people, especially the uneducated, to respect such things as war memorials, when the so-called educated have been mocking everything that we used to hold sacred for the past 50 years? We really can't have it both ways, can we?

I talked about lowlifes defacing war memorials. Who can forget that exceedingly privileged young brat swinging from the Union Flag on the Cenotaph in Whitehall? So much for his expensive education if all he could claim was, 'I didn't realise what it was!' Such foolish, selfish people need to remember those who have fallen in war; to remember their families and the wounded who are all too easily forgotten.

There's a whole section of our society who are so wrapped up in themselves and their own silly, selfish needs that they need to remember the feelings and needs of others. But how are they going to be reminded? They don't go to church anymore. Scripture is not taught any more in our schools. So where are they going to hear this important lesson? They are much more likely to be taught all about their rights and entitlements

and the importance of fulfilling their potential and becoming whatever they want to be, blah, blah, blah.

We've forgotten God in our society, haven't we? You see, my generation had it all. We hadn't lived through the terror and deprivation of the war. The Butler Education Act enabled bright children without money to go to grammar school. Grants made university education possible. The NHS was at its best. Antibiotics were working miracles. We were becoming more and more prosperous, jobs were for life, and we weren't at war. Why did we need God? That was a childish, infantile need. We had it all. What could we not do?

But now look. The economy is in freefall. Who knows what will happen to the euro, or even to the EU itself? You certainly don't have a job for life. Your pensions have been raided by the politicians. Antibiotics are becoming self-defeating. The Islamist threat is growing. Life is a lot more precarious than we deluded ourselves into thinking it was.

We need to remember God. Even some of the churches, I think, need to remember God. They certainly need to remember Jesus Christ. I was at a funeral recently where Jesus was hardly mentioned. You would not have known from the preacher that something called Easter had happened. 'Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead ... This is my gospel', wrote Paul to Timothy. So many of our churches have forgotten the basics. They fill the emptiness of their beliefs with displacement activity. Their whole day is filled with do-goodery, political posturing, lobbying for good causes. There's nothing wrong

with any of these things in themselves, but when it pushes out the proclamation of Jesus as Saviour and Lord, it is wrong.

We have already remarked how the anti-capitalist campers outside St Paul's cathedral have shewn up the church for the emptiness that it is. It's interesting to see their placards with 'What Would Jesus Do' written on them. I would love to ask those campers how many of them actually go to church. How many of them have actually put their faith in Jesus Christ?

We can all try to get Jesus on our side, and claim that he would agree with our cause, with our style of politics, with our way of life. Isn't that the implication behind those 'What Would Jesus Do' placards? They are claiming that Jesus would be joining them in the tents outside St Paul's.

But Jesus cannot be manipulated like this, especially to have a pop at our opponents by putting them on a guilt trip. 'Jesus certainly wouldn't be on *your* side, you filthy capitalists.' Jesus is Lord. He is in no-one's camp. He isn't the do-gooder in chief, nor the patron saint of progressive social workers. He isn't a hippy smoking dope, a revolutionary terrorist, or the emblem of middle-class respectability.

Jesus is Jesus. Not Jesus as we would like him to be, but Jesus as the NT says he is. He is Jesus the Son of God. Jesus who can walk on water. Jesus who challenged the high and the low. Jesus who claims lordship over *your* life, lordship over the anti-capitalist camp *and* over the City, lordship over our soldiers and politicians, lordship over the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. We're going wrong because we've forgotten. 'Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David'.