

## ANZAC Day and EASTER

Good morning,

It is an honour to be able to talk to you this morning about two different, yet similar times of reflection. We have taken time to reflect upon what God has done for us on the cross and what so many have done for us to provide us with the freedoms we so enjoy.

During the last week, in our reflections, we have taken the time to look back, and to look forward. To me this is what we celebrate and commemorate in our communion every week – looking back and looking forwards.

In Joshua chapter 4, the people had some time to reflect after some highly dramatic events:

- 1** When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua,
- 2** “Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, **3** and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight.”
- 4** So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe,**5** and said to them, “Go over before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, **6** to serve as a sign among you.

In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ **7** tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.”

- Here we see the importance of remembering.
- God performed a miracle there on the Jordan River; this was the difference between life & death, not just for individuals, but for the whole nation.
- The things that God did and the enormity of His power that was revealed to the people is absolutely mind-blowing.
  - Joshua 1 – God has promised that He would be with them.
  - Joshua 3 – they crossed the Jordan River.
  - But the best was yet to come... Joshua 6 – the walls of Jericho fell.

That was just the beginning... there were hundreds or even thousands more miracles that God achieved in and through His people. As they looked back, they could reflect upon the way in which God had been with them. As they looked forward, they had faith that God was still with them – leading, guiding, bringing victory, bringing purpose and eternal life.

God told the people they had to build a monument. If you think that the monument was just about the past, then you would only get half of the story...The monument was more about the future. So that people could look back and take a lesson from the past. Then as they live in the present and look to the future, they could anticipate God’s goodness and provision.

When we look back, we don't just see what God has done, but we see who God is – and this never changes. Once you understand what God is like, then you can look forward with a whole lot of positive expectation: The God who gave life will keep on giving life, the God who gives salvation will not let that salvation become irrelevant or out of date, the God of all comfort and purpose and hope and joy will keep on being that very same God – today, tomorrow and all the tomorrows that are to come.

### **Memorial & remembrance**

In modern Military service there are many sacrifices:

- Get yelled at- or encouraged vigorously to perform at a higher standard,
- Get cold and wet,
- Get hot, and sweaty
- Blisters and chafing,
- Bitten by ants & mosquitoes & midgies,
- Moved around Australia,
- Go overseas to engage in the defence of our country,
- The men and women of our Army, Navy and Air Force over the last 100 years have served in every decade and have served all over the world.
- They sacrifice in big ways and small,
- Some get noticed and some don't.
  - You pull on a uniform each day, which reminds you that you are not alone, you are part of something bigger.

Last year on Remembrance Day I shared with you my thought on what I considered to be important to me on that Day. I asked you to recall and spare a thought for those who returned and for all families who had been touched by service.

On ANZAC Day we talk about the ANZAC Spirit, forged on the fields during WW1. This is a spirit of doing what is right and not letting down the person beside you. It is a spirit of trial and tribulation, sacrifice where required, a commitment to a promise of a brighter future so that others might live. Easter is also a story of sacrifice and deliverance into a brighter future. In the same way that a Nation was forged out the faith shown by the Israelites; so too were nations forged out of the faith shown by the ANZACS and Turkish soldiers on the fields at Gallipoli.

Reverend Jenny has spoken this morning about faith, faith in Christ and faith in one another. This is the ethos of a soldiers lot; faith in what you are doing is right, faith in your commanders to resource you adequately, faith in abilities of those around you and faith that what you are doing in the interest of your friends and family is Gods will.