

11th November 2020

Peace

**“They dress the wounds of my people as though it were not serious.
‘Peace, peace,’ they say, when there is no peace.”**

Bible, Jeremiah 6:14

At 5.45am on 11th November 1918, at Le Francport near Compiègne in France, the Armistice that signified the end World War I was signed. It came into force at 11am Paris-time – the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. The first official Armistice Day celebrations were held in Buckingham Palace on 11th November 1919, two minutes of silence being observed at 11am. So began an annual time of remembrance and thanksgiving for peace. Today will be no different. For two minutes, many will stand in silent remembrance at 11o'clock.

World War I was believed to be the “war that ends all wars”, encapsulating a belief in a better and more hopeful future after the carnage of nearly five years of fighting. But the outbreak of hostilities in 1939 shattered the dream. Since the end of the World War II in 1945 there hasn't been a year free from a major conflict in some part of the world.

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‘Peace, peace,’ they say, when there is no peace.*

The prophet Jeremiah, bringing God's Word to his people, lambasted them for believing everything was OK when, clearly, it wasn't. In modern parlance, they were trying to cover deep and life-threatening wounds with sticking-plaster. They were pretending their troubles weren't serious. They cried “Peace! Peace!” when there was no peace.

So today, if you choose to pause in the midst of your busy life and spend two minutes in silent remembrance, don't just give thanks for the sacrifice of many who gave their lives to create a better world for you. Don't just celebrate that you live in peace right now. Two minutes of silence shouldn't be a sticking plaster that covers the world's wounds. The world needs people who pray for peace, campaign for peace, support those who are committed to peace *all* the time, and not just on November 11th. Just crying “Peace! Peace!” will never be enough.

A prayer for today

In peace I believe; for peace I pray; to peace I give my life. Amen.

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