

Thursday 2 November 2023 All Souls

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Part of the reason for keeping the Feast of All Saints is to remember those we have loved and who have died, to remember all they meant to us – both the Joys and the Sorrows. And in remembering them we will Mourn them. Each of us in different ways and probably in different ways for the different people that we have personally lost. I have lost all my Grandparents and I think on and remember each of them differently as I had a different relationship with each of them.

Part of our rememberence is knowing that our Lord Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazerus his friend and so we come knowing that we can stand before a God who truly understands our sadnesses and our griefs.

Of cause comfort can have many different meanings – not just to console but to strengthen which can sometime be a stern process. Probably the most famous misnamed wall hanging is the *Bayeux Tapestry* – misnamed as it is actually an embroidery not a tapestry. In it Bishop Odo is seen comforting

the troops – Not as a padre may have done in WW1 or 2 with tea, fags or sweets but with a club....

From the Bible we can find many passages of comfort for those who mourn.

There is comfort in the words of our first reading from the revelation of John. When speaking of the great multitude it says of them;

They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'

There is comfort in the famous reading from John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

“There is salvation **in no** one else, for there is **no other name** under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

And in Psalm 23;

though I walk through the valley of the shadow of
death thou art with me thy rod and thy staff they
comfort me.

These words remind us that through the grace of God
not only will the Faithful departed RIP and RIG but
we ourselves can know the presence and comfort of
the Lord to support and sustain us though the dark
times.

We have the comfort of knowing that;

the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our
Lord, Romans 6:23

since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of
God; ²⁴ they are now justified by his grace as a gift,
through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,
Romans 3:23 – 24.

⁹ If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will
forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all
unrighteousness. 1 John 1: 9

We can also find comfort in the resurrection of Jesus
as it says in 1 Corinthians

¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised, ¹⁴ and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. ¹⁷ If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

The Christian hope is that though the Grace of God we and all the faithful departed will have eternal life. That the day will come when, through the incarnation, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we will be united in that glorious hope where sadness and sorrow, sickness and want will be no more. It is to that hope we committed our loved ones at their funerals and it is in that hope which is our comfort today.