

Anzac Day 2007

Dawn Service:

Here this morning we are gathered at this "Stand To" to remember those who fought at Gallipoli and also to remember and pay tribute to those that have fought in all wars. Specifically Australians who fought in wars over the past 100 years.

I must admit it is difficult for a person of my age to come grips with the enormity of war and it is difficult for me to understand the tragedy of war.

But just the other day I think I got a glimpse of what war has achieved.

On Monday afternoon I as able to go with my three boys to the beach here at Evans, it was a pristine day, absolutely gorgeous, the boys went in surfing and I sat on the beach, as I watched the boys surf then cast an eye to the horizon and saw a sail boat making its way towards Evans, magic, and then I looked up the hill and saw a flock of birds take off, a pelican cruise up the river, the beautiful blue skies, the tranquility, the peace, my mind drifted and I thought

would I be sitting here enjoying all this if those men and women hadn't given there all at Gallipoli.

Where some 8000 Australians died and more injured, or at Poziers where only 97 men came back out of 785 of the 19th battalion. If the allied forces hadn't won WW2.

If the Japenesse invasion hadn't been stopped at Darwin

And I was struck with a sense of thankfulness.

A thankfulness that men and women gave up so much so that I, we may have freedom to enjoy this beautiful creation.

Men and women who took on the horror of war.

Men and women who sacrificed their life for freedom, not of their own specifically, but for the freedom of others.

For your freedom for my freedom.

I was reading a school book of my oldest sons just the other day and as I was looking through it I saw for one of their classes they had to read a letter from Wilfred Owen (a British poet) to his mother from WW1, As I was about to read the letter I thought isn't it great that our children are studying what happened back in WW1 and then as I read the letter it outlined for me the horror and sacrifice of war.

Let me read just a short extract:

"I can see no reason to deceive you about the last 4 days. I have suffered 7th hell

I have not been at the front,

I have been in front of it.

I held the advanced post that is, a "dug out" in the middle of no mans land.

We had a march of 3 miles over shelled road then nearly 3 along a flooded trench.

After that we came to where the trenches had been blown flat out and had to go over the top. It was of course dark, too dark and the ground was not mud, not sloppy mud, but an octopus of sucking clay, 3,4 and 5 feet deep, relieved only by craters full of water.

Men have been known to drown in them. Many stuck in the mud and only got out by leaving their waders, equipment and in some cases their clothes.

He goes on:

In the platoon to my left the sentries over the dug out were blown to nothing. One of these poor fellows was my first servant whom I rejected.

I kept my own sentries half way down the stairs during the more terrific bombardment. In spite of this one lad was blown down and I am afraid blinded."

A graphic description of the horror and tragedy of war.

A graphic description of sacrifice for our freedom.

This helps to remind us of the cost of our freedom here and now, but it also can remind us of the horror, tragedy and sacrifice for our freedom of another bloke.

And that bloke is Jesus, who took on the horror and tragedy of the cross, where he took on our worst enemy, who took on our sin and our death and in a mighty battle, defeated both by rising from the dead so that we could have freedom from both sin and death for eternity.

The bible puts it this way. " For Jesus died for sins once and for all the perfect for the imperfect to bring you to God."

As I think and contemplate what Jesus did for you and me, I am filled with a great sense of thankfulness.

As I contemplated this on Monday afternoon as I read the letter of Wilfred Owen I was filled with a great sense of thankfulness.

Here this morning I pray that you too will be filled with a sense of thankfulness to all those that fought for your freedom.

Our fellow Aussies

And Jesus our Saviour.

Lets Pray:

DHF

We come to you this morning and we remember all those who have gone to defend our country over the past years, all those that made the supreme sacrifice of their lives, we also remember those that came home and have since passed away, and all those that are still alive.

We come to you this morning Lord and humbly thank you for the freedom that we now have because of their commitment and sacrifice, that we are able to enjoy your creation here in freedom.

We bring to you Lord all those from our armed forces that are serving over seas, at Iraq or Afghanistan or other parts of this broken world.

Lord be their comfort and their strength, be with their families who will be missing their loved ones dearly, please may they know your love and comfort today.

Lord help us to live at peace, where possible with all people and to learn from the past and strive to love one another as you have loved us.

Lord we also want to thank you for Jesus who took on the horror of our sin and the tragedy of our death so that we may know freedom for eternity.

Help us to be thankful for those that gave their all for our freedom now

And Help us to be thankful for God who gave His all for our freedom for eternity.

In Jesus name Amen.

