

# Vicar's Sermon

**Date :** Sun 08/11/2009.  
**Title :** Remembrance Sunday – The war against evil.  
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**Subject :** The battle of good against evil.

I don't know how many of you really believe in God but one of the things that convinces me of His existence is the amount of evil in the world. It's much easier for me to see evidence of the devil at work than it is God. From the assassination of good men like Ghandi to the recent lethal bomb explosions in Pakistan I'm so aware that the devil is alive and well and that his presence is so evident and pernicious throughout the world. Everywhere you look evil is rampant and moreover it appears to be winning. To those of you who were alive then it must have seemed that way in the early days of World War Two when Britain stood alone against a powerful and wicked foe. Evil is on the loose and he's pointing his wicked finger in our direction and although the circumstances are very different and the names and faces of our enemies have changed the principle remains the same.

We are still fighting those who would seek world domination and power by imposing their culture, their standards, their laws, their religion upon us and, for those who will not bow the knee, they must be destroyed as having no right to live. The greatest threat to the world's stability comes from those who would combine political ambition and religious fundamentalism. I speak, of course, of Fundamentalist Islam and its evil grasp and influence on so many countries throughout the world including our own. I don't just mean their cry for Holy War and the way they seek to indoctrinate young Muslims but the way they seek to undermine our society.

When I was Vicar at St. Michael's on the Dines Green Estate here in Worcester, we used to supply 11,300 replacement needles to heroin addicts every eight months! And that was back in 1997. I have no doubt that the figure will now be much higher. And where did that life-sapping poisonous drug come from? The Poppy Fields of Afghanistan in which thousands of our troops are now patrolling and in which many of them are laying down their lives: murdered by those who seek to enslave our society and western culture and seek to turn the clock back hundreds of years to a system of medieval barbarity.

The presence of evil isn't just thousands of miles away in a country that, please God, none of us will have the misfortune to visit but far, far nearer than that: indeed less than three miles away on the Dines Green estate! This is no distant far-away war but one that is also taking place on our doorsteps and even in our own homes.

And it's this struggle against evil that our young men and women are fighting out there and for which many of them are tragically sacrificing their lives. And all of this convinces me that there is a God because wherever evil abounds then there must, by definition, exist its opposite.

And this isn't just a battle fought on land and in the air but in the heavens for this essentially is a spiritual battle. The Bible tells us quite clearly that we fight not against flesh and blood but against wicked principalities and the power of evil in the spiritual realms. The real foe is the one that you can't see with your eyes and yet who inspires the roadside bomb, the suicide bomber, the slaughter of innocent people, the cruel subjugation of women and inhuman forms of constraint and punishment.

This is a spiritual battle and that's why we're all involved in it for God has not left us powerless. We heard in our reading that we need to put on the whole Armour of God.

Yes, there is protection and there is a way to fight evil. We've heard a great deal over the past year about our troops not being supplied with the necessary equipment they need out in Afghanistan but in contrast God has given us everything we need in the war against evil. When Jesus died on the Cross He broke the ultimate power of evil and the devil was and is a defeated foe. He may snarl, snap and cause untold horror and misery but he knows that his ultimate power

to destroy us has been prevented and denied. And the weapons that God has given us are Truth, Righteousness, The Gospel of Peace, Faith, Salvation, The Word of God and the power of The Holy Spirit. And there will never be any shortage of any of these things.

And so, why, if we're so well armed does evil continue to grow and why do we see so many of our young men and women returning home in coffins? Is the war in Afghanistan able to be won? I very much doubt it. What does it mean anyway to win a war in that barren far away land? Will the people of Afghanistan be able to establish a system of true democracy? I don't think so nor do I think it right to impose our political system on a people for whom it is altogether alien.

And so are our young men and women risking and giving their lives in vain? Most certainly not! And if we're not fighting to win or to establish political stability then what are we fighting for? WE ARE FIGHTING AGAINST EVIL AS UPHOLDERS OF THE TRUTH and that has a meaning and purpose that goes far beyond winning or losing. Evil has to be opposed, fought and rebuked even if we die in the process. The fighting and winning of a war is not decided on a battlefield nor whether you ultimately win or lose but on whether you have stood up for that which is RIGHT & TRUE: HONOURABLE, LOVING AND JUST.

No, it is tragic beyond words that any young man or woman should perish in war but it is not a defeat. Just as it was tragic to see Jesus lowered from the Cross, an apparent failure, and placed dead in a stone cold tomb. But, there was a deeper truth and a greater power that raised Jesus from the dead: the same Truth and the same power that is awarded to everyone, of whatever age, who stands up against the wiles of the devil and bears the full Armour of God. And the ultimate victory of Jesus shall be shared by all those who, like Him, lay down their lives for their friends.

Amen.

*Peter*

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