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A gentleman by the name of Francois Gauthron, was a tour guide in Normandy. Francois' story happened during a reunion of an American bomber squadron, which hired him to take them to sites connected with their war experiences. One evening Francois ended a long day of touring by taking the men to a local pub. The room already contained quite a few people when they entered, most of them men about the same age as the veterans. When Francois heard that they were speaking German, he guessed that they were veterans from the other side of the conflict.

Conferring with the group's guide, he received confirmation of his surmise. "Your guys dropped bombs on my guys during the war," the other guide told him. "This could get interesting."

As the American vets entered the room, Francois watched with a bit of apprehension. It didn't take the Americans long to overhear the conversations in German and figure out who the men were. There was a period of awkwardness as the veterans found seats, and then finally one of the Americans went over to a table where some of the elderly Germans were sitting. He introduced himself in German

and struck up a conversation. Soon another veteran did the same.

“After about ten minutes, everybody in the room was talking to each other and sharing stories,” Francois recalled. “The Germans talked about what it was like to be young and scared that the next bomb was going to land on them, and the Americans told them what it was like to be young and scared as they flew planes amid anti-aircraft fire. For two hours they talked non-stop, and at the end of the evening they exchanged addresses with each other. I wouldn’t be surprised if some of them are still corresponding to this day., Francois said.”

Our world is becoming more aware of differences. Sometimes, this awareness leads people to strongly defend their identity and position, even aggressively, because they fear being overshadowed or taken over by others.

Globalization is the process by which countries, cultures, businesses, and people around the world become more connected and interdependent. When globalization tries to make everything the same everywhere, people and cultures often respond by holding onto their own identity even more strongly. Globalization, however, does not make the “other.” It just makes us more aware. As humans, we differ tremendously, different in sex, race, colour, creed, faith, and the list goes on.

Recognizing differences between people shapes how we see and relate to others, whether we learn these attitudes on purpose or absorb them naturally through society. 'The other' isn't always someone opposed to us — it can be a friend or someone similar who is still different in some way. We don't only find 'others' in opposing groups; they exist within every group. Having 'others' in our lives is a normal part of being human.

Wars can often be started by or fueled by the fear of others. The fear of attack when a nation believes another will strike first, so they strike pre-emptively. Fear of losing power for fear of losing status, land, or influence. Fear of difference when cultural, religious, or ethnic differences cause suspicion and hostility. Fear of scarcity through worries about losing resources — land, water, oil — lead to conflict. Or fear of change when new ideas or political movements create anxiety and push groups to fight to protect existing systems.

An important challenge is learning how to share the gospel while respecting 'others.' This means proclaiming the good news in a way that never exploits or marginalizes anyone, never absorbs or erases their identity, and never makes people feel like they only exist to serve someone else — or that they must build walls to protect themselves from others in order to survive.

The Corinth community to which Paul speaks to is not too

different than what can be described of ours, and he acknowledged his duty to proclaim the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:17 “For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.” with a mandate of mercy 2 Corinthians 4:1 “Therefore, since it is by God’s mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart.” and a ministry of reconciliation 2 Corinthians 5:18 “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation;”).

Let’s go back to the 1st century BC. Hellenism (which is essentially the influence of Greek culture, prominent in the Roman empire) brought about a heightened sense of Jewish identity in the Maccabean movement. Roman imperialism and colonialism gave birth to the zealots movement. The zealots being radical anti-Roman Jews who advocated armed rebellion against the Roman forces. There also was a rise of messianic figures and expectations.

Corinth was demographically, socio-culturally and economically rich in the existence of the other. Corinth was a gateway for rich trade from Italy and Asia and also famous for its Panhellenic or Isthmian games (which were held every two years) and Caesarean games (which were held every 4 years). Since the Panhellenic games and Caesarean games would overlap every four years it created

tension between the Greeks and the Romans, increasing national identity. With these games and the trading that was happening many would call the city “wealthy Corinth,” even though the majority of citizens were in fact poor, the lowest class being of the freed slave, with most believers in Corinth belonging to this lower class. Being a Greek city, yet a Roman colony, Corinth had a double identity, at the mercy of globalization, similar to many cities in the developing world today. Even within believers there were separations.

Look to Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 11:17–22 “Now in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it. Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine. When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord’s supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you!”

They were separating the rich from the poor at the Lord's Supper, probably dictated by class distinctions. This community which was endowed in "all speech and knowledge" and "not lacking in any spiritual gift" had lots of rivalries and divisions. It is to this community that Paul proclaims the gospel and ministry of reconciliation, to be received and lived.

Paul is writing to help them relate to the other within their Christian community and to himself. For Paul, it is the ministry of reconciliation that is the key to the problem of the other in the community of Corinth. Reconciliation - the restoration and renewal of a broken relationship. God's work of bringing all people back to Himself through Christ is based on His love for everyone. This love rules out the exclusion of "the other." Paul extends the scope of this reconciliation to embrace all of creation, "everything in heaven and everything on earth, making peace by the blood of his cross." The ministry of reconciliation was costly to God, personally in Jesus. This scripture from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians is a foundation for Paul's theological framework - that as believers they are not to be passive recipients of unifying peace, but active in God's mission which is ongoing of reconciling the world.

Paul first accepts the ministry of reconciliation through Jesus Christ and then becomes an ambassador to both Jews and Greeks, who together represent "all peoples". As

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:20 “So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

Ambassadors are to be mediators between two parties, and so as ambassadors of Christ they are to operate the ministry of reconciliation as a trust from God. To be reconciled with God is to be sent by God. Paul is eager to heal the rift in the relationship between himself and the Corinthians. But it wasn't easy, it cost Paul a lot of hardships, spiritual equipping, and remaining faithful despite all odds. As Teresa Okure says, “Paul confronted the power structures of his context by his counter-cultural power of weakness wherein lies true power.” As a servant, Paul served and displayed the Christ life in him, but at a cost. It is in this 2nd letter to the Corinthians Paul is appealing to the Corinthians to be reconciled to God. Without personally receiving and living out the reconciliation God offers in Christ, they will not be able to relate rightly to one another. But once they embrace God's reconciliation, they are empowered to extend that same reconciliation to others. Since Christ can no longer be viewed according to human categories (race, gender, social status, wealth, or strength), those who are “in Christ” must also see themselves as new creations — and recognize others in the same way.

So, as we gather on this Sunday before Remembrance Day

we remember the sacrifice of those who gave their lives in the cause of freedom and peace. But as followers of Jesus, we are also called to remember the deeper story — that God, through Christ, reconciled the world to Himself, of which Paul reminds us of this in verse 18, “God... reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” Reconciliation begins with God and reconciliation continues through God’s people.

So today, as we remember those who gave their lives in conflict, our first remembrance is to the One who gave His life to bring peace — peace not only between nations, but between God and humanity.

Before we ever sought peace, God sought us.
Before we ever thought of forgiveness, God extended His hand through the cross.

“While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

As we read the roll calls, we remember acts of human courage and sacrifice, an individual who risked everything to bring peace to others.

In the gospel, we remember divine courage and sacrifice — the Son of God entering into human conflict to bring peace. Christ risked everything to bring peace to us — only His battle was fought not with weapons, but with mercy, forgiveness, and love.

As you approach Remembrance Day, don't only look back — but look forward — to the kind of people we are called to be today and tomorrow.

Ambassadors of reconciliation. People who:

- Speak peace where there is conflict.
- Extend forgiveness where there is bitterness.
- Build bridges where there are walls.

Each one of us carries the ministry of reconciliation. Our witness in the world reflects the peace we've received in Christ. Are we living as ambassadors — showing the world what God's reconciliation looks like in our words, our relationships, and our communities?

Remembrance Day is bittersweet. We remember both heroism and heartbreak. Standing before God — who has freely shown His great love by acting for us and for our salvation — we no longer need to pretend or hide behind false fronts. Instead, we are enabled to speak honestly about ourselves in repentance and to receive our lives with gratitude as God's gracious gifts.

In prayer, we can tell the truth about the complexities of war: recognizing that battlefields have been places of extraordinary courage and self-sacrifice, and also of deep cowardice and terrible cruelty — sometimes even within the same person.

As sinners made right with God by grace, we can face the hard reality that, as civilians, we have often been part of a society driven by fear, a society that asks individuals — many of whom serve because they lack the opportunities of the wealthy and privileged — to do what we would never expect of ourselves or our own children.

And in the presence of the One who is making all things new, we are invited to remember those who have died in conflict and those whose lives have been forever changed by it, trusting that no life and no death lies beyond the reach of God's redeeming love.

Scripture points us toward a greater hope — that one day God will end all wars, heal every wound, and reconcile all creation to Himself. That's not just wishful thinking — that's the promise of the gospel. Because Christ has conquered death and sin, the story of history is moving toward peace.

How does your hope in God's final reconciliation shape the way you live and remember today?

Remember not only what has been lost, but recommit yourself to what Christ has called you to do — to be peacemakers, reconcilers, and witnesses of His love.

Paul's appeal still echoes today: we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

For the Americans and Germans in the story, their war

finally ended over a conversation in a French pub, more than fifty years after the war ended, their reconciliation.

When we are reconciled to God, we become instruments of His peace.

And in a world that still knows war and division, that's a powerful act of remembrance which we can offer.