

Bulletin for Sunday 31 July 2022

Good morning friends.

Let's pause as we prepare to worship... and then praise God as we sing:

Hymn: Morning has broken (R&S 45)

Prayers: Generous God, creator of all that is,
this amazingly beautiful blue and green planet
has plenty for all, if only it is shared.....
Teach us how to care for it and steward it,
working with you to build a world
where everyone is fed, and safe, and cared for...
a world where the richness and diversity of creation
is appreciated, and nurtured, and shared.
We ask your blessing on everything we do,
and on everything we give in your service,
today and every day. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: Psalm 49: 1-12 and Luke 12: 13-21

Reflection: It's a very recognisable cry from a sibling, in aggrieved tones - 'make him share with me!'

Many, perhaps most, of us do it as children: seeking that elusive 'fairness' when everyone will feel satisfied. By adulthood we may have learned to appreciate our brothers and sisters without constantly competing against them... or, like the man in the crowd and his brother, we may not!

Initially this is a surprising story. We might expect Jesus to have been primarily concerned about justice and injustice, but here he shows that there were things which worried him even more, such as broken relationships... and self-centred greed. He issued a brief warning against 'abundance of possessions' (or accumulating 'stuff'), and then, as he so often did, he told a story, so that it ceased to be just about the one man in the crowd, and became a parable for everyone to enjoy, to remember, to puzzle over and to learn from.

The parable has humour (the over-confident rich man getting his comeuppance) but it is still counter-cultural, both for Jesus' time and ours. Storing up as much as possible for a comfortable retirement has always been the aim for those who have the chance; and forgetting that there are others whose hard work has enabled your accumulation (can you imagine the rich man harvesting all that grain by himself? Of course not!) is unfortunately almost universal too.

Jesus reminds us simply that greed and endless accumulation are wrong, bringing poverty to many, and leading to a damaging self-centred, blinkered, obsession with getting more. Our relationships with our siblings, with our fellow workers, with the world around us, and most particularly with God, are more important and ultimately enriching.

Hymn: God in his love for us lent us this planet (R&S 85)

Prayers: Compassionate God, creator of abundance,
we pray for those who are hungry,
whether because their crops have failed
or because they simply can't afford food...
We pray too for those in need, whether of shelter,
of medical care, of security or of love...
We pray for peace where there is war,
and justice where there is oppression...
Show us what we can and should do, to share.
We hold before you our neighbours and friends,
and those known to us in any sort of need...
In Jesus 'name we ask all our prayers,
including the unspoken prayers of our hearts. Amen

Hymn: Son of God, eternal Saviour (R&S 605)

Blessing: May we be generous and quick to share.....
and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love,
this week, and always. Amen

There will be a Sunday at Six service on Zoom at 6pm as usual - all welcome.

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