

**Materials for Worship at Home
18 and 25 September 2022
The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Sundays after Trinity**

**Please use this material with the order of Service
for Worship at Home for the Linton Team of Churches
Ordinary Time**



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The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

Collect

Almighty God,
whose only Son has opened for us
a new and living way into your presence:
give us pure hearts and steadfast wills
to worship you in spirit and in truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Readings

1 Timothy 2:1-7

Instructions concerning Prayer

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings should be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For

there is one God;

there is also one mediator between God and humankind,

Christ Jesus, himself human,

who gave himself a ransom for all

—this was attested at the right time. For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

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Luke 16:1-13

The Parable of the Dishonest Manager

Then Jesus said to the disciples, ‘There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, “What is this that I hear about you? Give me an account of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.” Then the manager said to himself, “What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.” So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, “How much do you owe my master?” He answered, “A hundred jugs of olive oil.” He said to him, “Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.” Then he asked another, “And how much do you owe?” He replied, “A hundred containers of wheat.” He said to him, “Take your bill and make it eighty.” And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

‘Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.’

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Reflection

St Mary's Church, Linton Trinity 14

Jesus said, 'For the children of this age are more shrewd dealing with their own generation than are the children of light'. (Luke 16:8)

There's an old joke about how religious organisations should deal with money:

A rabbi, a priest, and a minister are discussing what they do with donations to their respective religious organizations. The minister says that he draws a circle on the floor, throws the money up in the air, and whatever lands in the circle, he gives to God, and whatever lands outside the circle, he keeps. The priest uses a similar method. He draws the circle, but whatever lands outside the circle, he gives to God, and whatever lands inside, he keeps. The rabbi has a slightly different method of dividing the money. He throws all the money up in the air. Whatever God wants, he keeps.

Talking about money, raising funds and how we should spend them is an awkward issue, but outside Sunday worship a lot of time is dedicated to money. Talk of money like sex is a taboo subject, yet both are very much part of our daily lives. But the fact is that if we are coy about money matters then we won't have a church and it won't be able to serve the community as we would wish. We need to be as Jesus said, 'children of this age.'

To illustrate this Jesus told one of his most challenging parables for us to interpret.

Here it is in brief: a lazy steward or property manager is about to face the sack because he has failed to bring in the full rents owed to his boss. He thinks to himself that he's not strong enough to do manual work and he's too proud to beg, so his only option is to use the one skill

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he does have and that is write-off the interest on the debts and recoup what the tenants owe as quickly as possible. And for this his boss commends him!

So, why has Jesus used this good-for-nothing rascal as a model of discipleship? And to be honest the boss isn't much better!

It depends on where we think the manager's fault lies. For some people his main fault is that he failed to manage the rents in the first place. Other people think that according to Jewish law he shouldn't have been charging interest in the first place, so wiping out the loan fee made himself out to be better in the eyes of his boss than he actually was.

However we look at the steward he is a rascal, perhaps even a likeable one, but we have to admire his pragmatism for he understands how the world works.

That is Jesus' point. We live in a material world, a world where we lurch from one crisis to another which requires practical responses. What Jesus commends about the man is that he is practical and acts with determination. Now, if a dishonest rascal can behave like this, think how much an honest person can deal with worldly matters.

I think this is the gist of Jesus' rather difficult saying:

Make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you in the eternal homes.
(Luke 16: 9)

By dishonest I'm sure Jesus didn't mean wealth acquired by stealing or cheating but wealth acquired through skilful understanding of the markets. It is nevertheless a hard saying and I leave you to ponder on it and wrestle with its meaning.

Jesus' parable reminds me of this well-known saying: 'It's true that money can't buy you true love. It does, however, put you in a good position to bargain!'

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Dealing with the practical realities of life in a messy world is certainly an important theme in Paul's Letter to Timothy. In today's reading Paul encourages his congregation to continue to pray - as any worshipping community should - but not just for themselves but 'kings and all who are in high positions' (1 Timothy 2: 2). There's good reason to suppose that some of the very early Christian churches might have cut themselves off from the wider communities and therefore appeared stand-offish and morally superior. Paul's message is that this cannot lead to good communal living; as Christians the incarnational life means being fully involved in all aspects of day to day human life – in all its political and social complexity and messiness.

It is of course especially appropriate that Paul should be asking us to pray for kings on the eve of our Queen's funeral and the succession of King Charles to the throne. Let it be our prayer that just as the late Queen negotiated everyday life with practical wisdom, integrity and shrewdness, we too as individuals and as a church community, might follow her example as an honest steward of this world.

Michael Wilcockson

Father hear the prayer we offer

1 Father hear the prayer we offer
Not for ease that prayer shall be
But for strength that we may ever
Live our lives courageously

2 Not for ever in green pastures
Do we ask our way to be
But by steep and rugged pathways
Would we strive to climb to Thee

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3 Not for ever by still waters
Would we idly quiet stay
But would smite the living fountains
From the rocks along our way

4 Be our strength in hours of weakness
In our wanderings be our guide
Through endeavour failure danger
Father be thou at our side

My Jesus my Saviour (Shout to the Lord)

My Jesus my Saviour
Lord there is none like You
All of my days I want to praise
The wonders of Your mighty love
My comfort my shelter
Tower of refuge and strength
Let every breath all that I am
Never cease to worship You

Chorus

Shout to the Lord
All the earth let us sing
Power and majesty
Praise to the King
Mountains bow down
And the seas will roar
At the sound of Your name
I sing for joy
At the work of Your hands
Forever I'll love You
Forever I'll stand
Nothing compares to the promise
I have in You

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Put Peace Into Each Others Hands

1 Put peace into each other's hands
And like a treasure hold it
Protect it like a candle-flame
With tenderness enfold it

2 Put peace into each other's hands
With loving expectation
Be gentle in your words and ways
In touch with God's creation

3 Put peace into each other's hands
Like bread we break for sharing
Look people warmly in the eye
Our life is meant for caring

4 As at communion shape your hands
Into a waiting cradle
The gift of Christ receive revere
United round the table

5 Put Christ into each other's hands
He is love's deepest measure
In love make peace give peace a chance
And share it like a treasure

Father, Lord of all creation

1 Father, Lord of all creation,
ground of being, life and love;
Height and depth beyond description,
only life in you can prove:
You are mortal life's dependence:
thought, speech, sight are ours by grace;
Yours is every hour's existence,
sovereign Lord of time and space.

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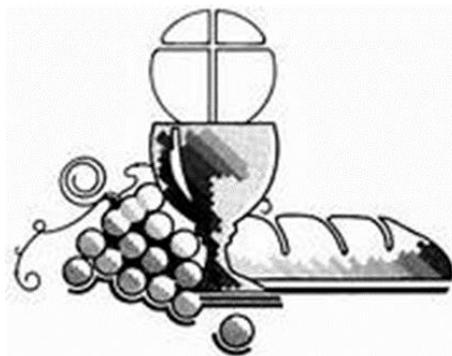
2 Jesus Christ, the man for others
we, your people, make our prayer
help us love, as sisters, brothers
all whose burdens we can share
where your name binds us together
you, Lord Christ, will surely be
where no selfishness can sever
there you love the world may see.

3 Holy Spirit, rushing, bringing
wind and flame of Pentecost
fire our hearts afresh with yearning
to regain what we have lost.
May your love unite our action,
never more to speak alone:
God, in us, abolish faction,
God, through us, your love make known.

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Closing Prayer

Lord God, the source of truth and love,
keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
united in prayer and the breaking of bread,
and one in joy and simplicity of heart,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.



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Collect

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love: grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Readings

1 Timothy 6:6-19

Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

The Good Fight of Faith

But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only

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Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honour and eternal dominion. **Amen.**

As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life. **Amen.**

Luke 16:19-end

The Rich Man and Lazarus

‘There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.” But Abraham said, “Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.” He said, “Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house— for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.” Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.” He said, “No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.” He said to

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him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.” ’

Reflection

Today’s homily has been written by the Revd Iain Osborne - Rector, The Ramseys and Upwood (Benefice)

Today’s Gospel reading brings us one of Jesus’ fantastically vivid little stories. It could have been written by the Brothers Grimm, or by Aesop. However, if this was an Aesop Fable, then it would have a ‘moral’. In the book of Fables I used to read as a child, there was at the foot of each fable a one-liner, printed in italics, that told me what I was supposed to learn from the story. I wonder what moral you would give here – what do you think this story of the rich man and Lazarus is mainly about?

The story is paired in the Lectionary with a reading from 1 Timothy that offers one possible answer: “The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.” So, is this mainly a story about money? With a moral that we ought to make sure that others do not suffer through poverty, else we will suffer ourselves.

Well, yes, that is part of what this story is about. It is a striking and uncomfortable truth that Jesus never tells any stories about good and godly rich people. Rich characters in His stories are generally harsh, blind, or crafty. Blessed are the poor, not the rich; whilst the hungry will be fed, the rich are to be sent away empty. God is not neutral between rich and poor.

However, I want to suggest that the story has a broader moral. It is not just about wealth and poverty, but about hard-heartedness or the opposite, about whether we are doomed by our choices, or whether change is possible.

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To the extent that the story is about money, I suggest that the danger of hard-heartedness is at the core of what the story says about wealth. There is nothing in the story about the money having been made in an immoral way - the offense to God seems to lie simply in the rich man's indifference to the plight of the poor one. Perhaps Jesus' general teaching about money is so very negative precisely because He thinks that having wealth makes us hard hearted.

It is self-evidently true that rich people do need to have hard hearts if they are to stay rich. This is simply because we live in a world of need. If we all had tender hearts, then we would see that need and give, and give, until we had no more excess to give. We would keep only what we truly need, and give the rest away. In that sense, wealth simply means excess, and to possess wealth is inescapably a sign of a hard heart.

But the story is not just about wealth, it raises more generally the question of how we might, in fact, change our ways. This issue is raised in the treatment of the rich man's brothers. What will change their minds, and their lives?

Jesus seems to be unimpressed by people who fail to consider their responsibilities unless a ghost frightens them into it; and, in fact, He doubts that seeing a ghost will have that effect.

"If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets," Abraham says in the story, "neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead." Jesus hadn't read Dickens' Christmas Carol, and I don't think he would have felt the story of Scrooge was particularly realistic.

In this, Jesus is surely correct. Mostly we construct a morally worthwhile life not in a rush of emotion, arising from a fright or a shock, but little by little. We do the right thing day by day, one choice at a time. By a steady application to 'Moses and the prophets' – which is to say, to what Scripture and church teaching tell us that God wants of us – we shape our characters, and it is the creation of habits that eventually enable virtue.

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What is required of us is, in the words of one author, ‘a long obedience in the same direction’. This thought is both sobering and encouraging.

It should sober us if we know that we are giving house-room to besetting sins. The more we repeat a sin, the more we entrench it, the more habitual it becomes. And to chase out a habit, we need to create an alternative habit. Simply wishing very hard to be different is largely pointless, you need actually to do something in order to change, to establish an alternative repeated pattern. Then put your will-power into making sure that you do repeat it – into positively doing a good thing, in other words, rather than into trying to avoid a bad thing. And there is no better time than today to begin, if we need to change a bad habit.

And this story is also encouraging because it suggests that we can in fact change. We don’t need someone to come back from the dead. We just need what is available to all: God’s Word.

The Gospel of Christ is good news - joyous, heartening news - because it is about change. We are all, in one way or another, prisoners of the past, of our memories or our bad habits.

Jesus has come to encourage us to repent because the Kingdom of God has come near. On the basis of repentance, of His saving work on the Cross, and of Jesus living out his own resurrected life through us, as the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts, we can change. We can become better people, and the world can change.

So, if I were printing this story in a book of Fables, and I had to choose a moral, it would not be about wealth, and it would not be a lesson of condemnation. But rather, one of hope, something along these lines: “You have God’s Word: so, listen!”

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Come Ye Thankful People Come

1 Come ye thankful people come
Raise the song of harvest-home
All is safely gathered in
Ere the winter storms begin
God our Maker doth provide
For our wants to be supplied
Come to God's own temple come
Raise the song of harvest-home

2 All the world is God's own field
Fruit unto His praise to yield
Wheat and tares together sown
Unto joy or sorrow grown
First the blade and then the ear
Then the full corn shall appear
Lord of harvest grant that we
Wholesome grain and pure may be

3 For the Lord our God shall come
And shall take His harvest home
From His field shall in that day
All offenses purge away
Give His angels charge at last
In the fire the tares to cast
But the fruitful ears to store
In His garner evermore

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4 Even so Lord quickly come
To Thy final harvest-home
Gather Thou Thy people in
Free from sorrow free from sin
There forever purified
In Thy presence to abide
Come with all Thine angels come
Raise the glorious harvest-home
Loving Shepherd of Thy sheep

For The Fruits Of All Creation

1 For the fruit of all creation
Thanks be to God
For His gifts to every nation
Thanks be to God
For the ploughing sowing reaping
Silent growth while we are sleeping
Future needs in earth's safekeeping
Thanks be to God

2 In the just reward of labour
God's will is done
In the help we give our neighbour
God's will is done
In our worldwide task of caring
For the hungry and despairing
In the harvests we are sharing
God's will is done

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3 For the harvests of the Spirit
Thanks be to God
For the good we all inherit
Thanks be to God
For the wonders that astound us
For the truths that still confound us
Most of all that love has found us
Thanks be to God

Firmly I Believe And Truly

1Firmly I believe and truly
God is three and God is one
And I next acknowledge duly
Manhood taken by the Son

2 And I trust and hope must fully
In that manhood crucified
And each thought and deed unruly
Do to death for He has died

3 Simply to His grace and wholly
Light and life and strength belong
And I love supremely solely
Christ the holy Christ the strong

4 And I make this affirmation
For the love of Christ alone
Holy church is His creation
And His teachings are her own

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5 Honour glory power and merit
To the God of earth and Heaven
Father Son and holy Spirit
Praise for evermore be given

All my hope on God is founded

1 All my hope on God is founded
All my trust He shall renew
He my guide through changing order
Only good and only true
God unknown
He alone
Calls my heart to be His own

2 Pride of man and earthly glory
Sword and crown betray His trust
All that human toil can fashion
Tower and temple fall to dust
But God's power
Hour by hour
Is my temple and my tower

3 Day by day our mighty giver
Grants to us His gifts of love
In His will our souls find pleasure
Leading to our home above
Love shall stand
At His hand
Joy shall wait for His command

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4 Still from man to God eternal
Sacrifice of praise be done
High above all praises praising
For the gift of Christ His Son
Hear Christ's call
One and all
We who follow shall not fall

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Closing Prayer

Keep, O Lord, your Church, with your perpetual mercy;
and, because without you our human frailty cannot but fall,
keep us ever by your help from all things hurtful,
and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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