

Traditional Home service Sunday 31st July

OPENING PRAYER

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things:
graft in our hearts the love of your name,
increase in us true religion, nourish us
with all goodness, and of your great
mercy keep us in the same;
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.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

*Father eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against
our neighbour, in what we have thought,
in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We have wounded your love, and marred
your image in us. We are sorry and
ashamed, and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us, forgive us all that is past;
and lead us out from darkness
to walk as children of light. Amen.*

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the
name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to
God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms,
hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.
Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name.

*HYMN 1 (Take My Life, and Let It Be
Consecrated)*

READINGS - Hosea 11.1-11
Colossians 3.1-11
Luke 12.13-21

TALK

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth. I believe in
Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who
was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of
the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius
Pilate, was crucified, died, and was
buried; he descended to the dead. On
the third day he rose again; he ascended
into heaven, he is seated at the right
hand of the Father, and he will come to
judge the living and the dead. I believe in
the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness
of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Spend some time praying for our nation,
our community and our families.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your
name, your kingdom come, your will be
done, on earth as in heaven. Give us
today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver
us from evil. For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours, now and for
ever. Amen.

HYMN 2 (Now Thank We All Our God)

CONCLUSION

The Lord bless you and watch over you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you, the Lord look
kindly on you and give you peace;
and the blessing of God Almighty, the
Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, be
among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

1 Now thank we all our God
with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done,
in whom his world rejoices;
who from our mothers' arms
has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.

2 O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us,
to keep us in his grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills
of this world in the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given,
the Son and Spirit blest,
who reign in highest heaven
the one eternal God,
whom heaven and earth adore;
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

1 Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee.
Take my moments and my days;
let them flow in endless praise,
let them flow in endless praise.

2 Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee,
swift and beautiful for thee.

3 Take my voice and let me sing
always, only, for my King.
Take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee,
filled with messages from thee.

4 Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
every power as thou shalt choose,
every power as thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne,
it shall be thy royal throne.

6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee,
ever, only, all for thee.

Sermon - Adrian Morton
Colossians 3.1-11 & Luke 12.13-21
Being rich towards God....

<Someone in a student chat room asked the following question:

What would you do or buy with a million pounds?

Some of the answers were as follows:

- *I would buy a vintage Bentley for maybe £350,000, pay off my mum's mortgage, and invest the final 600 grand in property*

- *Buy 500,000 lottery tickets & 250,000 Euromillions tickets*

- *Buy a ferrari and then go to las vegas and gamble with the rest of the money to get more.*

- *Honestly? Probably become a complete mess on alcohol and cocaine.*

- *Waste all of it on lemon curd*
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Lets look at this Luke passage...

Jesus was teaching a large crowd.
Then someone in the crowd asks him,

"Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?"

That Jesus doesn't get drawn into answering the mans' demand is interesting in itself.

I wonder how many times I've asked God for advice, wisdom and missed his reply because I'm not expecting him to point me to an underlying character or heart issue I might have.

Which is what Jesus was doing...

It was like, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

That's not the issue, the real and more important issue is that your heart is full of greed.

If your heart was right, how the inheritance was split wouldn't be causing such an issue.

The real issue was a heart issue, because Jesus then goes on to say:

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

and he goes on to tell a parable about an already rich farmer who have a bumper crop and thought it a good idea to build bigger barns...

Its a sobering thought that the parable was told to people who probably only just had enough to live on.

Maybe they had one spare garment, but no more.

The parable wasn't told to people worried about affording smart cars or foreign holidays.

Now because Jesus says: "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed"

I think this is telling us that Greed is a potential danger area for all of us.

Greed, which is a misplaced or distorted desire, has the potential to trip us up in our Christian walk.

It can hinder our relationship with Him. And actually, as we'll see, it can be even more serious.

If you look throughout particularly the NT, Greed is just about always mentioned in any list of vices.

So if you look in 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Romans greed is mentioned as a vice to avoid.

Jesus here, says be on your guard against **all** kinds of greed.

So its about recognising in yourself where your weaknesses are when it comes to greed.

It might be simply about accruing money.
Or possessions as it was for the man in our passage.
or it could be lust... you have a misplaced desire for another's wife or husband.
Or its about success...
Or someone else's gifting...

Paul in Romans recognised the danger in himself when he cited the command 'do not covet' as stirring in him 'every kind of covetous desire' as it says in Romans 7.

Maybe that is why he chose to support himself rather than have the church support him in his ministry.

We hear about gifted and charismatic speakers who start to charge for speaking.. and before they know it they have cultivated a lavish lifestyle.
And invariably that trips them up...

So we need to be on our guard.
We need to be proactive about recognising when greed stirs in our own hearts...

Because its a danger for us all...

<Talk about the pandemic...>

In our Colossians reading, it says that greed is idolatry...

In other words, it is a disposition that can come to dominate a person's life.

Till satisfying one's own needs becomes a god in your life.

So Greed competes with our hearts affection for God.

And if unchecked it will replace our focus on God and on His kingdom purposes.

It can turn our life in on itself.
So we are only concerned with getting whatever we desire without regards for the rights, feelings or welfare of others.

Peter in his second letter says those who are "experts in greed" have wandered away from kingdom life.

The parable Jesus told is quite stark and challenging.

Thinking life is about accruing material possessions for yourself is foolish!

There is no other way to put it.

You're acting like a fool if you believe life is satisfied simply by accruing material things for yourself.

Securing our economic future doesn't secure the future of our life.

And its foolish to think otherwise.

"Greed is the logical result of the belief that there is no life after death. We grab what we can while we can however we can and then hold on to it hard."

Sir Fred Catherwood

The final point is this:

We all have to give an account of our lives to God.

The rich farmer had not reckoned on his answerability to God for his life.

The parable ends with:

This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

I was praying about this parable during the week.

And I asked the Lord, 'what does it really mean to be rich towards you?'

And I felt he said, we are rich towards him when we do his bidding.

I had to think that through some more.
Its about obedience isn't it.

We could have come to the conclusion that to be rich towards God is to use our money and possession for his kingdom work.

To sow into good deed.

To use it for the relief of real needs in the world.

To have practical compassion to those less fortunate than ourselves.

And all that of course is good and worthy.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 says this:

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Being rich towards God is to be rich in good deeds.

But its wider than that.. its being obedient to Him with our money and possessions.

Anything we do that is not about relationship with Him.

That comes from a response from His goodness is just religious or rules.

To be rich towards God is firstly to understand that He has been rich towards us.

And that is understanding the Gospel.

That He has saved us.

That He has Blessed is with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

That despite the circumstances we may find ourselves in, he has given us a Hope for the future that is secure and cannot be shaken.

<Talk about Bill Johnson...

He said so many good things but one that is particularly relevant for our subject this morning.

He said, our friendship with God can only go where His Lordship has already been.

We all love the idea that Jesus calls us His friends.

And that's right.

But He needs to be Lord before He is our friend.

And in this whole area of how we use our money and possessions, it needs to come under the Lordship of Jesus.

We can't let greed replace who or what is Lord in our life.

He also talked about the passage where Mary of Bethany poured expensive perfume on Jesus' feet.

Perfume that was worth a year's wages.

It was an act that had eternal consequences. Because Jesus said, wherever the Gospel is reached i the world what she has done will also be told.

And the point he made was after Mary had poured out the expensive perfume and wiped Jesus' feet with her hair.

It says 'the whole house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.'

Mary would have left smelling as Jesus did.

There is something about when we offer Jesus our most expensive things.

The most difficult of things..

When we take that which is priceless and say its' all for you Jesus.

Jesus in return says, that's right and I'm all for you...

We can't ever out give God.

And whilst that isn't our primary motivation in terms of using our money and possessions.

I think there is a truth in that..

When we are obedient to Him with our money and possessions...

We will take hold of the life that is truly life

Amen.

