

Traditional Home service Sunday 18th September

OPENING PRAYER

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.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

*Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
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 (*Jesus, name above all names*)

READINGS - Jeremiah 8.18 - 9.1
1 Timothy 2.1-7
Luke 16.1-13

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 (*Take my life and let it be*)

CONCLUSION

May God give to you and to all those you love his comfort and his peace, his light and his joy, in this world and the next; 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

Jesus, name above all names
Beautiful Saviour, Glorious Lord
Emmanuel, God is with us
Blessed Redeemer, Living Word
Jesus, name above all names
Beautiful Saviour, Glorious Lord
Emmanuel, God is with us
Blessed Redeemer, Living Word

Lord I praise your name
Jesus name above all names
Jesus, name above all names
Beautiful Saviour, Glorious Lord
Emmanuel, God is with us
Blessed Redeemer, Living Word
Blessed Redeemer, Living Word
Blessed Redeemer, Living Word

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
1 Tim 2:1-7 & Luke 16:1-13
The Gospel is for everyone

I want to tackle both these readings today.

Firstly, this passage from 1 Timothy 2 fits well for the Sunday before the Queen's funeral.

"I urge then, first of all, that requests prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."

It is a time to pray for our future King.

Many have said how well he has conducted himself over this past week.

But we do need to pray for him, the royal family and for all those in authority as the passage directs.

The main point of our passage though is something else.

And its that the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ is for everyone.

This letter to Timothy is trying to address a particular issue which the church at Ephesus.

And the issue is of there being false teachers bringing disruption, causing people to wander away from faith, and in all likelihood bringing the church into disrepute to outsiders.

And Paul urges that prayers are made for **everyone**.
He references 'God our Saviour, who wants **all** people to be saved.'

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, who gave himself as a ransom for **all** people.

So we get this emphasis on **all**, on **everyone**.

The Gospel is for everyone.
Why is Paul urging us to pray for kings and all those in authority - that we may live peaceful and quiet lives.

On the face of it this sounds quite selfish.

Pray that we can get along quietly with our lives...

I think some have even taken this as, we just need to live quiet Christian lives, not upsetting anyone, not being overtly Christian or evangelistic.

No, there is an urgency throughout the NT that the Gospel needs to be proclaimed.

Salvation is an urgent matter and is for everyone.

The concern here though is not that the Christian should live a life free from trouble or distress.

But that we are to live in such a way that 'no one will speak evil of the name of God and of our teaching.'

We are to pray for those in authority so the Gospel message isn't hindered in any way.

That as Christians, as churches, we are free to proclaim the good news of Jesus to our friends, our neighbours, our work colleagues.

That the church is seen in a good light from those in authority.

You will know that in many countries, Christians and the church are seen in a good light.

We've heard much on the news this week about the Queen's personal faith.

I came across another quote she made:
"Each day is a new beginning, I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right, to take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings, and to put my trust in God."

Her faith is something to be thankful for...

Yet, again, the Gospel is for everyone.

It's for your friends, your children, your grandchildren.

I said in my Easter Day talk that people shouldn't fall into the mistake to believe that they don't need Jesus.

That you just need to be a good person.
Jesus didn't die on a cross and go through all he did just to give people another option.

It can't be you can either be a good person or you can accept Jesus died for you... either is ok...

I'm sure we all know plenty of people who are good people.
Good sorts...

But Jesus is either a solution for all of humankind or He isn't a solution at all.

As verse 5 says in our Timothy passage:

*"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, who gave himself as a ransom for **all** people.*

The Gospel is for everyone.

Chris spoke about Alpha this morning.

Invite someone to Alpha.
It just could be a life changing course for them

Your invitation could bring salvation to them and their household.

I also want to address this parable in our Gospel reading.
Because it is relevant to what we are thinking about.

It gives some biblical wisdom about our approach to money and how we use it.

There was a certain rich man.
And a manager, the person who was in charge of the rich man's affairs.
The manager was accused of wasting the rich man's possessions.

Literally "accused with hostile intent".
So it wasn't just an error, there is something more sinister behind what he had been doing.

So the manager was about to lose his job.
However, he was given some time before that was to happen.

And in this window of opportunity, he took it upon himself to reduce some of the debts people had with the rich man.

So that when he lost his job he would be welcomed into their houses.

He was safeguarding his future in other words.

At the end of the parable the rich man commends the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly.

And Jesus concludes by saying that "*the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.*

I tell you use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings."

Now Jesus is not condoning what the man did.
He certainly isn't commending dishonesty, lying or stealing to us.

And we need to ask, what is the overall point of this parable?

The Manager, with great shrewdness acts quickly to position himself to better his future.

In his window of opportunity, he uses his last moments of office, what he has power over, what he can influence, in order to show generosity on a grand scale.

Its like Jesus is saying, you think that's shrewd, which it is... but this is real shrewdness...

Use your worldly wealth with eternity in mind.
In your window of opportunity.
that which is within your power.
that which you have influence over, use with one eye on eternity.

I think that is the point.

Jesus is saying to those who would follow him.
Use your worldly wealth to prepare for your eternal future.

Use your money with the Gospel in mind.
That is acting shrewdly from God's point of view.

That is making sharp powers of judgement with regard to our wealth.

Jesus then continues...

He says:

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is

dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.” So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?”

So firstly ‘small’ matters to God.
Never disregard or despise the small...

How we deal with small things will reveal our character.

And that is certainly true when it comes to our money.
If we don’t use £1 wisely, we won’t use £1million wisely.

But it is a principle that has a wider application.

As we learn to handle the small things well, it will develop our characters in order to handle the bigger things well.

So, if you have been given a little bit of responsibility, be faithful with it because it will set you up to be able to handle bigger responsibility.

If we learn to deal with small conflicts well, we will be better able to deal with bigger conflicts.

And of course the primary context is about our money and possessions.

If you are faithful with a little wealth then the Lord will trust you with greater wealth.

But something bigger is also going on here...

Jesus goes on...

So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?”

He is kind of saying compared to ‘true riches’ our worldly wealth is a small thing.

And I believe in this verse, Jesus is laying out a huge spiritual principle for us.

The question to ask is ‘What are true riches?’

Well true riches are spiritual things...
Again, that’s why we are here...

Being hungry for more of God.
For an authentic lifestyle, to discern God better.
Being hungry for greater kingdom breakthrough.
To see more people healed, more souls saved...

These things are ‘true riches, spiritual things...

And Jesus is saying there is a direct connection between how we handle worldly wealth, i.e. money, a ‘small thing’

and spiritual things, which are much bigger and weightier.

The way I handle my money.
How trustworthy I am with money.
How faithfully I use it...

That is how I have access to the unseen spiritual realm.

Which are true spiritual riches.

Obedience in the realm of our money qualifies us so we can be trusted with the unseen spiritual realm.

Which is why there are so many passages about money and possessions in Scripture.

Conclusion

Lets finish and sum up...

The Gospel, the good news of Jesus, is urgent and is for everyone.

We are to pray for our rulers so that we can continue to be free to proclaim the Gospel.

And if the Gospel is urgent and for everyone. It will command our attention.

It will dictate how we use our time.
And how we use our money.

Jesus teaches that we are to use our money wisely with eternity and the Gospel in mind.

He teaches that being trustworthy with small things will set us up to receive bigger things from God.

And obedience in the realm of our money qualifies us so we can be trusted with the unseen spiritual realm.

Amen!