



# WELCOME TO ST PETER'S ASH



**THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AT ST PETER'S IS CALLED TO CELEBRATE, LIVE AND REFLECT THE LOVE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST**

**11<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2020**

**TRINITY 18**

**READINGS FOR TODAY**

Exodus 32 v 1 - 14  
Philippians 4 v 1 - 9  
Matthew 22 v 1 - 14

PARISH OFFICE: Monday & Friday 9 – 30 am to 11 – 30 am  
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*Come to the wedding banquet*

**COLLECT FOR TRINITY 18**

Almighty and everlasting God,  
increase in us your gift of faith  
that, forsaking what lies behind  
and reaching out to that which is before,  
we may run the way of your commandments  
and win the crown of everlasting joy;  
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.

**THIS WEEK**

WEDNESDAY HOLY COMMUNION 9 – 30 am

**CARE AND SHARE**

Food is being left outside church for people to take for themselves, or to share with others who they know are in need. The shelves are usually being emptied each day. If you would like to donate any tins, packets, UHT milk, tea, coffee etc. please bring it to church with you or leave it on the doorstep of the Rectory. Thank you.

**ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING**

This meeting, postponed from April, is NEXT Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October in church. We will be having a shorter service of Family Communion at 10 am and the meeting will follow immediately after. We hope to be finished by 11 – 15 am. Nomination forms are in the middle of church for 4 PCC members, one churchwarden, and two places on Deanery Synod.

**SHOEBOX APPEAL**

Shoebox time is here again! There are some ready to fold boxes and leaflets at the back of the church. NO toothpaste, sweets or 4 suit cards please, BUT homemade stuffed toys are allowed if stuffed with proper toy stuffing. Boxes can be made on line for £20, which includes the 'postage' and you can choose items from a limited list. There will be a box for donations in church but no big packing party this year, unless the rules change. Thank You. Barbara Rose

**CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOXES & CHRISTMAS CARDS**

Because banking is more difficult this year, if it is at all possible, please count the money in your box yourself, then give me a cheque – made out to The Children's Society. I will give you a receipt in the form of a new label to seal your box for next year. Thank you for your help.

I am selling Christmas cards again this year. Please pick up or ask Mary for an order form for The Children's Society Christmas cards which may be seen on their website. As this contains some other cards, please only order from the 26 cards on the list. I have just a few catalogues for viewing if you have no internet. Please pay cash with your order or cheques made out to Mary Lamont. Thank you.

**READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK – TRINITY 19**

Isaiah 45 v 1 - 7; 1 Thessalonians 1 v 1 - 10;  
Matthew 25 v 15 - 22

Congratulations and good wishes to everyone celebrating their birthday this week: CLAIRE & NICK BOUD (Today); BARBARA ROSE (13<sup>TH</sup>)

STEP BY STEP – have written to thank us for our £170 – 05 harvest donation. They accommodate 273 young people each night and give support with counselling and personal development to help them break the cycle of homelessness for good. They work across 6 counties.

**PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF THE RECENTLY DEPARTED, ESPECIALLY:**

WYN LONG; RICHARD STOKES; EDNA PEARSON;  
JUNE MIDDLETON; LIAM MURPHY

**DON'T FORGET OUR ST PETER'S PRAYER CHAIN**  
If you would like emergency prayer for yourself or somebody else please phone: 01252 322292 or 01252 323037 – this is a confidential service.

## Morning Prayer at 10 am on Sunday

*If there is more than one person present, someone may wish to read the parts marked (L), everyone says the rest together. You can say alternate verses in the Psalm and in the Canticles. Please have a Bible to hand. You may wish to light a candle.*

(L) O Lord, open our lips

All: and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

- 1 The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, ♦  
slow to anger and of great kindness.
- 2 He will not always accuse us, ♦  
neither will he keep his anger for ever.
- 3 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, ♦  
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.
- 4 For as the heavens are high above the earth, ♦  
so great is his mercy upon those who fear him.
- 5 As far as the east is from the west, ♦  
so far has he set our sins from us.
- 6 As a father has compassion on his children, ♦  
so is the Lord merciful towards those who fear him.
- 7 For he knows of what we are made; ♦  
he remembers that we are but dust.
- 8 Our days are but as grass; ♦  
we flourish as a flower of the field;
- 9 For as soon as the wind goes over it, it is gone, ♦  
and its place shall know it no more.
- 10 But the merciful goodness of the Lord is from of old  
and endures for ever on those who fear him, ♦  
and his righteousness on children's children;
- 11 On those who keep his covenant ♦  
and remember his commandments to do them.

All Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.

*This hymn is said or sung:*

Jerusalem the golden,  
with milk and honey blest,  
beneath thy contemplation  
sink heart and voice oppressed:  
I know not, oh, I know not,  
what joys await us there;  
what radiancy of glory,  
what bliss beyond compare!

They stand, those halls of Zion,  
all jubilant with song,  
and bright with many an angel,  
and all the martyr throng:  
the Prince is ever in them,  
the daylight is serene;  
the pastures of the blessed  
are decked in glorious sheen.

There is the throne of David;  
and there, from care released,  
the shout of them that triumph,  
the song of them that feast;  
and they who with their Leader  
have conquered in the fight,  
for ever and for ever  
are clad in robes of white.

Oh, sweet and blessed country,  
the home of God's elect!  
Oh, sweet and blessed country,  
that eager hearts expect!

Jesus, in mercy bring us  
to that dear land of rest,  
who art, with God the Father,  
And the Spirit ever blest.

(L) The night has passed, and the day lies open before  
us; let us pray with one heart and mind:

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,  
so may the light of your presence, O God,  
set our hearts on fire with love for you;  
now and for ever. Amen.

(L) Seek the Lord while he may be found,  
All call upon him while he is near.

Let the wicked abandon their ways  
All and the unrighteous their thoughts.

Turn back to the Lord, who will have mercy;  
All to our God who will richly pardon.

*A time of silence and self-examination may be kept.*

All Lord God,  
we have sinned against you;  
we have done evil in your sight.  
We are sorry and repent.  
Have mercy on us according to your love.  
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us  
from our sin.  
Renew a right spirit within us  
and restore us to the joy of your salvation,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May the Father of all mercies  
cleanse us from our sins,  
and restore us in his image  
to the praise and glory of his name,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.  
For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

*We now say the collect for Trinity 18 (see first page)*

*Read Exodus 32 v 1 – 14 followed by Psalm 106 v 1 – 6 &  
19 - 23 concluding with:*

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as  
it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

*Read Philippians 4 v 1 - 9*

(L) Alleluia, alleluia.

The word of the Lord endures for ever.

The word of the Lord is the good news announced to you.

All: Alleluia.

*Now read Matthew 22 v 1 – 14. Here are some thoughts on today's readings from Revd. Carol:*

The Gospel story this morning can come across as being contradictory in the fact that we hear of the rich man inviting everyone to the wedding feast. That meant rich and poor, therefore, it goes without saying that if you are poor you are highly unlikely to have the right attire for a last minute invite to a wedding at the local millionaire's house! Yet, we see that the rich man gets more than a bit annoyed at the fellow who hasn't got dressed up. Who knows! The underdressed chap might well have been enjoying himself, after all, when did he last have a decent meal in his belly and a drink to go with it? But he forgot about tidying himself up. Perhaps the host had some robes put out for people to wear, but the man was more interested in getting on with the party than the formal wear.

Surely this parable is saying that God accepts everyone?! Yes, it does, and yes, He does accept all those who choose to follow Him through Jesus. But I think what Jesus is trying to get across is that we have to put some effort in on our side of things. We've been invited to the heavenly banquet and we should be celebrating with Him, but in order to do so we shouldn't get distracted by the things that are going on around us. We are being warned not to take our eyes off of God, not to get caught up in the things that can distract us in the world, otherwise we could end up following Him in a half-hearted way - not fully committed. Just like the Israelites we read about in the Exodus reading, we can easily forget that God is always there, despite not always being able to see or hear Him. The Israelites had got fed up of waiting for Moses to bring them news from God, they wanted something to focus on and so ended with the golden calf to idolise instead.

So, what are our 'golden calves'? Well, they don't necessarily have to be things that we worship in a praying sence, but they can be things such as putting ourselves before God, without giving Him a thought in the decisions that we make, or the fact that perhaps we have got caught up in what gives us pleasure (shopping, eating, drinking, exercising etc..) and forgotten that God provides us with the resources to be able to do these things. Or maybe our idol is something that consumes our every thought - the Coronavirus for instance. All these things can get in the way of us and our relationship with God.

Through this parable, I think Jesus is simply saying we should give God what He deserves. Giving Him our time, listening to Him and being God centred in the way we live our lives. Remember He wants us to join in the party that's on offer through Jesus. It is how we approach it that is in question.

I have spoken in the past about saying 'yes' to God with a right heart. Well this is the same thing. It's all very well for us to claim that we are followers of Christ by saying we are Christian. But are we prepared to do what is expected of us? Are we prepared to keep our eyes focussed on God and not become complacent and wrapped up in the here and now? Yes, God's Kingdom is here and we mustn't forget that we are in it and play a part in it. But it is oh so very easy to lose sight of the One who brings that Kingdom.

Our journey of faith with Jesus is something that should be integral to every part of our lives. When we say 'yes' to Him, that's not it, job done! Like all relationships, it is a continual thing, where we constantly strive towards making it better and can enjoy each others company. In other words, really enjoy the heavenly banquet that God

has in place for us, because we have taken the time and trouble to not loose sight of Him.

We should be prepared for distractions, for those knocks and bumps that life throws in along the way. Indeed, it can often be in the times of knocks and bumps that we actually become more focused on God. We draw closer to Him. But there has been many a person who has fallen by the wayside by becoming complacent and losing sight of God in the comfortableness of their lives too.

So, to conclude. Jesus' message to us here today is that we are welcome to join Him at the party. Anyone and everyone is welcome, but beware of being complacent, not showing respect towards the One who has invited and provided you with the good things. Clothe yourself with His love and grace, share it with others, but more importantly keep your eyes fixed on Him. Rejoice and enjoy the party! AMEN.

*Now pause for your own reflections.*

*(L): We affirm our faith in the words of the Creed:*

*All We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is,  
seen and unseen.  
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation he came  
down from heaven,  
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit  
and the Virgin Mary  
and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge  
the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son  
is worshipped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic  
and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come.  
Amen.*

*We now say together:*

*All You have set us free to worship you without fear,  
holy and righteous in your sight.*

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, ♦  
who has come to his people and set them free.
- 2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, ♦  
born of the house of his servant David.
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old ♦  
to save us from our enemies,  
from the hands of all that hate us,
- 4 To show mercy to our ancestors, ♦  
and to remember his holy covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham  
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him without fear, ♦  
holy and righteous in his sight  
all the days of our life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the  
Most High, ♦  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
- 8 To give his people knowledge of salvation ♦  
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
- 9 In the tender compassion of our God ♦  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the  
shadow of death, ♦  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

*All* Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.

*All* You have set us free to worship you without fear,  
holy and righteous in your sight.

*Our prayers, today, are written by Mary Lamont:*

Heavenly Father

We thank you for your Church worldwide and your invitation to your heavenly banquet. May we be receptive to your call and, by your grace, be worthy of your calling. We pray for our Bishops Andrew and Jo, for Keith and Carol and all Priests and Deacons in this Diocese that they, being guided by you, may enable us to spread the your gospel of love and generosity to all whom we meet.

Lord in your mercy....

We pray for the Queen and all the Royal family, for our members of Parliament and all in authority and for leaders of all nations that there may be Peace throughout the world. We pray for a resolution to the feud between Armenia and Azerbaijan so that they can live together.

Lord in your mercy

We pray for all who are sick especially those known to us and those who have asked for our prayers. Give them the inner peace that only you can give. May they know your love and care. We pray for those who have had operations delayed because of covid19 while also remembering the workers in the N.H.S. who put themselves at risk for the good of others.

Lord in your mercy

We pray for families still struggling from the effects of Covid especially those with children being sent home from school to self-isolate and therefore someone at home to care need care; for parents needing to go back to work or who are searching for a new job because their job no longer exists.

Lor in your mercy

Be with your servants who suffer persecution for proclaiming the Gospel. We pray for the work of those involved with the work of CSW and the people they support. Turn the hearts of their persecutor and bring them to the way of truth.

We pray for the those who have died recently - Wyn Long; Richard Stokes; Edna Pearson. June Middleton, Liam Murphy and those whose anniversaries occur at this time... and all who are bereaved, especially those who have been unable to attend the funeral of a loved one.

Lord in your mercy.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of Peter and all your saints, we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unending love. Amen

As Jesus taught us, so we pray: Our Father in heaven....

*This hymn may be said or sung:*

Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven;  
To His feet thy tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
Evermore His praises sing:  
Praise Him, praise Him, praise Him, praise Him,  
Praise the everlasting King.

Praise Him for His grace and favour  
To our fathers in distress;  
Praise Him still the same as ever,  
Slow to chide, and swift to bless.  
Praise Him, praise Him, praise Him, praise Him,  
Glorious in His faithfulness.

Fatherlike He tends and spares us,  
Well our feeble frame He knows;  
In His hands He gently bears us,  
Rescues us from all our foes.  
Praise Him, praise Him, praise Him, praise Him!  
Widely as His mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore Him,  
Ye behold Him face to face;  
Sun and moon, bow down before Him;  
Dwellers all in time and space,  
Praise Him, praise Him, praise Him, praise Him!  
Praise with us the God of grace.

*Let us pray:*

God, our judge and saviour,  
teach us to be open to your truth  
and to trust in your love,  
that we may live each day  
with confidence in the salvation which is given  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord, we pray that your grace may always precede and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*All:* May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us, and all who we love, today and always. Amen.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace, and rise with Christ in glory. Amen.

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### Evening Prayer for this week

O Lord open our lips,  
and our mouth shall show forth your praise.

O God make speed to save us.  
O Lord, make haste to help us.

*A lamp or candle may be lit.*

- 1 O God, will you not give us life again, ♦  
that your people may rejoice in you?
- 2 Show us your mercy, O Lord, ♦  
and grant us your salvation.
- 3 Truly, his salvation is near to those who fear him, ♦  
that his glory may dwell in our land.
- 4 Mercy and truth are met together, ♦  
righteousness and peace have kissed each other;
- 5 Truth shall spring up from the earth ♦  
and righteousness look down from heaven.
- 6 Righteousness shall go before him ♦  
and direct his steps in the way.

*All* Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.

That this evening may be holy, good and peaceful,  
we pray with one heart and mind:

*Silence is kept.*

As our evening prayer rises before you, O God,  
so may your mercy come down upon us  
to cleanse our hearts  
and set us free to sing your praise  
now and for ever. Amen.

*A Psalm is said: Mon 85; Tue 89 v 19 - end; Wed 91;  
Thurs 94; Fri 102; Sat 104 ending with:*

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.  
Amen.

*Two Scripture Readings now follow (see below). Between  
the two readings we say:*

*All* I saw the holy city  
coming down out of heaven from God.

- 1 I saw a new heaven and a new earth, ♦  
for the first heaven and the first earth had passed  
away and the sea was no more.
- 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down  
out of heaven from God, ♦  
prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- 3 And I heard a great voice from the throne saying, ♦  
'Behold, the dwelling of God is among mortals.'

4 'He will dwell with them and they shall be his  
peoples, ♦  
and God himself will be with them.

5 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes, ♦  
and death shall be no more.

6 'Neither shall there be mourning,  
nor crying, nor pain any more, ♦  
for the former things have passed away.'

7 And the One who sat upon the throne said, ♦  
'Behold, I make all things new.'

*All* To the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb ♦  
be blessing and honour and glory and might, for  
ever and ever. Amen.

*All* I saw the holy city  
coming down out of heaven from God.

*Readings:*

Monday: 2 Chronicles 17 v 1 - 12; Mark 15 v 1 - 15  
Tuesday 2 Chronicles 18 v 1 - 27; Mark 15 v 16 - 32  
Wednesday: 2 Chr. 18 v 28 to end of 19; Mark 15 v 33 - 41  
Thursday: 2 Chron. 20 v 1 - 23; Mark 15 v 42 - end  
Friday: 2 Chron. 22 to end of 23; Mark 16 v 1 - 8  
Saturday: 2 Chronicles 24 v 1 - 22; Mark 16 v 9 - end

*Gospel Canticle: The Magnificat (The Song of Mary)*

*All* You have mercy on those who fear you,  
from generation to generation.

1) My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit  
rejoices in God my Saviour; he has looked with favour on  
his lowly servant.

2) From this day all generations will call me blessed; the  
Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his  
name.

3) He has mercy on those who fear him, from generation  
to generation.

4) He has shown strength with his arm and has scattered  
the proud in their conceit.

5) Casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting  
up the lowly.

6) He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the  
rich away empty.

7) He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, to  
remember his promise of mercy.

8) The promise made to our ancestors, to Abraham and  
his children for ever.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.  
Amen.

*All* You have mercy on those who fear you,  
from generation to generation.

*Prayers of thanksgiving are made for the day that is  
ending. Intercessions are offered for the church, the  
world and for individuals, the sick and the departed.*

Our Father, who art in heaven ...

The Collect for this week (see first page)

*This hymn may be said or sung:*

God is working his purpose out  
as year succeeds to year:  
God is working his purpose out,  
and the time is drawing near;  
nearer and nearer draws the time,  
the time that shall surely be,  
when the earth shall be filled  
with the glory of God  
as the waters cover the sea.

From utmost east to utmost west,  
wherever foot hath trod,  
by the mouth of many messengers  
goes forth the voice of God;  
give ear to me, ye continents,  
ye isles, give ear to me,  
that earth may be filled  
with the glory of God  
as the waters cover the sea.

What can we do to work God's work,  
to prosper and increase  
the brotherhood of all mankind--  
the reign of the Prince of Peace?  
What can we do to hasten the time--  
the time that shall surely be,  
when the earth shall be filled  
with the glory of God  
as the waters cover the sea.

March we forth in the strength of God,  
with the banner of Christ unfurled,  
that the light of the glorious gospel of truth  
may shine throughout the world:  
fight we the fight with sorrow and sin  
to set their captives free,  
that earth may be filled  
with the glory of God  
as the waters cover the sea.

All we can do is nothing worth  
unless God blessed the deed;  
vainly we hope for the harvest-tide  
till God gives life to the seed;  
yet nearer and nearer draws the time,  
the time that shall surely be,  
when the earth shall be filled  
with the glory of God  
as the waters cover the sea.

Let us pray:

Abide with us, Lord, for it is evening,  
and day is drawing to a close.  
Abide with us and with your whole Church,  
in the evening of the day,  
in the evening of life,  
in the evening of the world;  
abide with us and with all your faithful ones, O Lord,  
in time and in eternity. Amen.

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray, and in your great  
mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night,  
for the love of your only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all  
evermore. Amen.

May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the  
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

## **SERMON FROM THE DIOCESE**

### **The Rich Fool:**

### **Luke 12: 13-21**

**Revd Peter Harwood,  
Director of Mission,  
Diocese of Guildford**



### **Money Makes Fools of Us**

#### **Introduction**

Having money makes life easier, being poor isn't miserable. But money does bring its problems.

Studies have shown that the more generous we are in such things as giving, volunteering and being emotionally available to our friends, the happier we are. But the more money we have the less generous we become, the more lonely we become and the less happy we become

What's the answer? Let's see what wisdom Jesus has on this in our reading from Luke 12 v 13-21

#### **Want to ask 3 why's of this passage**

1. Why the request
2. Why the rebuke
3. Why the refusal

#### **1. Why the request?**

The simple answer is that as you read through Luke, Jesus talks more about money than he talks about money more than any other single subject.

Most of Chapters 6, 11, 16. Indeed 11 out of Jesus' 39 parables are directly about money. 28 % of Jesus' teaching is related to money in some way.

If Jesus was vicar, that would translate into 15 sermons a year! One might expect that to turn the crowds away – but we read in Chapter 12 v 1 – many thousands.

But that was why he asked – Jesus was always talking about money.

But then, one wonders why did Jesus talk about it so much? The reason is that how you spend money, is a very good indicator of where your heart is. What you are passionate about, where your values are.

Christians are called to worship God, love our neighbour, change the world – to do those things requires a generous heart that gives time and money.

I can say, "I have faith" – how do I measure that though? One way to measure it is looking at how I use my money – It is quantifiable, it's concrete, it's a reality check.

My giving is a barometer of how much I am living out my faith.

## 2. Why the rebuke?

Jesus rebukes him. *"Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you [or over you]?"* It is again a surprising response because Jesus does see himself as a judge, an arbiter. Just a few verses later v 49-51, he talks about bringing division not peace.

Jesus' goal isn't to put them man off, rather he wants to bring him to his senses – to wake him up to the fact that chasing after money leads to a dead end – literally and metaphorically.

This young man has the ear of the Lord of Life, the son of God – and he's asking about how to carve up an inheritance – how small minded is that!

It reminds me of that great quote by C.S Lewis from the *Weight of Glory* *"We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition [ + accumulation of wealth] when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."*

Have you noticed how many "I"s there are in the parable? The rich man in the parable was only concerned for one thing – himself.

Jesus has come to give him a life, a better life in the present age, and eternal life in the next. But he can only do that if he is "rich towards God", In other words, when he holds nothing back but gives everything to God - not when he is selfish and self-obsessed.

## 3. Why the refusal?

Jesus' lesson here is how money blinds us to reality. So much so, that he calls this man a fool. How often does God come and say to somebody, "You fool".

Notice he stored up 'everything'. The NRSV translates it particularly well – "there I will store all my grain and my goods"<sup>1</sup> He is a fool, because he has stored up as if this world is all there is, when actually there is a spiritual world too. God says to him "you are dying tonight" – what a fool you are.

Some years ago, a man in his 50's came to me very distraught. He had just been diagnosed with oesophageal cancer. He said to me "I gave my life to the city, so that I could retire early and live in comfort and now I just have months to live. What a fool I have been."

## What's the answer?

If you say to yourself "I have everything ", God will say "You are empty"

If you say to yourself "I need more", God will say "you need to give more"

BUT

If you go to God and say "I'm empty" – he'll say "I'll fill you"

If you go to God and say "I will give you my life" – He will say "I will give you life and life in all its fullness."

As Christians all over the Guildford Diocese are thinking about their giving – perhaps this is a good moment to consider your giving. And if you were to ask me how much you should give, my advice is simply to pray. Put aside some time to be with God, seek him and ask God how much.

And remember, the more you give, the more you will receive out of life. There is real joy in giving.

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