

Service for Week 28th July – 3rd Aug

2025 By Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer. Loving God, we surround ourselves with belongings, some contribute much to life, others yield nothing, but all of them can so easily keep us from you, closing our eyes to what is ultimately important in life. Teach us to travel light, and to recognize where true fulfillment lies, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven.....

Amen

Bible Reading Luke 12:13-21

Someone in the crowd said to him (Jesus), "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."
Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?"
Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.' "

"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded

from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

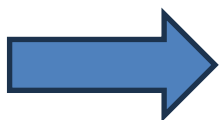
Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

When we read the Bible the Old and the New testaments, we can get what can seem to be conflicting ideas about commerce, the accumulation of money and wealth generally. We are given encouragement to work - In Proverbs we read- Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth. So, there is this encouragement to work to make a living but at the same time we are asked not to forget God and the needs of others.

In our reading a man asks Jesus "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." - to understand this, we have to know a bit about the law. At that time an elder son would normally be due to receive double a younger son's portion of an inheritance. Any dispute over inheritance was normally settled by a local Rabbi hence the reason why this man asked Jesus to make a judgement. The man was asking Jesus to tell his older brother to give him 50% of the inheritance instead of the 33% he was due. But Jesus recognizes that it is just out of sheer greed that the man is asking Jesus to influence his brother.



We live in a society these days, don't we, that is largely motivated by money and trying to get more of it. Adverts on television and the radio encourage us 'invest' in schemes which will bring us riches – but which rarely do. They entice us to purchase things by telling us 'that we are worth it' or telling us that because a popular film, TV or sports personality has something we should also want to have it.

A relatively new sales tactic now is to sign up people who are called 'influencers' to encourage people to buy products and services online through social media on their mobile phones. Some of these social media influencers can earn hundreds of thousands of pounds, by influencing their followers to buy things.

Jesus who has millions more followers had a message then and now that was the opposite to what is normal in our society. It is counter- cultural in that it speaks against a society which is obsessed with possessions and getting rich for the sake of it. He illustrated this message with a parable (a story with a message). In that agricultural society he told the story of wealthy landowner who had an abundant crop one year and found that he did not have the space in his barns to store it. His solution was to demolish the barns and build a huge new barn to store the crop. He could then he thinks 'take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'

But Jesus says in all the time planning and thinking only of making himself rich and making sure he had a good life in the future, he had not considered one thing. What if he died that night and all his wealth is suddenly gone and can't be used for his future happiness. God calls him a 'fool' because he has spent his life looking after himself and storing up wealth which he can't take with him when he dies. He is not foolish for ensuring that he had enough in the future for himself to live. But he was a fool to make money and possessions the centre of his life and putting everything into something that could so easily be destroyed or lost.

Jesus said, by way of answering the man's request to change the terms of his inheritance, that we should not let greed or the pursuit of money overtake our lives. Instead, we should make sure we have a right relationship with God and recognize that our 'treasure', our 'wealth' is in him and can never be lost or destroyed come what may.

Amen

Closing Prayer.

Living God, I thank you that you provide me not only with daily bread but also the bread of life- inner nourishment that means I need never go spiritually hunger again. Teach me to enjoy your gifts and to celebrate life in all its fulness.

Amen. Prayers inspired by 'Prayerfully Yours' by Nick Fawcett