

Banchory Ternan East Church

29th March 2020

To know Christ and make him known



Matthew wrote: Do not store up for yourselves treasure on earth, but store up for yourself treasure in Heaven. Matthew 6:19,20,21.

Isaiah said. The Lord will be your guide continually and will satisfy your needs.

Let us worship God

A prayer poem to start

A Bible reading to follow

Luke 12:13-21



¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

¹⁴ Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" ¹⁵ Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

¹⁶ And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

¹⁸ "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones,

and there I will store my surplus grain. ¹⁹ And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

²⁰ "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?'

²¹ "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

An all age story about priorities from Luke

Online activity time: The church is the people

A prayer for ourselves and others

A member suggested you might like to finish by listening to "In Christ alone" [here](#). This version brings out the togetherness of what Luke decided to tell us of Jesus message today.

A closing thought

Sitting before Jesus during anxious times

Luke 12: 'Life is not defined by what you have.' (v15 The Message)

Lord, I realise that I need to be wholehearted in my life of faith. Give me the courage to look honestly at my life and be willing to face up to the 'gods' that preoccupy me. Do I really desire You, Lord, with all my heart? If not, give me grace to desire You and to see You as my dearly Beloved, who alone can satisfy my deep inner needs.

Amen. (Aileen Ross)

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Let us pray

Assets – a poem prayer for three voices

‘I have four big lollies.’

‘Ten were given to me’

‘I will show you
Where blackberries grow
If you’ll come and see.’

‘I have twenty fireworks.’

‘I’ve got sixty-three.’

‘I know a place
where the sunset and moon
reflect in the sea.’

‘I can shout the loudest.’

‘Just listen to me.’

‘I share a space
That is full of quiet
With a willow tree.’

‘I’ve got a whole country.’

‘I rule over three.’

‘I have birds
And the curving sky,
And all that is free.’

Cecily Taylor

A bible reading to follow

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A reflection on the word

Hello everyone,

Let’s take a moment to settle down before God.

Pause for a moment

Let us pray together

Lord Jesus Christ

By the power of your presence

Open the mind of God to us,

That in your light we may see light

And in your strength be strong. Amen

Midweek I found myself sitting in my comfy office chair reading one of Martin Luther King’s sermons. Why? Well, obviously because somebody had sent me a picture of the contents of their fridge. We live in strange times, don’t we? Don’t go out.

But how are fridges linked with the sermons of Martin Luther King? The Government’s demand that we stay inside has us scrabbling to do all manner of things—even tidy up. The picture of the fridge galvanised me into action for two reasons. Firstly, it reminded me of my father, who lived and worked for much of his life in hot countries including Ghana and Nigeria. For Dad leaving the fridge door open for 10 seconds even in Scotland made you a Rich Fool.

Secondly, as I looked at the picture of the stacked fridge I'd been sent, I noticed that it wasn't just full, it had been filled in the neatest way I had ever seen. Not just neatly stacked, but in categories too. Prioritised you might say to satisfy the needs of each member of the household. And that spurred me into action. Not to tidy the manse fridge, but to tidy and categorise my desk and bookshelves. All went well for a dozen books or so and then I found myself sitting exhausted in the office reading part of Martin Luther King's book, a knock at midnight, with a mug of coffee by my side.

The passage started with the dramatic story of the rich fool. Martin Luther King then asks, why does Jesus call the man a fool? All he seems to do is protect the crops the good land had given him. This is not a dishonest man. So why does Jesus call him a fool. What are your thoughts? It seems Luke decides to write down this parable to underline that fools are people who are free from God- or so the psalmist tells us in psalm 14. This man is not dishonest, but he is self-absorbed or selfish maybe. He never stops to think that he, himself, can't actually grow anything. The fruits of the harvest are given to him through God's grace by the work of the soil, sun and rain.

Through this story, Luke decides to tell us about how Jesus urges us to prioritise what we have and that includes not just money, but time, skills and relationships too.

Check out your lives, especially at this time and ensure your priorities are right. You may be a big shot today but what about tomorrow?

When it comes to living with God, it is about balancing all this physical stuff that we need to live, the house we live in, the cars we drive, the clothes we wear, the money we accumulate, the way we use our time and the skills we have to share with others. All this has to be balanced against why we live and how, as church people, we believe that God asks us to live. It's a big ask sometimes, isn't it?

Martin Luther King illustrated Jesus' parable with one of his own stories. A man received a phone call telling him that his wife had been in an accident. The first question he asked when he answered the phone was "How much damage did it do to my car?" No enquiries about how his wife was, just how much damage to my car. He had allowed his car to become more significant than a person. He wasn't a fool because he **had** a car, he was a **fool** because he **worshipped** that car. He allowed his car to become more important to him than God.

Somehow, we need first to lift our eyes to the kingdom of God, before looking below on our possessions. All too often we do not keep the balance.

The man didn't realise how much he needed people. There appears to be no room for the teamwork of our interdependent lives.

For Jesus, the rich man was a fool because he didn't realise how much he depended on people in his life. Do we, at all times in our lives, see that?

Maybe this is something we are all chewing over in the current lock down conditions. Take some time to wonder or even discover who or where the toothbrush and toothpaste you use each day was made?

What about the towel, shampoo and soap you use, where was it made? What about your breakfast? Whether you prefer to drink coffee, tea, water, juice or even hot chocolate it will have been made in a different country from the one we live in?

It goes on and on as you think about your day? Who baked the bread you have eaten today?

Have you ever thanked the farmers who get up at 3am each day whatever the weather to check the animals you might rely on to feed you some day?

If you tot it up on your abacus you will probably be surprised to discover that even though it is only lunch time, about half the world's population will have helped you live your life. That is one heck of a Christmas card list.

What Jesus is urging us to remember is that no matter how rich we are in the sense of financial resources and possessions, many people have helped us get here, most often these are people we have never met or ever will meet. Ordinary people, doing ordinary jobs on which we rely.

Today we are living in a time when we need to take a moment to remember and take reassurance from all who are still working to help us live as normal lives as possible. We may not be able to go out, but we can tell each other how much we appreciate all they do with a phone call, a card, an e-mail, a text. Or even standing outside at night applauding. Each time we do that we act as Jesus would want us to do, as a people known by God and not like the Rich fool of this story. Here's an old Jewish story to finish with that reflects the balance we should strive for in our lives. The better way to live Paul calls it in 1 Corinthians.

Once there were two brothers who, together, owned a piece of land. The older brother had a wife and children, the younger one was not married. At harvest time, the brothers split their crop into two equal parts. That night the older brother could not sleep because he felt guilty that they had divided the harvest equally. Afterall, he had a wife and children, but who would take care of his brother when he was old? The older brother got up, walked to the field and carried a hundred of his sheaves to his brother's pile.

The same night the younger brother couldn't sleep either because he too felt the equal split was not right. Afterall his brother had to feed an entire family, not just one and so he got up too and in the darkness placed a hundred of his sheaves by his brother's pile.

Then in the morning, both were surprised because they each still had the same number of sheaves. That night, both rose again and repeated their work of the previous night. But again, next day both wondered what was going on. They decided that night to move their sheaves a third time and then to hide in the field and watch. That was when the brothers met in the field, each with their arms full of sheaves and each on their way to the other brother's sheaves.

The brothers embraced each other and wept.
And upstairs God smiled.

While we can't embrace each other at the moment, let's to make our actions count as we thank all of who still we depend on even during these unusual times. Remember too when Jesus highlighted a commandment from the Old testament book of Leviticus.

Love your neighbour as yourself, he said.

Let us pray

Loving God

Your son Jesus Christ fed the hungry

With the bread of life and the word of his kingdom.

Renew us, your people with your heavenly grace at this unusual time when we must keep our distance from others.

Sustain us by the true and living bread

Jesus Christ your son, who helps us to appreciate when our lives maintain your god given balance and showers us with his special presence and reassurance.

And now to God the Father,

God the Son

And God the Holy Spirit

Be glory and honour

As it was in the beginning

Is now and ever shall be.

WORLD WITHOUT END.

Amen

A prayer for ourselves and others written by Melanie.

Let us pray

Almighty God

You are above all others and we know you are in control of all things. Help us to know this assurance in our hearts and minds at this very troubled time. Thank you for the blessings you pour out on us now and in the days, weeks and months ahead.

Lord, we come before you now, gathered not in our own Church building but in our own homes, but still we gather, as we always do, a Church family. We pray now for all the members of our Church, our friends and neighbours, those we sit beside weekly when we come to Church, or those we see at the men's group or guild, Tom toms or playgroup. At this very strange and quite scary time Lord hold us in your loving arms.

We pray for our community, the beautiful place in which we live where we have seen such kindness shown and goodness come from so many at this time.

We pray for all the families who are suddenly brought together 24 hours a day, we know this is hard but it's also a comfort to have those you love around you. We pray for everyone who is truly isolated and going through this alone. We are all missing our loved ones, help us Lord to reach out and keep in touch with each other to show we care, some of us can do this in so many ways with a card, a phone call, by contacting friends on social media, we know we are so lucky, be with those for whom this is not possible.

We pray for those who are vulnerable, I think we all feel that way just now and we know Lord you are with us all, we pray for the elderly, the sick, those who are homeless. We pray for those who serve – the carers, key workers, everyone in the NHS, people who are risking their own lives to save others. Guide them and protect them Lord, be with them at every moment of every day.

We pray for those who are struggling financially and find themselves in a time of crisis, we pray that your love will continue be shown as people reach out and offer help to others. Lord be with all who are in need and be with us as we try to step up and do what we can to help.

We pray you may impart your wisdom on the leaders of our country and the world, may their decisions and actions be guided by you.

Out of this darkness, your light will always shine, help us to be your light. Help us to follow your greatest commandment to love the lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind and to love our neighbour as our self.

Let us join our voices together as we share in the words you taught us to say –

Our Father, in heaven,

Hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

and forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil,

for the kingdom, the power and the glory, are yours,

now and forever. Amen.

A closing thought

Sitting before Jesus during anxious times

Luke 12: '*Life is not defined by what you have.*' (v15 The Message)

Lord, I realise that I need to be wholehearted in my life of faith. Give me the courage to look honestly at my life and be willing to face up to the 'gods' that preoccupy me. Do I really desire You, Lord, with all my heart? If not, give me grace to desire You and to see You as my dearly Beloved, who alone can satisfy my deep inner needs.

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(Aileen Ross)