

18<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Hymn SoF 32 At the name of Jesus

The minister greets the people.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

### Sentence

You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8.9

### THANKSGIVING.

Gracious God, we humbly thank you for life and health and safety,  
for freedom to work, leisure to rest, and for all that is beautiful in creation and human life.  
But, above all, we praise you for our Saviour, Jesus Christ, for his death and resurrection;  
for the gift of your Spirit; and for the hope of sharing in your glory.  
Fill our hearts with all joy and peace in believing; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Prayer of the Day

O God, you are rich in love for your people:  
show us the treasure that endures and, when we are tempted by greed, call us back into your service  
and make us worthy to be entrusted with the wealth that never fails.  
We ask this through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### Jeremiah 8.18-9.1

**8**<sup>18</sup> You who are my Comforter in sorrow, my heart is faint within me. <sup>19</sup> Listen to the cry of my people from a land far away: 'Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her King no longer there?' 'Why have they aroused my anger with their images, with their worthless foreign idols?' <sup>20</sup> 'The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we are not saved.' <sup>21</sup> Since my people are crushed, I am crushed; I mourn, and horror grips me. <sup>22</sup> Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people? **9**<sup>1</sup> Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people.

### Psalm 79.1-9

<sup>1</sup> O God, the heathen have come into your land: they have defiled your holy temple,  
they have made Jerusalem a heap of stones.  
<sup>2</sup> They have given the dead bodies of your servants as food to the birds of the air:  
and the flesh of your faithful ones to the wild beasts of the earth.  
<sup>3</sup> Their blood they have spilt like water on every side of Jerusalem: and there is none to bury them.  
<sup>4</sup> We have become a mockery to our neighbours: the scorn and laughing stock of those about us.  
<sup>5</sup> How long, O Lord, shall your anger be so extreme: will your jealous fury burn like fire?  
<sup>6</sup> Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not know you:  
on the kingdoms that have not called upon your name.  
<sup>7</sup> For they have devoured Jacob: and made his dwelling-place a desolation.  
<sup>8</sup> Do not remember against us the sin of former times: but let your compassion hasten to meet us, for we are brought very low.  
<sup>9</sup> Help us, O God our saviour, for the honour of your name: O deliver us and expiate our sins, for your name's sake.

## 1 Timothy 2.1-10

<sup>1</sup> I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – <sup>2</sup> for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, <sup>4</sup> who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. <sup>7</sup> And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle – I am telling the truth, I am not lying – and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles. <sup>8</sup> Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. <sup>9</sup> I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, <sup>10</sup> but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

## Luke 16.1-13

<sup>1</sup> Jesus told his disciples: ‘There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. <sup>2</sup> So he called him in and asked him, “What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.” <sup>3</sup> ‘The manager said to himself, “What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig, and I’m ashamed to beg – <sup>4</sup> I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.” <sup>5</sup> ‘So he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, “How much do you owe my master?” <sup>6</sup> ““Three thousand litres of olive oil,” he replied. ‘The manager told him, “Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifteen hundred.” <sup>7</sup> ‘Then he asked the second, “And how much do you owe?” ““Thirty tons of wheat,” he replied. ‘He told him, “Take your bill and make it twenty-four.” <sup>8</sup> ‘The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. <sup>9</sup> I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. <sup>10</sup> ‘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. <sup>11</sup> So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? <sup>12</sup> And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own? <sup>13</sup> ‘No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.’

Sermon

**Affirmation of Faith.**

**We believe in one God, who made and loves all that is. We believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was born, lived, died and rose again, and is coming to call all to account.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, who calls, equips and sends out God’s people, and brings all things to their true end.**

This is our faith, the faith of the Church:

**We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**CONFESSION OF SIN**

The following Confession may be introduced.

‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says the Lord. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson they shall be like wool.’ Isaiah 1.18

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Let us now confess our sins to almighty God.

Heavenly Father, you have loved us with an everlasting love, but we have broken your holy laws and have left undone what we ought to have done.

We are sorry for our sins and turn away from them.

For the sake of your Son who died for us, forgive us, cleanse us and change us.  
By your Holy Spirit, enable us to live for you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God desires that none should perish, but that all should turn to Christ, and live.  
In response to his call we acknowledge our sins. God pardons those who humbly repent,  
and truly believe the gospel. Therefore we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Christ died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Romans 6.10–11

Hymn TIS 447 Lord, your Almighty Word

#### THE MINISTRY OF PRAYER

**Let us pray for the world and for the church.**

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.

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

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Notices

#### THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Loving God, we thank you for hearing our prayers,  
feeding us with your word,  
and encouraging us in our meeting together.

Take us and use us to love and serve you and all people,  
in the power of your Spirit and in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

hymn SoF 156 Have Thine own way

blessing.

May the God of peace equip you with everything good for doing his will, working in you what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**



### Parable of the shrewd manager.

This parable was directed at Jesus' disciples. According to one commentary I read, this story is notoriously difficult to understand because of apparent double standards.

But I think the moral of the parable is "better late than never" & God is always ready to forgive our foolish ways if we resolve to improve our ways !

This lesson comes within the context of Jesus' teaching about relationship with God & the proper use of our wealth and our blessings or gifts.

The wealthy landowner is painted as a merciful man who removed his dishonest estate manager from employment, but did not send him to jail.

Knowing he was guilty & would not find further employment, the manager devised a plan to ingratiate himself to other wealthy men, so that he would be provided for in the future.

These business associates had significant debts to his master, which were not due for payment until after the harvest.

The manager hastily called them in one by one and reduced their interest by a large percentage.

Not knowing his current situation, the debtors rewrote their bills and were grateful to the landowner for his supposed generosity..

The master's debtors interpreted their good fortune as a substantial act of mercy & kindness.

***The masters gracious praise of the dishonest manager hits us as a totally unexpected ending.***

What was he praising? Dishonesty? Wasting his masters possessions?  
Or that he wisely used wealth and the opportunities of daily life to ensure his future security?

Wealth has its dangers, and Jesus calls **us** his followers to use it wisely for eternal benefit.

Integrity in the use of earthly resources is an indicator of integrity in our relationship with God & others.

We can see all too clearly the results of our indiscriminate use of our natural resources & as a result we are now fighting the devastating effects of world-wide climate change.

Another example is our inertia about sharing & witnessing of our faith in God.  
Hence the decline in Christianity in our community.

But this parable is about the wise use of our God given blessings - particularly focussing on our use or mis-use of our wealth.

Money is not our possession. It is a trust from God to be used faithfully for him & to bring blessing to others.

Wise use of wealth and the opportunities for God's kingdom is a mark of authentic discipleship.

Note: Nothing that is from God is obtainable by money. Do you agree? What difference might this understanding make to your life?

How do we use our gifts & blessings from God?

There is a level of application here that comes to each of us in the management of that which God has placed in our hands, whatever that is.

There is the deposit of faith, which is both a privilege and a responsibility, and there may also be gifts, material possessions & opportunities that have been given to us to manage for God's glory, representing Him to his world.

If we can handle what we have - we may be given more.(remember the parable of the Talents)

How many of us have watched on our TVs the devastation of the floods in Pakistan these past weeks?

We can hardly imagine the devastation & destruction of such an event & even as I speak, as many as the whole population of our country are living in the mud with flies, death & disease all around.

Then we finish our dinner, turn off the TV & go to our comfortable beds.

We are the 'rich' people - how can we make a difference to the families in Pakistan, or Ukraine, or Sudan?

It is not a sin for us to be well off, to be protected from disasters such as we see each night.

**Jesus is putting his finger on what we don't do -What we fail to do, when we close our minds & harden our hearts.**

Remember the story of Lazarus begging on the steps of the rich man's house?

When Lazarus died he was taken to glory.

The rich man - who didn't even notice the beggar- spent his eternity in fire, because he failed to notice the plight of Lazarus.

A sin of omission!

We are urged to 'consider the poor' to take care of those less fortunate, to open our eyes (& our wallets) to the needs of others.

Who did Jesus associate with? Was it not the outcasts, the sick, the needy?

These are the ones who need us - us who have plenty.

Whereas we may consider wealth to be a blessing from God, Jesus insists that money seeks to divorce us from God, & to enslave us.

*Jesus* urges us to use money to help others.

*Money* urges us to spoil ourselves.

If all Christians fully accepted the teachings of Jesus about money, & strived in all honesty to live accordingly, the beneficial impact for poor communities would be phenomenal.

For a start, poverty within the worldwide communities would be eradicated.  
Well over 200 million Christians would be liberated from the daily struggle to survive.

Moreover, the church's capacity to respond to the needs of the poor outside the church would be multiplied beyond recognition, & for countless millions the gospel message of God's love would be powerfully demonstrated.

Only God's Spirit can produce such a reformation - can we be willing to be filled with such a life-giving Spirit?

Or are we far too comfortable & secure in our own bubble to risk reaching out to others.

***“Lord help us to put our trust in you rather than money, & empower us to be extravagantly generous in responding to the needs of others.”***

If you are moved to respond, our church is right now supporting such groups as:

*Bush Church Aid* (think floods, fire & drought),

*Anglicare* (think support for domestic violence victims, homelessness (think high rents & cost of living),

*Smith family* (think supporting education for under-advantaged children) & many overseas organisations.

Right now there is a little girl Nita in Cambodia who is depending on our generosity to enable her to be educated & healthy so she can build a life of quality & opportunity.

The donation box is at the back of the church.....do we even see it?

Do we fail to appreciate the connection between faith, compassion & our eternal destiny?

Let us pray that God will help us not to be blind to the needs of those who are struggling, whether they be on our doorstep or in another part of the world. **Amen**