



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

CHURCH AT HOME

Announcements:

Welcome to Trinity's worship resource for July 31, 2022, celebrating the Eighth Sunday After Pentecost.

Pastor Jack Dressler (519-250-7210) is our interim Pastor. Please contact him for any pastoral needs.

Pastor Jack will be leading the following services:

August 21, September 25, October 9 (Thanksgiving), October 23, November 13, December 11 and potentially December 24

Father Brian Wearne will be leading the following services:

August 14 (communion), August 28 (communion), September 11 (communion), October 2 and October 16

**** Please Contact Dena Peifer if you wish to be a reader or lead a Sunday service ****

Thank you again for your support for Trinity. Please continue to mail in cheques, or drop them off in the church's mailbox or make your donation either through PAR or through the Donate button on the church's website, at "www.trinitylutheran.ca".

Introduction

Today's texts offer instruction and encouragement for all who are occasionally overwhelmed by the "unhappy business" of life. Jesus urges us to take care and be on guard against all kinds of greed. We who have died with Christ in holy baptism have also been raised with him and are encouraged to elevate our thinking, seeking the "things that are above." To that end we seek the sustenance of the Lord's supper and the encouragement of God's word.

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose steadfast love endures forever.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Merciful God, we confess that we have not followed your path but have chosen our own way. Instead of putting others before ourselves, we long to take the best seats at the table. When met by those in need, we have too often passed by on the other side. Set us again on the path of life. Save us from ourselves and free us to love our neighbours. Amen.

Hear the good news! God does not deal with us according to our sins but delights in granting pardon and mercy. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

You are free to love as God loves. **Amen.**

Worship

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all! **And also with you!**

Prayer of the Day

Benevolent God, you are the source, the guide, and the goal of our lives. Teach us to love what is worth loving, to reject what is offensive to you, and to treasure what is precious in your sight, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Alleluia.

First Reading: Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23

The teacher of wisdom who wrote Ecclesiastes sees that working for mere accumulation of wealth turns life into an empty game, a “vanity of vanities.” Nevertheless, he asserts in the next verse, it is good to find enjoyment in one’s work because such enjoyment is a gift from God.

²Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

¹²I, the Teacher, when king over Israel in Jerusalem, ¹³applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to human beings to be busy with. ¹⁴I saw all the deeds that are done under the

sun; and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind.

^{2:18}I hated all my toil in which I had toiled under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to those who come after me ¹⁹—and who knows whether they will be wise or foolish? Yet they will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. ²⁰So I turned and gave my heart up to despair concerning all the toil of my labors under the sun, ²¹because sometimes one who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave all to be enjoyed by another who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. ²²What do mortals get from all the toil and strain with which they toil under the sun? ²³For all their days are full of pain, and their work is a vexation; even at night their minds do not rest. This also is vanity.

Psalm: Psalm 49:1-12

My mouth shall speak of wisdom.

¹Hear this, all you peoples; give ear, all you who dwell in the world,

²**you of high degree and low, rich and poor together.**

³My mouth shall speak of wisdom, and my heart shall meditate on understanding.

⁴**I will incline my ear to a proverb and set forth my riddle upon the harp.**

⁵Why should I be afraid in evil days,

when the wickedness of those at my heels surrounds me,

⁶**the wickedness of those who put their trust in their own prowess,
and boast of their great riches?**

⁷One can never redeem another, or give to God the ransom for another's life;

⁸**for the ransom of a life is so great that there would never be enough to pay it,**

⁹in order to live forever and ever and never see the grave.

¹⁰**For we see that the wise die also; like the dull and stupid they perish
and leave their wealth to those who come after them.**

¹¹Their graves shall be their homes forever, their dwelling places from generation to generation, though they had named lands after themselves.

¹²**Even though honored, they cannot live forever;
they are like the beasts that perish.**

Second Reading: Colossians 3:1-11

Life in Christ includes a radical reorientation of our values. Just as the newly baptized shed their old clothes and put on new garments, so Christians are called to let go of greed and take hold of a life shaped by God's love in Christ.

¹So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, ³for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). ⁶On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. ⁷These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. ⁸But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices ¹⁰and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. ¹¹In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

Gospel Reading: Luke 12:13-21

In God's reign, the "rich will be sent away empty." Jesus uses a parable to warn against identifying the worth of one's life with the value of one's possessions rather than one's relationship with God.

¹³Someone in the crowd said to [Jesus,] "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." ¹⁴But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" ¹⁵And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." ¹⁶Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. ¹⁷And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' ¹⁸Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' ²⁰But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' ²¹So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

The gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon: Rich Toward God (preached by Father Brian Wearne at Trinity on July 31, 2022)

In the name of the true and living God: † Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

As Jesus walked the Road to Jerusalem and His Cross, He taught His followers many lessons that we do well to hear. In today's exchange with the brothers from the crowd and His Parable of The Rich Fool, Jesus teaches us a lesson on life's very meaning. "Take heed and beware of covetousness", take heed and beware of enviously desiring material possessions, "for one's life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses".

The man from the crowd asked Jesus to tell his brother to divide the inheritance with him. Clearly, the family inheritance which was intended to support this family had instead been misused as an instrument of division. It was a tradition for respected rabbis to arbitrate such personal disputes over property or money. But here, Jesus refuses to play the role of judge regarding material things, and contrarily issues a stern warning about covetousness. We may take care to notice that Jesus does not say this man should not have his share of the inheritance.

What He does say is that there are more important things in life than money or possessions. Things like relationships between brothers. "Beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses". As He begins His parable of The Rich Fool, Jesus is now addressing the entire crowd on the very nature of life. For greed seeks worldly things, which must not be equated with true living. Material possessions become a substitute for the proper object of a person's search in life. And we all know what the proper object of a person's lifelong search is. Don't we? The proper object is God, and therefore "covetousness is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5).

Thus we hear about The Rich Fool whose ground yielded plentifully. Perhaps you noticed his response. Did he thank God, "through whom all things were made" (John 1:3)? Listen again to his response. "He thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops? I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry". Perhaps you noticed that after The Rich Fool has a banner year, his entire response is a repetition of "I" and "my". Indeed, we would expect this man to be pleased with himself for the fruit of his hard work.

But not only did he fail to thank God for such a blessing. Jesus says "He thought within himself' with his egotistical concerns that included neither God nor his neighbour. As many do today, this man actually believed that he only had himself to thank for his material success in life. And as he eagerly planned to live the dissipated life of taking it easy so he could "eat, drink and be merry", he vainly placed his trust in his possessions rather

than in God. Thus God calls this rich man a fool, despite his material success that would likely prompt many today to call him a role model.

Christ's parable takes a solemn turn as this man is judged by God before our eyes. In fact, the death of every one of us as a time of reckoning is in view here, and apparently, this man is judged unworthy of God's Kingdom with very few words. "Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?" Jesus adds "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God". The million-dollar question becomes "How can I be rich toward God"? "What is life all about, if not the abundance of things we possess?" Well, perhaps you noticed that we have already uncovered part of the answer. If The Rich Fool had not been so selfish; if he had simply acknowledged God and thanked God for the blessing of great crops, he would not have lost his soul.

In this sense, to be rich toward God is to live a life in relationship with Him through faith. Yet there was also another element lacking in The Rich Fool. As he was being condemned, God said "This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?" For The Rich Fool selfishly intended to keep all his "crops and goods" for himself. Jesus had recently taught others to "give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you" (Luke 11 :41), meaning that deeds of love toward people, such as giving alms, help to purify us and make us clean before God. This man should have known that he was in a position to perform works of mercy to help the poor.

Throughout The Holy Bible, God's People are called to help those less than themselves. In this sense, to be rich toward God is to live a .with others through works.

Taken together, we can easily see how The Rich Fool broke The Great Commandment "to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself". We can also easily see how we can be rich toward God – how we can find meaning in life by acknowledging God and by mercifully giving to the needy. But sometimes we stumble, don't we?

Sometimes we get so swept away by the materialistic culture around us that fails to acknowledge God, that we forget the grave warning Jesus gives us all to "Beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of things we possess".

Thankfully, St. Paul has some words of advice that have enabled Christians throughout the ages to remain faithful to God and our neighbours. St. Paul equates covetousness with idolatry, meaning it is possible to be so attached to material things that they take God's place in our lives. So he urges us to cast off things like covetousness, mis-

placed anger, blasphemy, filthy language out of our mouths, and dishonesty. We can do this through asceticism. From the Greek word askesis which we translate as "athlete", we practice asceticism when we ask God for help to fight temptation to sin through a life of prayer and self-denial, in order to grow in spiritual strength. Such a life reminds us that the poor and needy go without what we voluntarily sacrifice through no choice of their own, and moves us to help them. As baptized Christians, we become in practice what we already are in spirit. As we died with Christ, so we must be willing to experience death daily by 'tilling' old sinful and disintegrating passions. This is one way we can be rich toward God.

Closely connected to this is St. Paul's encouragement to "set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory". What St. Paul is encouraging us to practice is what the Church calls mysticism. As Christians, we have received Christ's exalted resurrected life in Baptism, yet we need to - continue our relationship with Him in order to experience salvation at the resurrection of the dead. By wilfully setting our minds on things above where Christ is, we are not practicing escapism as such, but praying to God in continuous, mystical prayer that will ensure we do not fail to acknowledge His role in blessing us with all that we have in this life.

The spiritual disciplines of asceticism and mysticism demonstrate that Christ's warning to 'take heed and beware of covetousness' is as attainable for us today as when He first uttered it. For it is impossible to follow Jesus, and yet believe that life's meaning is derived from the abundance of things we possess. As Christians, we find life's meaning through relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, who demands that we respond with acts of mercy towards the poor and needy. In this way we are able to be Rich Toward God.

And now to ☩ God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be all might, majesty, dominion and honour, this day and forevermore. Amen.

Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

The Prayers of Intercession

Trusting in God's extraordinary love, let us come near to the Holy One in prayer.

O God, you are wholeness. Where there is division in your church, bring reconciliation and healing. Guide the work of theologians, Sunday school teachers, seminary profes-

sors, and all who provide instruction for the building up of your church. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God, you are the source of all life. Where creation cries out in distress, bring relief and renewal. Bless farmers, ranchers, distributors, and all who provide our food. Nourish the land and all its habitants. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God, you are wisdom. Where nations and communities yearn for peace, bring justice. Strengthen those who toil for the welfare of others, especially military personnel, police, first responders, and activists, and for the healing of the nations. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God, you are life. Where your people are overwhelmed with the busy-ness of life, bring encouragement. Accompany all who experience emotional, mental, or physical distress. Renew us at your table of mercy. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God, you are our treasure. Where scarcity and anxiety pervade your church, bring abundance and vitality. Guide the work of church councils and committees and give them clarity for the work of ministry in this place. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of presence, bless those of this community who cannot be with us this morning, and those who walk with them, especially:

In Residence: Margaret; Maria; Stan; Katie; Katherine; Cordelle; Dorothy

Needing our prayers: Ed; Pastor Mike & Patti, Donna; Sharon B; Jeffrey; Art

Friends of our Members Needing our prayers: Audrey; Greg; Paul; Hilda; Mary; Anna

...and all members who may have needs unknown to us

And all those we name in our hearts...

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

O God, you are resurrection. We give you thanks for all your saints. Inspire us by their example of faithful living to set our minds on things above and to be rich in love toward you. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your children, merciful God, and hold us forever in your steadfast love; through Jesus Christ, our holy Wisdom. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

The God of peace, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you, comfort you, and show you the path of life this day and always. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. Love your neighbor. **Thanks be to God.**