

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity YEAR C August 4, 2013

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

Hosea 11:1-11: Judgement is prophesied for Israel because of the people's idolatry and unfaithfulness, but God's compassion and love for God's people makes judgement difficult for God, and so restoration is also promised.

OR **Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23**: The teacher laments that everything is meaningless, and reflects on the futility of working hard to accumulate wealth that will ultimately be inherited by others, who may or may not use it wisely.

Psalms 107:1-9, 43: Praise for God's unfailing love, and God's salvation of God's people when in distress. The history of God's people reveals God's faithful love.

OR **Psalms 49:1-12**: Not even the wealthy can save themselves from death or buy their way into eternal life. Therefore, there is no reason to fear those who trust in their wealth.

Colossians 3:1-11: Because of Christ's life in us, we are called to prioritise the values of heaven over the values of earth, and to avoid the greed and lust that of "earth-bound" existence. Rather, recognising that we are all the same in Christ, we are to find our life in Christ, and seek to become like our God.

Luke 12:13-21: In warning against greed, Jesus tells a parable of a wealthy man who feels secure because of his great riches, but whose wealth becomes meaningless when he dies. Then Christ challenges us to seek a rich relationship with God instead of material riches.

Readings at:

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Hosea%2011:%201-11%0Acw%20Psalms%20107:%201-9,%2043%0AColossians%203:%201-11%0ALuke%2012:%2013-21

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

Let thy merciful ears, O Lord,
be open to the prayers of thy humble servants;
and that they may obtain their petitions,
make them to ask such things as shall please thee;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect Two

Let your merciful ears, O Lord,
be open to the prayers of your humble servants;
and that they may obtain their petitions,
make them to ask such things as shall please you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Presider or deacon

Let us offer prayers to God, who knows the needs of every living creature.

Deacon or other leader

For N our bishop and N
our presbyter, for this holy gathering, and for the people of God in every place.
Lord, have mercy.

For the leaders of the nations, and for mercy, justice, and peace in the world.
Lord, have mercy.

For farmers and a good harvest, for travelers and those on vacation, and for safety from
violent storms.
Lord, have mercy.

For all those in danger and need: the sick and the suffering, prisoners, captives, and their
families, the hungry, homeless, and oppressed.
Lord, have mercy.

For the dying and the dead.
Lord, have mercy.

For ourselves, our families and companions, and all those we love.
Lord, have mercy.

Lifting our voices with all creation, with Saint _____ and all the saints, let us
offer ourselves and one another
to the living God through Christ.
To you, O Lord.

Presider

All-knowing God, God of Wisdom, hear our prayers for all whose days are full of pain
and give us rest from toil; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

POST COMMUNION

O God,
as we are strengthened by these holy mysteries,
so may our lives be a continual offering,
holy and acceptable in your sight;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands that have taken holy things; may the ears which
have heard your word be deaf to clamour and dispute; may the tongues which have sung
your praise be free from deceit; may the eyes which have seen the tokens of your love

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shine with the light of hope; and may the bodies which have been fed with your body be refreshed with the fullness of your life; glory to you for ever. Amen.

Holy Father, who gathered us here around the table of your Son to share this meal with the whole household of God: in that new world where you reveal the fullness of your peace, gather people of every race and language to share in the eternal banquet of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We praise and thank you, O Christ, for this sacred feast: for here we receive you, here the memory of your passion is renewed, here our minds are filled with grace, and here a pledge of future glory is given, when we shall feast at that table where you reign with all your saints for ever. Amen.

PRAYERS

God of justice,
your word is light and truth.
Let your face shine on us to restore us,
that we may walk in your way,
seeking justice and doing good. Amen.

Friends in Christ,
God invites us to hold the needs of our sisters and brothers
as dear to us as our own needs.
Loving our neighbours as ourselves,
we offer our thanksgivings and our petitions
on behalf of the church and the world.
Hear our prayers, God of power,
and through the ministry of your Son
free us from the grip of the tomb,
that we may desire you as the fullness of life
and proclaim your saving deeds to all the world. Amen.

As you heard the prayer of Isaac and Rebekah, O God,
and guided them in the way of your love,
so listen now to those who call upon you.
Move us to praise your gracious will,
for in Christ Jesus you have saved us from the deeds of death
and opened for us the hidden ways of your love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord God, friend of those in need,
your Son Jesus has untied our burdens
and healed our spirits.
We lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still burdened,
those seeking healing,
those in need within the church and the world.
Hear our prayers
that we may love you with our whole being
and willingly share the concerns of our neighbours. Amen.

Creator God,
you call us to love and serve you
with body, mind, and spirit
through loving your creation
and our sisters and brothers.
Open our hearts in compassion
and receive these petitions
on behalf of the needs of the church and the world.
Holy One,
hear our prayers and make us faithful stewards
of the fragile bounty of this earth
so that we may be entrusted with the riches of heaven. Amen.

We praise your abiding guidance, O God,
for you sent us Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah,
to model for us the way of love for the whole universe.
We offer these prayers of love
on behalf of ourselves and our neighbours,
on behalf of your creation and our fellow creatures.
Loving God,
open our ears to hear your word
and draw us closer to you,
that the whole world may be one with you
as you are one with us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of mercy and healing,
you who hear the cries of those in need,
receive these petitions of your people
that all who are troubled
may know peace, comfort, and courage.
Life-giving God,
heal our lives,
that we may acknowledge your wonderful deeds
and offer you thanks from generation to generation
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of salvation,
who sent your Son to seek out and save what is lost,
hear our prayers
on behalf of those who are lost in our day,
receiving these petitions and thanksgivings
with your unending compassion.
Redeeming Sustainer,
visit your people
and pour out your strength and courage upon us,
that we may hurry to make you welcome
not only in our concern for others,
but by serving them
generously and faithfully in your name. Amen.

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Generous God,
in abundance you give us things both spiritual and physical.
Help us to hold lightly the fading things of this earth
and grasp tightly the lasting things of your kingdom,
so that what we are and do and say
may be our gifts to you
through Christ, who beckons all to seek the things above,
where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Generous Giver,
you pour forth your extravagant bounty without measure
upon your whole creation.
Teach us such generosity,
that the fruits of our spirits
and the works of our hands may be used
for the building of your commonwealth of blessing. Amen.

Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church: open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; 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. *Common Worship*

Gracious father, revive your Church in our day, and make her holy, strong and faithful, for your glory's sake in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Common Worship Shorter Collect.*

Almighty God, your Son has opened for us a new and living way into your presence. Give us new hearts and constant wills to worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

Lord and giver of life, you alone nourish and sustain your people, through Christ, the bread of life. Feed our hunger and quench our thirst, that we may no longer work for that which fails to satisfy, but do what you require, in obedience and faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

O God, the King of Righteousness, lead us we pray, in the way of justice and of peace. Inspire us to break down all oppression and wrong, to gain for everyone their reward, and from every one their due service; that each may live for all, and all may care for each, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our needs before we ask, and our ignorance in our asking; have compassion on our weakness, and give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask, for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Lord, Jesus Christ, let me seek you by desiring you, and let me desire you by seeking you. Let me find you by loving you, and love you in finding you. Amen. *St Anselm*

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

Foolish Self-Sufficiency

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14, 2:18-23; Psalm 49:1-12; Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21

These texts concern the foolish destructiveness of self-sufficiency. Luke's parable portrays a "fool" who is a great accumulator and who imagines that his vast possessiveness adds to his well-being. In the end a) he talks only to himself in his isolation, and b) his self-preoccupation is interrupted by death.

The parable expositors Psalm 49, a meditation on the futility of a self-aggrandizing life. The culminating verse 12 (repeated as a refrain in verse 20), recognizes that life has boundaries that cannot be outflanked by wealth, power, or wisdom. True wisdom (see verse 3) is to live in the limits of life given by God.

Colossians echoes the same conviction with the telling phrase, "greed which is idolatry" (3:5). Greed is a way of worshipping wrong gods. Colossians, however, goes further. It not only warns against such self-destructiveness, but commends a "new self"—the one baptized into Christ, who centers life not on self, but on "compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and forgiveness" (verses 12-13). There is a genuine alternative!

This teaching is urgent in our society. Not only because of the perennial seduction of greed, but because we live in a society of bad tax law, bad credit arrangements, and bad advertising, all of which seek to make greed into a civic virtue. We know better! We may choose against such foolishness for a life of neighborliness. **Walter Brueggemann**,

LECTIONARY NOTES 2

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

The theme of this week's readings is not hard to discern – all of the readings contrast a life of dependence on wealth with the life of dependence on God. The teacher in Ecclesiastes, the Psalmist in Psalm 49, the Apostle in Colossians and Jesus all warn against greed and speak about the danger of making wealth our goal and our security. In Hosea and in Psalm 107, God's salvation and care is promised, even when God's people have needed to be disciplined and corrected. When it comes to making our way in the world, the quest for money too easily becomes an end in itself, and will ultimately lead us into destruction, and to bringing suffering on ourselves and others. However, when life is found in our relationship with God, and in basing our lives on the values of God's reign, we bring life and joy to ourselves and others, and our lives have eternal value. Ultimately, we all need to choose the priorities by which we will live.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: So much of the suffering and injustice in our world can be traced to the quest for money and to the greed of certain individuals or groups. The ongoing pain from the global economic crisis, the ecological challenges posed by our dependence on fossil fuels, the war and violence which arises between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' (so often justified as a "protection of interests"), the debates around health care, immigration and climate change – all have strong, albeit often hidden, financial agendas intertwined within the other issues. The challenge is to recognise the powerful, and often destructive, role that money plays in global affairs, and to challenge our world

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leaders, our business leaders and ourselves to embrace a financial ethic of sharing and giving, over accumulating and 'protecting'. Ultimately, in a world where economic performance is measured quarterly, it will be difficult to begin to embrace an eternal view of wealth, but if the voices of Christ-followers remain silent on this difficult, prophetic, Gospel call, all hope of a more just and equitable world is lost. In what ways can you make your voice heard a little more clearly?

LOCAL APPLICATION: The way we view, earn and use money in our churches, families and individual lives, is a window into how we understand and live the Gospel. Too often there is little difference between the economic values of the "world" and those of the "Church". Too often we spend (or hoard) money selfishly, and measure success by the accumulation of wealth – somehow falling into the trap of seeing wealth as a sign of God's blessing – while ministry to the poor, the marginalised and the vulnerable is left undone or poorly resourced. Apart from sexuality, perhaps, money is the issue that we deal with least helpfully and honestly in the church, and yet it is a primary issue in the Scriptures. Dependence on God sounds like a quaint, outdated and unrealistic way of living in today's wealth-focussed world. Simplicity is all too often equated with stupidity and a "sour-grapes" attitude. The imbalance between the rich and the poor, and the unequal way that the world's resources are shared and used, are all justified – often with biblical support. But, if we will allow the Gospel to challenge us and change us, we will find our hands opening, our trust moving from wealth to God, and our lives shifting from accumulation and protection, to sharing and giving. In what ways are these shifts happening in your community?

SERMON OUTLINE

Luke 12:13-21 Someone in the crowd said to him

The Parable of the Rich Fool – parable told by Jesus in response to a query about inheritance.. Rabbis opinions were often sought on such matters – as laid down in Deuteronomy. Whatever the problem was, it created an opportunity for Jesus to tell a memorable story/parable...

1. The Greed which Jesus condemned: *'Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.'* - as so many have discovered

2. The Ground which bore good crops:- *'The land of a rich man produced abundantly – he had worked long & hard & was a successful farmer – how could he be described as a fool?*

3. The Grain which he harvested – > a major problem

a) barns which he would pull down – no longer adequate...

b) buildings he would erect - *build larger ones - there I will store all my grain and my goods* – made good business sense – *I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry*" - but he left out 1 major consideration – that he may not be around long enough to enjoy his new-found prosperity > *"You fool!"*

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4. The Grief which would befall the farmstead:- He felt secure with his wealth – but is challenged by God:- *This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?"*

In the punchline to the parable Jesus challenges us too - *So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.'*

By Norman Porteous

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

- "Hosea and Gomer," sermon discussion from Frederick Buechner, Frederick Buechner Blog.
- <http://frederickbuechner.com/content/weekly-sermon-illustration-hosea-and-gomer>
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- "On Securing the Soul," Mary Hinkle Shore, *Pilgrim Preaching*
- http://maryhinkle.typepad.com/pilgrim_preaching/2010/07/on-securing-the-soul.html
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- "The Rich Fool," Alyce McKenzie, *Patheos*
- <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/faithforward/2010/07/the-rich-fool-lectionary-reflection-on-luke-1213-21-for-august-1-2010/>
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- "Broken Hearted God," the Rev. Mimi Walker, *Day 1*
- http://day1.org/2108-broken_hearted_god
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- "This Very Day, Our Lives Are Being Demanded," Catherine A. Caimano, *Faith and Leadership*, 2007.
- <http://www.faithandleadership.com/sermons/catherine-caimano-very-day-our-lives-are-being-demanded>
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- "Then How Do We Live?" the Rev. Dr. Sam Matthews, *Day 1*
- http://day1.org/1054-then_how_do_we_live

CHILDREN

Church of Scotland - Children's address and other resources for this sunday

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/15620/4_august_2013.pdf