

Welcome and call to worship
CH4 152 Praise the Lord, his glories show
Prayers of adoration and confession and Lord's Prayer
First Address...Get rid of the clutter!
CH4 506 All I once held dear
OT Reading: Hosea 11:1-11
CH4 557 O Love that wilt not let me go
Gospel Reading: Luke 12:13-21
Sermon
Offering
CH4 721 We lay our broken world
Prayers of Intercession
MP 1008 The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want.
Blessing

Prayer1

Let us pray: Awesome and most-loving God...
 Ever faithful and ever true.
We come today to give you thanks
And to proclaim your greatness.

We come to sing your praises...
And to receive your grace.

BUT...Lord...
So many things in this world frighten us...
We are disturbed both by the natural disasters and man-made evil...
That destroy the peace and harmony...
You wish for us.

In our hearts...there are even deeper fears and discomfort...
Which can make us afraid of life itself...
And unsure of our own worth.

Loving Lord Jesus...
Who won the victory over evil on the Cross...
Help us to grasp what this means...
In the context of these troubled days.

Help us to know in our hearts...
The greatness of your unfathomable love...
Deeper than our deepest fears...
Surer than death.

But...we confess that our fears sap our courage and our strength...
and
we steer away from the hard demands of love.

Father, forgive us...
And fill us with your Holy Spirit...
So that we may journey through our lives with confidence...
In the company of Our Lord Jesus Christ...
Who taught us when we pray to say... OUR FATHER

Prayer before SERMON

Let us pray: Loving God...
Turn our eyes upon Jesus...
Help us to focus only on Him...
So that the things of the world may grow strangely dim...
In the light of His glory and grace. AMEN.

SERMON

I would like to turn Jesus' Parable on its head...
Imagine Jesus said to the man who had asked him...

to arbitrate with his brother over their inheritance...

“It’s not my job to do that...
And besides life is about much more...
than the money and possessions you have.”

And then Jesus goes on to say:
“There once was a rich man, who owned a very fertile piece of land...
If he planted wheat...it grew and grew...
If he planted rice it grew too.

Whatever he planted it really grew...
The land provided far more than he and his family needed.

“What am I going to do?” the rich man wondered...
“I have run out of places to store all the crops I have grown.”

Then he said: “I know what to do!
There are plenty of people in the village who could benefit from this
food,
I will share my crops out with them.
Then I will be able to fit in what I need in my stores,
And will not have to build bigger one.”

Then after he had shared out his crops...
And all were satisfied...
God came to him and said...
“Well done my good and faithful servant...
You have been faithful in this life...
You have helped others...and by doing so have helped me...
I will give you an important role and responsibility in my Kingdom...
which I am building here on earth....
My upside down Kingdom...
where mercy and justice will reign...
rather than power and greed”

I think that would be a far nicer story...

But Jesus knows us only too well...

That we are not always like that..

That we all have difficulty being generous to others...

As...certainly in the West...

we tend to be thirsty for material possessions, power and prestige...

For ourselves...and our families...

So that we can get on in life.

So Jesus uses this parable to teach about the futility...

of hoarding possessions on earth...

for...as the saying goes..."You cannot take it with you."

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We do see such greed in the world...

And I am sure it is the source of a lot of the world's problems.

Greed for the world's precious resources...

For example.... precious metals, stones and minerals...

Led to colonisation of the world.

And...when we British left these countries...

The plundering often still continues...

With the rich becoming richer...and the poor becoming poorer...

And with different countries plundering their precious resources.

This kind of situation is a fertile ground for revolution.

In addition to this...

Climate change has been a further consequence of that greed.

All this greed has left its legacy...

in the problems of the world we see today...

poverty, drought, flood, war, unrest and terrorism.

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In Matthew's Gospel...

When Jesus teaches on the same theme in the Sermon on the Mount...

He says:
“Do not store up for yourselves treasure on earth...
Where moth and rust destroy...
And where thieves break in and steal.

BUT...store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...
Where moth and rust DO NOT destroy...
And where thieves do not break in and steal.
For wherever your treasure is...
There will your heart be.”

Jesus goes on to say that you cannot serve both God and money.

BUT...whatever you do... “You can’t take it with you.”
Jesus is certainly clear about this.

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The Parable today seems so very pertinent...
In this world...where everything seems so uncertain.

When what we see around us...
Does seem almost Apocalyptic.

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Although...I find it difficult to believe that a loving, just God...
Will allow the earth to be destroyed in a cataclysmic way.
From what I understand of the Scriptures...
God...through Jesus...and each one of us...
(If we have taken Jesus into our hearts)...
Is building his Kingdom here on earth...
A Kingdom based on love, justice and mercy.

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Our reading from the prophet Hosea makes this clear...
Although talking about Israel...
It can be read as God’s love for all his people.

It can be paraphrased....with God saying...
“How can I give you up?
How can I hand you over?
How can I destroy you like Sodom and Gomorrah?

My heart is changed within me...
All my compassion is aroused...
I will not carry out my fierce anger.

For I am God...and not man...
The Holy One among you...
I will not come in wrath.”

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God is love...
And He has unconditional love for His people.
He does not wish our harm.
He wants to draw us all into His Kingdom here on earth.

We are all given the responsibility...
of helping to build the Kingdom of God...
By sharing our possessions with those who have less...
Like the rich farmer in my version of the parable.

We need to build up the Kingdom of God....
By sharing the good news of the Gospel of Christ...
With all those in our neighbourhood...
Who have been bypassed by that Gospel.

By reaching out to the stranger...
And giving them welcome.

By reaching out to the vulnerable...
And giving them help.

I reckon that...if nothing else...
Our current times are a wakeup call...
To be true to our Faith...
To reach out to others...
AND...
To pursue these Kingdom values.

May God's Kingdom come on earth...

As it is in heaven. AMEN.

Prayer 2

Let us pray:

Almighty God...

We pray for a church...

more fully aware of what the Christian Good News means...

more eagerly expectant of the gifts it can possess...

more readily aware of its responsibilities to humankind,

and more zealous in its mission.

Guided by the Presbytery Prayer Diary...

We pray for

May all our churches work more closely together...

In our outreach and mission...

To further your Kingdom.

We pray for the Messy Churches in our area...

And all Christian work with families...

That they may bring more families back...

to hear the Gospel message.

May helpers come forward...

to help reap the harvest of souls.

We look for a Church in which we can all play our part...

In fellowship with other Christians...

In proclaiming the unifying, peace-making love of Christ.

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We look for a world...

In which pain, sorrow, and despair...

Will always find compassion, joy and hope.

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Lord, rid our world of selfishness and self-aggrandisement.

We look for a world...
In which the weak will always share the strength of the strong...
In which the old will be supported by the young...
In which the refugee will receive hospitality...
And the hungry will be fed.

We look for a world where wisdom will prevail...
A world free of greed...war...hunger...poverty...and agony!

We look for such a world...and such a church...
In the Name of Jesus Christ...
By whose love and grace...all things are possible...
AMEN.