

Reflection for Trinity 15

Today's gospel reading recounts a story told by Jesus which gives a graphic picture of the afterlife, but I don't think that is the point of it. It seems to me that that is just the background, and uses a folk-view of life after death that was current at the time, in a similar way to our society referring to pearly gates and angels sitting on clouds playing harps.

I think the point is recognizing God's compassionate heart for the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized, and choosing to live our own lives with similar priorities.

In the story, Abraham refers to what we have been taught through 'Moses and the prophets'. Moses stands for the Law, not just the Ten Commandments but also all the other regulations given while the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness. Together they tell of God's concern for the down-trodden and disadvantaged, and for the whole of his creation; for example, debts were to be written off every 7 or 50 years, and crops at the margins of fields were to be left for those without land.

The prophets, such as Isaiah, Ezekiel and all the 'minor' prophets (including Amos), repeatedly remind the people of what the Law has revealed about God, especially in terms of social justice and compassion. In today's Old Testament reading, Amos berates the well-off for living it up while others are in need, much as the unnamed rich man does in Jesus's story. Elsewhere the prophets complain about using false weights and measures to cheat their customers, not paying their workers what they are rightfully due, and denying the poor their rights. Does any of this sound familiar from today's news?

The moral, economic and social choices we make have consequences: not just for people and the world around us, but also for our relationship with God, now and through eternity. Jesus's story suggests that in 'Moses and the prophets' we have already been shown enough of God's nature to make the right choices; and we also have the witness of the life of self-sacrificing love that Jesus himself lived. So let us make sure we choose to live as God's children ourselves.

Ian Totterdell, churchwarden



NEXT SUNDAY 05.10.25 Trinity 16

10.30am in the Church

READINGS: OT Habakkuk 1: 1-4; 2: 1-4

NT 2 Timothy 1: 1-14

GOSPEL Luke 17: 5-10



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St Thomas, Exeter

28th September 2025

Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

10.30am in the Church

Today

Sung Eucharist

Hymn Numbers

242 *Immortal, invisible, God only wise*

39 *As the deer pants for the water*

442 *See ye first the kingdom of God*

252 *Inspired by love and anger*

Tuesday 30th September

7.30pm House Group at Helen's house.

Wednesday 1st October

10am Holy Communion (BCP)

Thursday 2nd October

9.30-11am St Thomas Tots

10.30-12noon Knit & Natter at Jenny Tuckett's house

Friday 3rd October

9.30am Morning Prayer

10am Staff Meeting

Saturday 4th October

1.45pm Liz will be licensed as a Reader (Pioneer) at the Cathedral



Collect

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love: grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service; 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**

Amos 6: 1a, 4-7

Alas for those who are at ease in Zion, and for those who feel secure on Mount Samaria! Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory, and lounge on their couches and eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the stall; who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp, and like David improvise on instruments of music; who drink wine from bowls, and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph! Therefore they shall now be the first to go into exile, and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away.

1 Timothy 6: 6-19

Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains. But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he alone who

has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen. As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

Luke 16: 19-end

‘There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.” But Abraham said, “Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.” He said, “Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house— or I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.” Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.” He said, “No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.” He said to him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.”

Post Communion

Keep, O Lord, your Church, with your perpetual mercy; and, because without you our human frailty cannot but fall, keep us ever by your help from all things hurtful,

and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Notices

This Sunday we welcome Revd Dr Joel Love who is the Diocesan Director of Ordinands to celebrate and preach at our 10.30 service.

Last Sunday **£90 was raised for Hospiscare**. Many thanks to everyone for their kind generosity.

Sunday 28th September The Birdhouse Café in Pines Gardens is having a Community Fundraising Day from 10am—4pm. Liz is walking there after the service if anyone would like to join her.

Saturday 4th October. Liz's special Lay Licensing! All are welcome to attend the licensing service at the Cathedral where Liz, our Pioneer Community Worker, will be officially licensed as a Lay Pioneer. Please be seated by 13.45. Liz will be going for drinks afterwards so please ask her for details if you want to celebrate after the service.

Next Sunday we welcome the Very Revd Andrew Beane, the Archdeacon of Exeter, to celebrate and preach at our 10.30 service.

On Friday 17th October at 6.30pm in St Thomas Methodist Church, Soul of the City Gospel Choir will be giving a concert in aid of Age UK.

Dates for your Diary

Harvest Festival on 12th October (followed by bring & share lunch in the hall)

On Sunday 26th October we will be hosting a multi-cultural All Souls festival in the hall, churchyard and church (after our service). Our own All Saints and All Souls services will be held on Sunday November 2nd.

We will welcome the Methodists to a joint service on Remembrance Sunday (9th November).

Bishop Moira, the new Bishop of Crediton, will celebrate the Eucharist with us on Sunday, 16th November.

We will hold a carol service, jointly with Grace Church, on the evening of Sunday 14th December.

The Bishop of Exeter, the Rt Rev Mike Harrison, will celebrate the Eucharist with us on Sunday, 11th January 2026.