

Reflection for Trinity 7

I sometimes think that readings from Ecclesiastes should come with trigger warnings: 'this passage may diminish your joy and increase feelings of despair'. Over the whole book, the writer contrasts the often-hollow promises of human society with the greater and deeper sense of meaning and satisfaction that comes from knowing and serving God, a positive message; but a snippet like this only gives one side of that. The writer complains that so much of what he has worked at seems to have been done in vain, a 'vanity'.

Actually I think the writer complains too much when he says that others will get the benefit from his effort: many people are rightly pleased that they can hand on the wealth they have accumulated to their children and grandchildren, and many people are helped by money inherited from their parents – money they have not themselves worked for. But the basic point seems sound: accumulation of wealth (and fame, prestige, etc) here on earth is insecure and fleeting.

Jesus makes this point in our gospel reading: 'life does not consist in the abundance of possessions'. In our society today, and in most millennia past, this is a radical proposition; many of the most influential people say that the abundance of possessions is the only thing that matters. But God has a perspective across eternity, and yet also sees each of us as individuals, and so being 'rich towards God' is the most important thing.

What does it mean to be 'rich towards God'? I think it means knowing God, and his love for us, and his will for us – by spending time in prayer, reading his word, and following his commands. But it also means having good relationships with other people, seeing God in them and showing God to them through our lives. One thing absent from both the Ecclesiastes writer and the rich fool in Jesus's story is connection and consideration for others; both come over as 'Billy-No-Mates'.

So let us consider how we, individually and collectively, can become 'rich towards God'.

Ian Totterdell, Churchwarden



NEXT SUNDAY 10.08.25 Trinity 8
10.30am in the Church

READINGS: OT Genesis 15: 1-6
NT Hebrews 11: 1-3, 8-16
GOSPEL Luke 12: 32-40



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St Thomas, Exeter

3rd August 2025

Seventh Sunday after Trinity

10.30am in the Church

Today

Sung Eucharist

Hymn Numbers

351 Now is eternal life

170 God is love, let heaven adore him

464 Take my life, and let it be

Wednesday 6th August

10am Walsingham Mass

Thursday 7th August

9.30—11am St Thomas Tots

10.30-12noon Knit & Natter. See notices

Friday 8th August

9.30am Morning Prayer

10am Staff Meeting

Saturday 9th August

9am Men's Breakfast at the Sawyers



Collect

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: graft in our hearts the love of your name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of your great mercy keep us in the same; 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**

Ecclesiastes 1: 2, 12-14, 2: 18-23

Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. I, the Teacher, when king over Israel in Jerusalem, applied 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. I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun; and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind. 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 —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. So I turned and gave my heart up to despair concerning all the toil of my labours under the sun, because 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. What do mortals get from all the toil and strain with which they toil under the sun? For 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.

Colossians 3: 1-11

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

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

Luke 12: 13-21

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.' But he said to him, 'Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?' And 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.' Then he told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" Then 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. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." But 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?" So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.'

Post Communion

Lord God, whose Son is the true vine and the source of life, ever giving himself that the world may live: may we so receive within ourselves the

power of his death and passion that, in his saving cup, we may share his glory and be made perfect in his love; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

Notices

We are very pleased to welcome back the **Revd Georgina Vye** to preside and preach at our 10.30am service this Sunday. Many of you will remember Georgina as a curate here with Revd Nick Edwards. We thank her for her help during the Vacancy and hope you will catch up with her after the service over refreshments.

Thank you to everyone who contributed and helped at our stall at the Love St Thomas Summer Festival last weekend. It was a great occasion and showed our church to be at the heart of the community.

Knit & Natter From the 24th July we shall be meeting in St Thomas Pleasure Ground every Thursday morning from 10.30 till 12 noon, weather permitting. If it's wet, we shall be in Jess and Jimmy's café (118 Cowick Street). Do join us, or just come to say hello, especially if you aren't a regular at Maple Road.

Sat 16th Aug 11.00 - 12.00 Meet outside church hall entrance for 4th seasonal noticing Nature walk.

Thank you to those people who offered their services for cleaning the church after the call for volunteers last Sunday morning. There are still places available on the cleaning rota and for anyone who is able to help with the occasional arrangement of the flowers.

Advance Notice for your diaries. On **Thursday 11th September** probably starting at 6pm there will be a meeting for the congregation to discuss what qualities we should be looking for in our new Incumbent. The meeting will be led by the Archdeacon of Exeter, the Revd Andrew Beane. This is a very important meeting and we hope that as many people as possible will attend.

