

Reflection for 3rd Sunday before Lent

This Sunday's Gospel is Luke's counterpart to Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, his Sermon on the Plain. It has some of the beatitudes but not all of them. It counters them with woes. The blessings are aimed at the poor and the woes at the rich. But what does this mean?

The poverty is a material poverty and the richness is a material richness, but all is perhaps not as it seems. Is material poverty and suffering really a good place to be? Without clothes or food? The word poor here means someone who is at rock bottom, desperate in a variety of ways. It may be someone who does not know where the next meal will come from, but it also means those who realise they are hungry for God, that life is not worth living without him, they hunger for more than material things. When they put God first they are blessed. The spiritually poor are aware of their shortcomings and humility.

The rich Jesus refers to are those who are self-satisfied and probably materially rich, but they ignore God. They know nothing of his forgiveness and see nothing of his purposes. They think they have everything, but they do not. This includes those who think they are spiritually rich and that their relationship with God is sown up. They lack the humility to be really spiritual; they have too high an opinion of themselves.

The 'rich' are perhaps the real spiritually poor who have no thought for God whilst the 'poor' are those who have the richness of God in their lives.

Phil Baker



Codes for Zoom Evening Prayer

Meeting ID: 834 3213 2524

Passcode: 830031

Telephone numbers: 0203 481 5237,
0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196

NEXT SUNDAY 20.02.22 2nd Sunday before Lent

SERVICES: 10.30am in Church.

READINGS: OT Genesis 2: 4b-9, 15-25
NT Revelation 4:
GOSPEL Luke 8: 22-25



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St Thomas, Exeter

Sunday 13th February 2022

3rd Sunday before Lent

10.30am in Church 5pm Zoom

Apologies if you were unable to access the **Zoom service** last Sunday evening—almost certainly my fault! We will try again this week with the same service sheet but with new codes as on this pewsheet.

Advance warning about Lent—beginning with **Ash Wednesday** on 2nd March. We are preparing a Lent/Holy Week programme. What are you planning on doing or not doing this Lent?

We had a very splendid Eucharist last week, marking 80 years of the Air Cadets and 70 years of HMQs accession. If you want to suggest and volunteer ideas and inspiration for the **Queen's Jubilee** in June, do please speak to me, Ian or Judith.

Monday of this week (14th February) is the feast day of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Patrons of Europe, but more commonly associated with **St. Valentine**, whose reputed martyrdom has been rather lost in modern day celebrations. Lots of love to everybody!



Collect

Almighty God, who alone can bring order to the unruly wills and passions of sinful humanity: give your people grace so to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, among the many changes of this world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; 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**

Jeremiah 17.5–10

Thus says the LORD: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the LORD. They shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. Blessed are those who trust in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit. The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse—who can understand it? I the LORD test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.

1 Corinthians 15.12–20

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in

Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.

Luke 6.17–26

Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them. Then he looked up at his disciples and said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. 'Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. 'Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. 'Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. 'But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. 'Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. 'Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. 'Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

Post Communion

Merciful Father, who gave Jesus Christ to be for us the bread of life, that those who come to him should never hunger: draw us to the Lord in faith and love, that we may eat and drink with him at his table in the kingdom, where he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

NOTICES

For our services in Church, **mask wearing** is not now compulsory but we would still advise it while infection numbers remain high. On most Sundays you can also be seated with some social distancing if you wish. Please don't be embarrassed to be safe. If you are coming to coffee, we also recommend wearing a mask until you are seated in the Hall.

Knit and Natter February 2022 We shall be meeting every Thursday from 10.30 to midday at 19 Maple Road. Details from Jenny on 01392 498725.

House Group. Next Meeting on **Tuesday 22nd February 2022.** New people very welcome!

Flower Team. If anyone would like to join the flower team they would be most welcome. This would involve arranging flowers for various occasions and watering and dismantling them when appropriate. We are looking to form a rota. If you are interested please contact Ian.

Street Pastors are starting their training sessions on 7th March 2022. If anyone is interested in joining the Street Pastors please see the website below.
www.streetpastors.org/locations/exeter

Community Larder The Community Larder is receiving donations on Tuesdays from 10am-12noon. Thanks to everyone for their generosity in 2021. **The Methodists** are looking for car driving volunteers to distribute the donations in the local area on Friday mornings from 11am for an hour or so. If you are interested please contact Julian Albrow, Methodist Minister, or Ian.

