



## The Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2025:** 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Theme for today is “Our relationship with possessions”**

**Prepared by Rev Derek Grimshaw**



### Opening Words

God has brought us together, and we have gathered, the hour is appointed, the time is here, it is a sacred moment, in a lifetime of sacred moments, let us turn aside and focus our attention on God this day.

**Hymn: STF 544 As the deer pants for the water** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBppKZ0eJlQ>

As the deer pants for the water,  
so my soul longs after You.  
You alone are my heart's desire  
and I long to worship You.

*You alone are my strength, my shield,  
To You alone may my spirit yield.  
You alone are my heart's desire  
And I long to worship You.*

I want You more than gold or silver,  
Only You can satisfy.  
You alone are the real joy-giver  
And the apple of my eye.

*You alone are my strength, my shield,  
You're my Friend and you are my brother,  
Even though You are a King.  
I love You more than any other,  
So much more than anything.  
You alone are my strength, my shield,*

### Opening Prayers:

Gracious Saviour, thank you for your unfailing love that pursues us whenever we may wander, for your pure heart that loves and nurtures us through every season and chapter of our lives.

Even though we may wander from you, you remain there, steadfast.

Patiently waiting as we find our way back to you. You are there in our darkest of valleys, our harshest of storms and the calmness at the end of it all. We confess we may have turned away from you and towards more selfish acts.

Help us, gracious God, to turn away from self-centeredness.

That we shall not be quick to anger, blame and act, but will walk with patience and to live with a heart like yours that burns with mercy and compassion not with wrath.

We pray that we can set our hearts on things above and the needs of others, not on earthly desires.

Lead us back to you so that we may live our lives with pure intentions and may we know the true riches of this life we have been blessed with. O Lord, our God, you are our light bringing us out of the darkness, our refuge in this life, Christ our redeemer. **Amen.**

**Hymn StF 720 We turn to you, O God of every nation** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdNDhsBB6no>

We turn to you, O God of every nation,  
giver of good and origin of life;  
your love is at the heart of all creation,  
your hurt is people's pain in war and death.

We turn to you that we may be forgiven  
for crucifying Christ on earth again.  
We know that we have never wholly striven  
to share with all the promise of your reign.

Free every heart from haughty self-reliance,  
our ways of thought inspire with simple grace;  
break down among us barriers of defiance,  
speak to the soul of all the human race.

On all who rise on earth for right relations,  
we pray the light of love from hour to hour.  
Grant wisdom to the leaders of the nations,  
the gift of carefulness to those in power.

Teach us, good Lord, to serve the need of others,  
help us to give and not to count the cost.  
Unite us all to live as sisters, brother,  
defeat our Babel with your Pentecost!

**Reflection:**

A year after moving into the manse in Dereham we are eventually getting around to unpacking those boxes that were put in the garage almost a year ago and have almost been forgotten about. The house clearance programmes on television would claim that if we haven't looked at them for a year, then we don't need them and should just get rid. They may well be right and maybe I should make three piles of our belongings, one for the charity shop, one of stuff that we might reasonably sell or give away using social media, and one for the tip, which seems like a good idea, but will take time when the whole task is down to me alone and I am working full time.

It is at times like these that we start to think about what is really important to us, and it would appear when we read the Bible that this has been a human condition for generations. We grow attached to possessions, whether it is "rainy day money" property, or those things we have collected along our journey through life. I know that tucked away in our garage are mementos of a bygone life, things that hold no value to anybody but me. There is a box of LPs that I collected and loved listening to. In truth, I can download any of the songs in seconds onto my phone and play them in the car as I travel around. I don't even have a record player anymore, but those records matter.

When he writes to the Colossians Paul encourages his readers to think about what really matters. Are they simply storing up riches on earth that matter very little in the greater story of life. What use will my LPs be in heaven? I guess that when I am gone, they will end up in a charity shop in any case. Paul encourages his readers to store up riches for heaven, these are the very things that Jesus taught his disciples.

Jesus has the amazing gift of teaching the disciples by using parables to make the point clear and the parable we have just read put our relationship with possessions into context. Here was an already wealthy man who had a bumper harvest. Rather than considering the option of sharing his good fortune with others, he relishes in his good fortune and plans to invest his money in storing up his crops so that he can have an easy life. Then Jesus hits us with the punchline, despite his good fortune, he will die that very night and what is his treasure worth to him then.

I have sat in Church councils when we have been considering selling off the Churches possessions to balance the finances and have sold nothing because each item was donated by some notable member in the dim and distant past. I have sat while a church agonised about spending a significant bequest from a Church member in their Will only to decide that it was best to keep it in the bank for a "rainy day" or do some more work on the building, which they genuinely thought would attract hordes of new members.

- We need to reflect on our relationship with possessions as we seek to build the Kingdom of God.
- It is not a bad thing to be attached to buildings, but the challenge is about how we use them.
- It is obviously a good thing when people leave money to the Church, but I challenge us to think creatively about the gifts people leave.

**Hymn StF 341 All for Jesus** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2M1f\\_34veo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2M1f_34veo)

All for Jesus, all for Jesus,  
this our song shall ever be;  
for we have no hope, nor Saviour,  
if we have not hope in thee.

All for Jesus, thou wilt give us  
strength to serve thee, hour by hour;  
none can move us from thy presence  
while we trust thy love and power.

All for Jesus, thou hast loved us;  
all for Jesus, thou hast died;  
all for Jesus, thou art with us;  
all for Jesus crucified.

All for Jesus, all for Jesus,  
this the church's song must be,  
till, at last, we all are gathered,  
one in love and one in thee.

**A time of prayer**

Loving and gracious God, we bring our prayers to you today in the name of Jesus, the Lord of love, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, trusting that your steadfast love endures forever.

We pray for all situations of war and conflict, remembering especially today...

Comfort those who are suffering and give strength to all who seek to offer love, peace and healing.

We pray for all who lack the essentials of life; food, clothing, shelter, love...

Come close to those in need and make us generous to respond from whatever resources we have.

We pray for all in pain today, whether in body, mind or spirit, known or unknown to us...

Give healing and relief to the sick and patience, love and courage to all who care for them.

We pray for our community, calling to mind individuals, groups and organisations nearby...

Give wisdom and a passion for justice to all in leadership, that your steadfast love may be revealed.

We pray for the church, in this place and in every place where you are worshipped and glorified...

Pour out your Holy Spirit afresh that your body on earth may demonstrate your limitless love.

We pray for ourselves, aware that so often we fail to be motivated by love for you and for others...  
Reveal yourself to us afresh, that we may live the lives for which you created us, to your glory.  
Loving and gracious God, we have offered our prayers to you today in the name of Jesus,  
the Lord of love, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, trusting that your steadfast love endures forever.  
Thanks be to God, **Amen**

*The Lord's Prayer Our Father ...*

**Hymn: StF 489 All I once held dear** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Merf00gcQik>

All I once held dear, built my life upon  
All this world reveres, and wars to own  
All I once thought gain I have counted loss  
Spent and worthless now, compared to this

*Knowing You, Jesus, Knowing You  
There is no greater thing  
You're my all, You're the best  
You're my joy, my righteousness  
And I love You, Lord*

Now my heart's desire is to know You more  
To be found in You and known as Yours  
To possess by faith what I could not earn  
All-surpassing gift of righteousness

*Knowing You, Jesus, Knowing You...*

Oh, to know the power of Your risen life  
And to know You in Your sufferings  
To become like You in Your death, my Lord  
So with You to live and never die

*Knowing You, Jesus, Knowing You...*

**A prayer of blessing:**

And now we rise from this moment, we depart from this gathering, but worship does not cease here, in fact it is only just getting started.

So, as we go from this place, we know that the Spirit of God goes before you, inviting us to play your part in the unfolding story of love.

Amen.