



The Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit

Sunday 28th September 2025: 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Theme for today is "Are we ready for God's heaven?"

Prepared by Mrs Della Collingwood



Opening Words

Holy, precious and gracious God, thank you for this day, and for bringing us together again to worship you.

As we come to know more of your word, and your calling on our lives, so help us to receive the grace and love that is waiting for us, all around us, by your Holy Spirit we pray, **Amen.**

Prayers

Peace on each one who comes in need,
Peace on each one who comes in joy.
Peace on each one who offers a song
Peace on the maker, peace on the son,
Peace on the Spirit, the triune one.

O God, for your love for us, warm and brooding, which has brought us to birth and opened our eyes to the wonder and beauty of creation, we give thanks for your love for us, wild and freeing which has awakened us to creations energy: to the sap that flows, the blood that pulses, the heart that sings, we give you thanks. **Amen.**

Hymn 186 Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vz-FkqobgXY>

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word –
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;
proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same –
his holy name: the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure:
tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore!

Bible Readings: Isaiah 58: 6-12 1 Timothy 6: 6-19 Luke 16: 19-31

Reflection 1:

Today's readings are about our attitude to wealth and how it relates to our relationship with God.

Jesus describes it in a parable about two men known to each other. One is wealthy and called Dives or "rich man" and the other is named Lazarus meaning "God is my help". The rich man lives in a mansion with fine clothes and a lifestyle to match, he thinks that to be rich is to be happy and have all the food he needs to be comfortable, whereas the poor man is a beggar at the gate of the mansion living in poverty with sores on his body and lacking the dignity and respect he should have.

What happens to them is like another of Jesus's parables, that of a farmer who has such a rich harvest that he wanted to pull his barns down and build greater to store his abundant crop. He is pleased, until Jesus tells him that this night he would die and then what will become of him?

For Dives and Lazarus, the story is the same. They both die and go to God's Kingdom in heaven, but for Dives, he goes to hell, whereas Lazarus is in heaven and talks with Abraham. Dives is overheated and wants Lazarus to cool his tongue and the pain he is in, but he is told no, because there is a gulf between them. Then he remembers his brothers and wants God to warn them, but God knows they won't listen. They all could have read the scriptures, but it would be of no use.

However, God does send a messenger to Israel to tell and show how to live their lives, giving them guidance and caring love in their lives and that his only son, Jesus and the people killed him.

Read hymn 718

We lay our broken world
In sorrow at your feet,
Haunted by hunger, war and fear,
Oppressed by power and hate.

Where human life seems less
That profit, might and pride,
Though to unite us all in you
You lived and loved and died.

We bring our broken towns,
Our neighbours hurt and bruised;
You show us how old pain and wounds
For new life can be used.

We bring our broken hopes
For lives of dignity;
Workless and overworked you love
And call us to be free.

We bring our broken loves,
Friends parted, families torn;
Then in your life and death we see
That love must be reborn.

We bring our broken selves,
Confused and closed and tired;
Then through your gift of healing grace
New purpose is inspired.

O Spirit, on us breathe,
With life and strength anew;
Find in us love, and hope and trust,
And lift us up to you.

Reflection 2

Paul's preaching about money is about pride in people. They have come to be rich by means of their religion. They have been able to have bought food and clothing and to Paul this should be enough, for on reflection they have brought into the world nothing and leave the world with nothing. Those who want to get rich fall into the temptation of becoming foolish, with harmful desires which will pull them down to ruin and destruction. For to Paul the love of money is the root of all evil and for some, they have so wanted money that they have wandered far from the faith and have broken their hearts with many sorrows.

Paul, in his epistle, talks of his own money made by his tent making and how that was enough for him to live on. The money he collected in his preaching he sent off with Timothy or other disciples to Jerusalem, these people were living a communal life, having gifted their money to the communal purse so that all may benefit. These were the widows and orphans, the poor and the homeless as well as the disciples who were setting a good example, this to the people of Jerusalem was heaven.

I'd like to finish the story of Dives and Lazarus and Paul's preaching on money matters, by looking at The Old Testament and seeing the roots of the problem and what the outcome was for the Israelites in Isaiah's time and also the prophet Joel, if the people sin against God he punishes them with drought and the people starve, but if they worship God and do well, then he rewards them with rain and crops and cereals grow in abundance. If this is the case, God says he will give them food bought without money, that is it is free and creation takes on a new look and meaning of God who is the great provider of all good things and peace will reign throughout the land, it is in fact God's heaven established on earth.

To think about

- Do you think that life on earth is related to life in heaven?
- Do you try your best to follow the teachings of Jesus?
- Do we give warning to family and friends about the dangers of being sent to hell or heaven?
- Jesus talks of The Kingdom of God. Does our communities behaviour resemble that of the parable of Dives and Lazarus or the time of Isaiah in chapter 58?
- Do we get free food these days? If so, are Tesco, Aldi and Lidl part of God's plan for feeding his people?
- Do we give enough charity in feeding the poor at home and abroad?

The Lord's Prayer

Prayer

We give praise to God who created all the heavens and the earth and fills it with splendour and beauty. You have not left it for us to go our own way, but through your word in the Bible and Jesus' life and word, you show and tell us how to live our lives and direct the life of our nation. Jesus came to show us God as a loving and generous Father, caring for his people and giving us a home and family life in our churches, in this we can grow in spirit and strength and in the love of Christ we know that each of us is held firmly to the bosom of his love until the end of our lives

when we are received by you into your eternal home prepared by Christ for all his people. Help us to walk in your way until that moment comes when we can see and give thanks for your glory and perfect self. These prayers we ask in Jesus' name. Amen

Hymn 715 The right hand of God is writing in our land https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5m_g6w2hY3M

The right hand of God is writing in our land,
writing with power and with love
our conflicts and our fears,
our triumphs and our tears
are recorded by the right hand of God.

The right hand of God is pointing in our land,
pointing the way we must go.
So clouded is the way,
so easily we stray,
but we're guided by the right hand of God.

The right hand of God is striking in our land,
striking out at envy, hate and greed.
our selfishness and lust,
our pride and deeds unjust
are destroyed by the right hand of God.

The right hand of God is lifting in our land,
Lifting the fallen one by one;
Each one is known by name,
And is lifted now from shame,
By the lifting of the right hand of God

The right hand of God is healing in our land,
healing broken bodies, minds and souls.
So wondrous is its touch,
with love that means so much,
when we're healed by the right hand of God.

The right hand of God, is planting in our land,
planting seeds of freedom, hope and love.
In these many peopled lands,
let His children all join hands,
and be one with the right hand of God.

Benediction

Whatever we face, we do not face it alone

Wherever we go, we do not journey alone,

However we suffer, we do not bear it alone

Wherever we are and wherever we go and however we journey, we go in peace, in hope and in faith, for we go with Christ who always goes with us. Amen

So, the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest and remain with us now and forever more. Amen