
Stay Connected – Sunday 10th August

Eighth Sunday after Trinity

This Week's Reading

Bible Reading: Luke 12.32-40

Peter's Blurb

Hello everyone,

Summer's here with a vengeance! Everyone is feeling the heat with temps consistently in the high-80°F's during the day and the high 70°F's at night. Air conditioners are working overtime in those places that have A/C (and can afford to run them – that's another story!) Mercifully we seem to be getting plenty of rain with regular localised thundershowers so everything is still lush and green. Things may change, though, as we get deeper into hurricane season – there are a couple of disturbances to our SE that will bear watching – we hope the high pressure to our North will keep them in the middle of the Atlantic but we still have to be vigilant and prepared.

It was new challenge today for Rochelle Simons, to whom thanks, who led our Peaceful Worship at 8 a.m. for a group of some 8 or so communicants. This will be a regular "gig" for Rochelle on an as needed basis and we welcome her to the "team". Today, also, it was our distinct joy and pleasure for our contemporary service to be led by Rev. Jennie (Foster Skelton) who unwrapped the messages in today's scripture reading from Luke (see summary below).

We shall have the pleasure of Rev. Jennie leading us next week too and then Rev Terry the following week. We are thankful for our priests taking on the extra burdens created by vacations or *interregnums* – Rev Jennie had already led St. Mary's service earlier this morning as Fr. Carl Williams is off-island. I don't know who took services at the Cathedral as Bishop Nick and Archdeacon John are both abroad. Perhaps it was Canon Ant Pettit, who is the Bishop's Commissary during Bishop's absence. St. Paul's undoubtedly have additional leaders available to cover for Canon Ant.

Of course, it's not just the clergy who are travelling. Many of our congregation are also away which left us, today, with a smaller than usual attendance and a shortage of youngsters for Junior Church. Other Summer activities – beaching, boating etc. may have a role in this too. 😊 The lazy, hazy days of Summer!!

Lisa Dawn had, once again, worked her magic with today's slide presentation. Just a few wrinkles with sound balance to be mastered but we will get there. I know we've been doing this for years but nonetheless it is new to us as Gav always managed it.

Lisa Dawn had received a Note of Thanks from Gav & Helen which she incorporated into a slide and presented it during the service. Here's the text of the note:

Dear friends. We would like to convey our heartfelt thanks for the wonderful leaving gift you gave us. The real gift was the friendships we made and we cannot express how blessed we are that you invited us to be part of your church family. It was an honour and privilege to carry the torch for St. Mark's over the past five years, and we will continue to hold you all in our prayers, as I hope you will hold us in yours. Thank you again for everything.

Gavin and Helen. x

That's about it for this week

Love, Peter

Come to St. Mark's – not just a Church but a family!

Rev. Jennie's Talk

From Shepherd to Thief

Luke 12: 32-40

There are a lot of different names for Jesus in scripture. I'm sure you can think of quite a few, and we find a few of them in today's passage.

In today's scripture, Jesus takes on several 'personas': He is the shepherd, the master and then, strangely.... the thief...and he is called the 'Son of Man'. We're quite familiar with the first two; we sing hymns and choruses about them all the time....

- I grew up singing *Jesus Tender Shepherd Hear Me* as a bedtime prayer.
- Psalm 23, *The Lord's My Shepherd* is probably familiar to most: although from the Old Testament Psalms, before the incarnation (before the birth of Christ), we are familiar with the concept of God as our shepherd.
- The persona of 'master' shows up in older hymns such as *Master Let Me Walk with Thee*.

The name Son of man sometimes causes us a little bit of puzzlement; we are probably more used to calling Jesus the Son of God, but we know that he was both fully human and divine.

But why does Jesus talk about the second coming as if he is a *thief*? It seems a strange choice... after all, thieving, stealing is a criminal offence.....

This idea, this simile of Jesus returning "like a thief" occurs several times in the New Testament:

- Matthew 24:43 (the verse is almost identical to the Luke 12:39)
- 1 Thessalonians 5 (a letter of Paul)
- 2 Peter 3:10 (a letter of Peter)
- Revelation 3:3 & 16:15 (a letter of John)

Five different authors: Paul, Peter, John and Luke & Matthew all use this phrase in their writing.

What is clear is the exhortation to preparation in these passages. Jesus tells us to be prepared.....and in Luke's gospel, this starts well before this segment.

If you remember last week's reading about the **rich fool** which follows on into today's reading (even though we skip over a big chunk in the middle), Jesus is encouraging us to seek heavenly treasure rather than earthly treasures: "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" We are reminded of the temperate nature of earthly things... that moth and rust (not to mention any manner of other things) can destroy. Then there is a big section when Jesus tells us not to worry about our daily needs but to trust our heavenly father to provide for them...and then today's reading which starts with these lovely words... (we have a pet name.... he calls us "Little Flock")

"Do not be afraid Little Flock, for it is the father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom". We, his "Little Flock" are granted the freedom to share the things of this world generously. We are at liberty to use earthly resources for mission. We don't have to save those... because it is the Father's good pleasure to give us, YOU, so much MORE...The KINGDOM! We steward these earthly things by using them to further the kingdom.

When we think of preparing, we often think of another thing... **Shopping**...acquiring the right supplies.

How do you prepare for:

- Sunday dinner? First you make a list of the things you need and go grocery shopping.
- a hurricane? buy batteries and bottled water
- a trip overseas? travel sized toiletries etc

But Jesus tells us to be prepared for the kingdom of God in another way GIVE... generously and purposely. This is how we store up treasure in heaven; this is how we are prepared. He has a lot to say about this; it is not a minor

issue. It was part of Jewish tradition to give alms to the poor, but Jesus is challenging our notions that we just give from our *surplus* (the extra we have after our own needs are met). He is challenging us to shift our priorities, to put the needs of others above our own personal comfort and material possessions.

The message translation puts it like this:

Be generous. Give to the poor. Get yourselves a bank that can't go bankrupt, a bank in heaven far from bank robbers, safe from embezzlers, a bank you can bank on. It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.

So, Little Flock.... in the next section our Shepherd takes on the persona of *master*....and Jesus is speaking in a way that would be unexpected for his listeners, this is radical stuff he is saying. He tells them to be ready but when the master shows up, he speaks of the master who will seat the servants and begin to serve THEM...

And if that wasn't enough...

- 1.-Challenging the status quo on how we give
- 2.-Bringing a master who sits the servants down to serve THEM

we *then* have the persona of the *thief*... Jesus doesn't exactly call himself a thief but he likens his second coming to a thief...

And there is a certain irony to this... God may be **perceived** as a thief but there is no way that he can BE a thief because everything belongs to him already.... there is nothing that he can steal...

A thief is one who is both unexpected and unwanted. Jesus is not a thief, but if our hearts are focused on the things that are temperate, we may feel robbed when those things are unexpectedly taken away.

It is his good pleasure to give us THE KINGDOM... we are fellow heirs with Christ... and he has given us direction on how we can best be prepared.

When it comes to the subject of the second coming of Christ, it seems that many err on the side of overemphasizing it or underemphasizing it; not talking about it all or talking about it so much that we try to *scare* people into salvation.

There are people who will claim that they can predict the date of Christ's return...and the date will come and go and then they come up with a new one... and I guess we are expected to politely forget that they came up with a date for Christ's return that was wrong before. It's a waste of time because Jesus himself told us that we wouldn't know, it will be unexpected.

There are those who try to warn people about Christ's return by scaring them: "Jesus is coming, YOU better be ready"!

But by the same token, some Christians don't want to mention the second coming much at all. It is something we can't predict, let's pretend it's NOT coming.

I think in the Anglican church we are usually closer to the second one, we don't talk about the second coming that much, but we know it is important and we are constantly reminded of it when we say the Apostles Creed or the Nicene Creed, statements of our shared faith which were written by early Christians to define and teach the faith... we say "he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead".

We know that Jesus is coming back and he's asking us to live like this matters, so in our creeds, and in our songs and hymns we sing the words tell of Christ's return...But do you think it's possible that sometimes we forget about Christ's return? Maybe sometimes the church behaves as if Jesus is a historical figure? Are we ever tempted to think of Christ as a good guy so we should just be "good guys" too. Jesus has plenty to tell us about holiness, holy living, but being a Christian is not following the teachings of a dead guy. We worship a **risen** Saviour and we submit to Christ as our LORD.

A few years ago my kids were really into the **Who is/Who was** collection of books (They are really good biographies for younger readers) and I noticed that there was a book on Jesus. I don't think we acquired that one, primarily

because we read about Jesus all the time in the bible which tells us everything we need to know....but it was unsettling that the title of the book about Jesus was “Who WAS Jesus?” and not “Who IS Jesus?”.

We serve a RISEN Saviour. He is living, and he shall return. We are told to be prepared for that return, and if we are committed to following Christ, we his “Little Flock” do not have cause to be afraid. We can be excited to INHERIT THE KINGDOM even though we cannot imagine just how wonderful that will be. Will he find us ready and active servants of the gospel or will he find us storing up treasures on earth?

The gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the stories about the earthly life of Jesus) were written down many years after Christ ascended to the Father...and people often think that is unusual. We may think, “why did it take so long?”, but if those who had been with Jesus believed that his return was **imminent**.. any day now... bringing people to faith in Christ was considered urgent. But writing down these stories probably wasn't thought to be the priority... not as important as the disciples **actively** telling people about Jesus themselves.

The disciples were under an understandable misconception that Christ was coming back really soon... they had no reason to think that it wouldn't be in their own lifetime....

The epistles (the letters of Paul and Peter, James, John and Jude) were written earlier as letters of encouragement and guidance to the growing Christian Church, but it wasn't until those who had walked with Jesus in the flesh were much older and nearing the end of their lives that the gospel stories were written down. If the early church suffered with this misconception (that Jesus was coming back REALLY soon), I think we often suffer with the opposite... we forget that he will return or we think that it is so long in the future that it doesn't affect us.

We don't need to worry about WHEN Christ will return. It will be unexpected. We CAN focus on living expectantly and committedly as he has told us, in the same way that we prepare with excitement for a holiday or a visitor. We can have excitement in **prayerfully and purposefully** preparing for “**thy kingdom come**” so that we are ready to meet him face to face...and what a glorious day that will be!! May we live our lives in preparation for that wonderful day, “Little Flock”.

Lord Jesus, we await your coming in glory... until then, may we be watchful. Help us to focus our lives on prayer, generosity and sharing the good news following the example of your first disciples. We pray that you speak to our hearts and direct our steps as we, your Church, your “Little Flock” prepare for your coming kingdom.

In your Holy name we pray, Amen.

In our prayers

We ask for your prayers for Father Don, Margaret Blanchette, Al Spearing, Gill Rossiter, Sam & Marjorie, Gwyneth & Ralph, Jill, Barbara (Dyer), Vinette, Nancy, Gail, Janet & Gary, Tina, Val & Mark, Robert & Kalreeta and for Sally Brown and Hilda Warner . We also ask for special prayers for all members of the church family who are travelling over the next few weeks.

This Sunday



Previous services and other videos are on our YouTube channel. [ti](#) and/or our Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>

Next Sunday

Next Sunday, **17th August** – There will be our usual 8.00 am Peaceful Worship, led by Rochelle Simons, followed by our Contemporary Worship at 9.30 am led by Rev. Jennie Foster Skelton. Children will break out for Junior

Church in the Parish Hall.

Coming Events

- **Bible Studies in Luke – Marks of a Disciple** – a series of lunchtime Bible Studies will be held in the Cathedral on Thursdays at 12.15 p.m. For details contact the Diocesan Office. **Dates: 14th, 21st, 28th August.**
- **Friday night Barbecue at SMC** – This will take place in the church grounds on **Friday, 15th August at 6.00 p.m.** On offer will be: burgers and hotdogs, chips, and something refreshing to drink! Come along and enjoy our shady prayer tree. We will also have a few tables and chairs set up for dining. This is a chance to socialize on (what we hope will be) a beautiful Bermuda summer Friday evening.
- **Vendor's Market** – The next Vendor's Market will be held on **Saturday, 22nd August;**
- **Bereavement Support Tea** – our next monthly chat will take place at **3.00 p.m. on Sunday, 7th September** in the Parish Hall. Take-Out Bar-b-que – St. James' Church will be hosting a Take-Out Bar-b-que on **Saturday, 20th September 2025**, The in the Church Hall. **Save the date** - details to follow.
- Take-Out Bar-b-que – St. James' Church will be hosting a Take-Out Bar-b-que on **Saturday, 20th September 2025**, The in the Church Hall. **Save the date** - details to follow.

Down the Debt – St. Mark's needs your help in reducing the size of our debt which inhibits future investment in our church. If you feel you may be able to help with this please go to <https://stmarks.bm/donate/> where you will find details and an opportunity to donate.

Links:

Just a reminder – if you want to check vot's happnin' or vot's comin' dahn de road – you can find it all at our:

- **Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>
- **YouTube Channel:** <https://www.youtube.com/StMarksChurchBermuda>
- **Website:** <https://anglican.bm/churches/st-marks/>
- **Holy Trinity Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/holytrinitychurchbda>

End Stuff:

Here's a thought. It is always a great time for us all to review our pledging. If each of us is able to increase our pledge by 10% that would be a great boost to our cash flow (which as you know is tenuous at best). And, with our in-person collections still inhibited by numbers restrictions, please consider the opportunity to convert to pledging by Direct Deposit (see below). Your support is vital.

As always, another huge thank you to all of you who continue to support our church family with your pledges and donations via online transfer.

Direct deposits can be made to: Butterfield Bank for the account of:

St. Mark's Church Wardens – A/c No. 20-006-060-104125-100.

- **For Pledge Envelope donations** – if you already have a Pledge envelope number just be sure to enter your Name and Env # e.g. "Nash Env 190" in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.
- **For Grave Payments** – when paying Grave Maintenance fees be sure to enter Grave Number and Name of Lessee e.g. "Grave 273 Peter Nash" in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.
- **For Cash donations** – if you do not have an Envelope # just be sure to also enter your Name and "Donation" e.g. "Nash Donation" in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.

Use of the "Beneficiary" space is IMPORTANT – it is the only way we have to identify who is paying and for what.

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