
Stay Connected – Sunday 3rd August

Seventh Sunday after Trinity

This Week's Reading

Bible Reading: Luke 12.13-21

Peter's Blurb

Hello everyone,

Well, here we are again. After the high emotion and the almost festive nature of last Sunday's service it was back to earth again and to the reality that – “Yes, they have really gone” 😞 But, sad though that may be it's now time to pull ourselves together as we move ahead into the future. Our Search Committee are beavering away at the process of seeking a worthy successor and we shall undoubtedly be hearing more about that in the weeks ahead.

Albeit with a smaller congregation today, not surprisingly, I think the service went well. Lisa Dawn had assembled today's slide show from components left by Gav. Seemingly a simple process of taking a template for the format of the service – i.e. will the children remain in church or leave for Junior Church – that affects the sequence of the liturgy, – it becomes a matter of replacing the words of the music selections last used in that template with those selected for the current week. Slides for every music item in our repertoire are also on file. Sounds simple enough right? But actually, doing it for the first time raises questions the answers to which need figuring out. We are especially thankful that Lisa Dawn took the time and trouble over the holiday to tackle the task. I lent a couple of hours moral support and by the end of Thursday she had Sunday's slide presentation built. Hopefully, it will come easier this week and each successive week too 😊

The service was led by Archdeacon John who gave a talk on the “Parable of the Rich Fool.” The parable teaches that life is not about the abundance of possessions, and that one should not store up treasures for oneself but be rich toward God. The text of John's talk is included below. The next two Sundays, John advised us, our 8.00 a.m. Gentle Worship services going forward will be led by Rochelle, using the reserve sacrament, while our 9.30 a.m. services for the next two Sundays will be led by Rev. Jennie (Foster-Skelton). The fourth Sunday of the month will be led by newly-minted Rev. Terry and the last (fifth) Sunday of August will be the quarterly East End Churches event which will be held this year at Blue Hole Cove (opp. the Shell Station at W. end of the causeway.) I'll have more to say about the details in the next couple of weeks.

August and Cup Match time of the year is always difficult attendance-wise as families travel, vacation or have other things on their mind than 9.30 at St. Mark's. But let's make a special effort not to backslide during this period of *interregnum*. We need to keep the momentum going so that our new priest will find us to be our usual vibrant, loving energetic church family

That's about it for this week (did you notice – I didn't talk about the weather 😞)

Love, Peter

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

Archdeacon John's Talk

Rich man and his barn

May the words...

What is your net worth? This is an important question. What is your net worth?

On my visits once to a Nursing Home, I would have many different conversations with a delightful elderly lady, which always ended with her saying:

“Was it worth it, darling, was it worth it?”

This became a by-word at home for processing any conflicts or problems experienced. At the end of a difficult day, it was a great way to get things into perspective:

“Was it worth it, darling, was it worth it?”

The concept of the value of things, what they are worth, is something we use every day.

In tightly controlled economies, such as the old USSR, products were all allocated a value – a loaf of bread of a certain size and weight would cost ‘x’ amount wherever you were.

The price was fixed.

In modern capitalist economies, prices will vary, even for the same thing. Something is worth whatever someone is prepared to pay for it.

This is never truer than at an auction, where your precious heirloom might remain unsold and not even reach its reserve price – or go for millions of dollars beyond the valuation it had been given.

It was a very clever idea that the advertising agency, used by the hair colour company L’Oreal, came up with nearly fifty years ago, to turn the focus on the *value* of the product, to the *consumer*.

Remember those adverts in glossy magazines? The photo of the pretty model or actress with the catch phrase “L’Oreal – because I’m worth it!” Later, this became: “because you’re worth it!” “because *you’re* worth it!”

The lady in the nursing home would have loved that! I can just hear her saying “Yes, you’re worth it, darling, you’re worth it!”

The L’Oreal advert really captured the spirit of the age, because in the 1970’s and 80’s, the women’s liberation movement was at its height.

Women didn’t (and don’t) need to find their sense of worth in the role they play in relation to others, and men in particular, but in who they are in their own right.

This was the same truth that Abolitionists like William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, Olaudah Equiano and Mary Prince whose day we kept on Friday, all believed so passionately in relation to slavery.

They were shocked, as we are, that people could be bought and sold as chattels and possessions, worth whatever price the market would settle at.

Freedom is the birth-right of every human being.

And we continue to find shocking – or should do - that today across the world, vulnerable people, men, women and children are trafficked – bought and sold – as sex workers, refugees and would-be asylum seekers.

Freedom is the birth-right of every human being.

This is our true ‘net worth’: we are children of God. We are given our value, our worth, our dignity, because we are created and loved by him.

As St Paul (Colossians chapter 3) says in the Scriptures “Here there is no Greek or Jew..., slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all”.

It's so easy to forget this, and be tricked by the spirit of the age in our present time, into thinking that our 'net worth' is something that can be read off from a spreadsheet in terms of monetary value.

A business, yes. Deduct the liabilities from the assets and there it is – the company's 'net worth'.

A person, no. Our value, our worth, goes far beyond that. It's of a different order entirely.

Look at that farmer in our Gospel reading. He had a bumper crop, which made him super-rich.

He downloaded an app to his smart phone which told him his 'net worth' was astronomical! Well, he would have done if he were alive today.

So he built a huge barn, stored it all up, and with his profit decided to eat, drink and be merry.

"You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself? This is how it will be for those who store up things for themselves but are not rich towards God."

That last saying is powerful, isn't it?

"Being rich towards God."

What a wonderful way of understanding our life as Christians.

We have the most fantastic net worth. God has loved us from the very moment we were first thought of - and before that even!

In Jesus, God lived as one of us, so that every corner, every turn of our existence could be filled with the light of his understanding. He loved us enough to die for us, and with such power that he rose again that we might do the same.

Our calling, in response to this gift of such great worth, is to 'be rich towards God'.

I first heard of Mother Theresa of Calcutta when I was a teenager and she was interviewed in a TV documentary made about her by the Christian broadcaster Malcolm Muggeridge. She had a great way of putting this: 'doing something beautiful for God'.

'Something Beautiful for God'. Think what this might be for each of us. Knowing many of you as I do, I've got a good idea of what you are finding this to mean for you, being rich towards God and doing things that are beautiful for him.

And there will be much that many of you will be doing *behind the scenes*, unbeknown to anyone, to glorify God in matters small and great.

Kindness to others, yes. We do this as a human instinct; it's something God made us for and that's what it is so fulfilling and satisfying.

But also, we give of ourselves to others when it is hard to do so, because this is the example Jesus gave us: to give and not expect a reward.

And another beautiful thing for God: supporting the work of the Church through taking part in its life and our contributing to its mission, whether the giving of our time and energy or of our money and livelihood.

We give to the Church because, as part of our thanksgiving, it is a duty laid upon us as its members. But also, because it's a joy, a freewill offering, a way sometimes planned sometimes spontaneous, of being 'rich towards God'.

Our life after all is God's gift: "All things come from you O Lord, and of your own do we give you".

Above all, it's in our worship that we try to do something beautiful for God, in the offering of our lives.

As we pray at the end of a service: "we offer you our souls and bodies, to be a living sacrifice".

Put more fully in the old Book of Common Prayer:

"And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto thee".

This is so liberating! God's service is our perfect freedom.

Is it worth it, darlings? It most certainly is!

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.

<https://www.youtube.com/StMarksChurchBermuda> and/or our Facebook page at:

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

Next Sunday

Next Sunday, **10th 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 on poster below.
- **Take-Out Bar-b-que** – St. James' Church will be hosting a Take-Out Bar-b-que" in the Church Hall. on **"Date to be confirmed** - details to follow.
- **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.

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



Bible Studies in Luke – Marks of a Disciple
Thursdays 12:15-1:00
In the Cathedral Hall

24 th July	Luke 11:1-13	Praying
Aug 7 th		
Aug. 14 th		
Aug. 21 st		
Aug. 28 th		