

Bulletin for Sunday 7th November 2021

Good Morning, Friends.

We pause as we prepare to worship..... and then praise God as we sing:

Hymn: Fill thou my life, O Lord my God (R&S 406)

Prayer: Glorious God, you have given us this time;
 help us to still our minds, and gather our thoughts,
 as we come to worship you now...
 You have given us more than we realise or imagine:
 generous care for our needs, and far beyond...
 Thank you for your gifts of life and love and laughter!
 We ask your blessing on everything that we do,
 and everything we give, in your service,
 now and always. In Jesus' name. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Reading: Psalm 146 and Mark 12: verses 38-44

Reflection: This is a story of great generosity; of a woman giving selflessly and unostentatiously. But it is more than that. Too often we read Bible passages in isolation, forgetting to check their context. This episode occurs during the days Jesus spent in Jerusalem between his triumphal entry on what we call Palm Sunday, and his arrest and crucifixion. He is suspended between the crowds who love him and hang on his every word, and the authorities who are plotting to destroy him, to silence him forever. This polarisation is caused by Jesus' insistence on speaking out, and criticising the greed and the unfairness which he sees here in Jerusalem.

The widow is practically destitute, and yet she has been allowed, if not positively encouraged, to give her all. The rich folk, on the other hand, although their contributions are financially greater, won't notice any real difference from having made them. Jesus points out the injustice of this - that the sums given are quite out of proportion to the resources each person has available. God, he says, sees not so much the actual sum given, but the cost of the gift to the individual. If only we could hear the tone of his voice! Was he commending the generosity and commitment of the widow, or criticising the hypocrisy of her richer neighbours? I suspect he was doing both: applauding her, and simultaneously protesting against the injustice of the system.

Justice must go hand in hand with commitment and generosity if all are to live fully.

Hymn: Take my life and let it be (R&S 371)

Prayer: God of generosity beyond our understanding,
we bring you our prayers for the world...
for those in places of conflict, we pray for peace;
for those living with poverty, we pray for prosperity;
for those in pain or distress, we pray for care and relief.
We hold before you especially today
those suffering because of climate change
and those we have seen in the news this week...
Finally we pray for those we love, and worry about....
Show us where we can give, and help, and care...
Loving God, hear all our prayers,
spoken and unspoken, in Jesus' name. Amen

Hymn: The Church is wherever God's people are praising (R&S 583)

Blessing: May we give generously, as we have received...
and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love
now and always. Amen

There will be NO' Sunday at Six 'service on Zoom tonight - back next week (14th).

Please continue to remember that we all have a part to play in caring for each other and doing what we can to keep everyone safe from Covid, which includes letting us know if you have a positive Covid test after recently being in church. Sadly it's impossible to make our churches completely risk-free.

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