

TRINITY NEWS

SEPT. 19, 2010

Pentecost 17 Luke 16:1-13

The Path Before Us Belongs to God

The parable at Luke 16:1-13 is the story of a sloppy business manager who induces his master's debtors to pay up by reducing their bills considerably! The master even commends him for his cleverness! Then Jesus says some strange words; "Make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth, so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal habitations" (16:9). We usually read this parable in our churches in monotones that fail to register the intensity of feeling that lies behind this parable. There is surely some degree of mental toughness in the way that Jesus goes after the Pharisees here. It is a rejection of the love of money rather than the rejection of money itself. It made no sense to the Pharisees, but they suspected that it was against them. After all, from his point of view they are rejecting the greatest vocation of all, to participate and indeed assist in the unfolding of the revelation of God's will and purpose in the world. This parable is a masterpiece of crafting an argument that is deceptively subtle and yet ultimately explicit in a way that leaves the Pharisees in no doubt that they are the target. There seems to be some sort of inner rage against the Pharisees in this parable which matches the intensity and directness that we observe in the parable of the Wicked Vinedressers in Mark 12:1-12. The parable demonstrates the lengths to which God is prepared to go in order to facilitate the unfolding of the kingdom of God on earth. Other gains may have to be forfeited. Even those who were seeking the truth of God such as Nicodemus and many others could be left aside unless they turn around and follow in the Way of God that is proposed and lived by Jesus of Nazareth. This is the challenge of Jesus to his people, then and now. They worship the God of Jesus, "the man for others", who wants them to accept the insights given to him by the Father, and the pathways into God that his life and ministry provide. But the in-breaking of the Reign of God brings a cost to the heart of God if the "chosen people" reject another crucial opportunity on their pilgrimage to God. If they turn aside they will bring pain not only to themselves, but to God. That is the persistent challenge of Jesus, but he never loses hope for his people or for us.

Not everything that Christianity brings to Judaism is new. We built on Judaism. We took their Scriptures and embedded them in our own. Christ had already prepared the way for this when he took the great opening commandment of the *Shema Yisrael* about loving One God with all one's heart, mind, soul, and strength (Deuteronomy 6:4) and linked it to Leviticus 19:18, an instruction about loving our neighbour as we are to love ourselves. He made this the second of the two great commandments and said that the other nine commandments plus "all the law and the prophets" hung on these two Commandments which are "the greatest of all". This 'process' was one that Christianity adopted. Perhaps one day we will begin to know how important Christ's linkage of Deuteronomy 6:4 and Leviticus 19:18 was both for him and the early Church. We know little of the discussions between Christians and Jews about the various texts appealed to by the Christians from the Tanach. We have the New Testament evidence of such exchanges, but it is usually in a polemical setting rather than the sifting through of texts in another context that we observe in the Mishnah. It would not be incorrect to say that everything that is said by Jesus and his followers should be tested against Jesus' linkage of the two great commandments. This could lead to a less legalistic reading of some texts if the two great commandments are seen as a subset of all this teaching. We may never get to the bottom of this parable, but it leaves traces of the way in which Jesus unsettled people by saying unsettling things that made them afraid and distrustful of him because he shook their assumptions and tested their dogmas. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: "The religion of Christ is not a tidbit after one's bread; on the contrary, it is the bread or it is nothing. People should at least understand and concede this if they want to call themselves Christians".

Bishop Arthur Jones

Your prayers are asked in our healing ministry for Diana Croyston, JPeter, Beryl Tanner, Ron Thoburn, Suzanne Jacobson, Cena Quiapos, Benjie Gonzales, Ron Jacob, Bonnie SyCip, Fidelia Matthews, Jovel Llagas, Ted Whale, Ema Duhaylongsod, Loy Solasco, Emerinciana Gatela, Amy Gonzales, Augusto Natividad, Avelina Collado, Eric Williamson, Carlyn-Fern Manning, Richard Kendall, Johnny Manning Jr, Carrie Angus, Jaqueline Acquiatan, Janet Johnstone, Susan Dalmas, Sunny Cabanang, Gloria Domingo, Katsi Araneta, Valerie Jones, Emilie Nauntofte, Marian Kermanshahchi, Rosaline Soulsby.

To plan:

- Sept. 20, Monday.
 - Vestry meeting, 6:30pm., Rectory.
- Sept. 21, Tuesday.
 - Bible Study, 10am.
 - Urdaneta Bible Study ,7:15pm.
- Sept. 23, Thursday.
 - Eucharist, 9am, Chapel
- Sept. 26, Sunday.
 - Confirmation class after the 9:30 service

Next Sunday's readings:
 Amos 6:1-7;
 Psalm 146; 1
 Timothy 6:11-19;
 Luke 6:11-19

	Last Sunday	Year-to-date	Proportionate Budget	2010 Budget
Pledge	P59,900.00	P2,755,058.48	P2,775,000.00	P3,900,000.00
Loose Plate	P16,287.50	P630,264.73	P668,846.15	P940,000.00

The church's monthly **Sources & Uses** report is available for viewing in the Church Office. Please look for Maricel. For questions, feel free to email Edison at edisonyp@gmail.com