

Sunday 28 September 2025

(No OT reading at 7.30 today)

Psalm 96

1 Timothy 6.6-19

Luke 16.19-31

Rev Nic Denny-Dimitriou, St David's, Chelmer

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**Luke 16.19-31: The Rich Man and Lazarus**

<sup>19</sup> “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup> And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, <sup>21</sup> who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. <sup>22</sup> The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried.

<sup>23</sup> In Hades, where he was being tormented, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. <sup>24</sup> He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames.’ <sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things and Lazarus in like manner evil things, but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. <sup>26</sup> Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.’

<sup>27</sup> He said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house -- <sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers -- that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.’ <sup>29</sup> Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ <sup>30</sup> He said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

<sup>31</sup> He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’ ”

## **Transcript of YouTube Video**

### **Archbishop Jeremy Greaves – “Sunday is Coming” – 28 September 2025**

The parable for this Sunday is a one of stark contrast: the rich man feasts daily in luxury while Lazarus, poor and covered in sores, lies at his gate, longing for scraps. After death, their roles are reversed—Lazarus is comforted, the rich man tormented. The parable is a powerful indictment of economic inequality and the blindness that privilege can create.

This is not just about wealth and poverty—it’s about how easily we grow indifferent to the suffering at our doorstep. The rich man does not actively harm Lazarus; his sin is simply that he never truly sees him.

Rowan Williams writes, “To be saved is to be given the power to see.” Salvation, then, is about having our eyes opened to the dignity, pain, and presence of our neighbours—especially those the world ignores.

This parable is not about future punishment but present responsibility. It asks us: who lies at our gate today? And what would it mean to truly see—and serve—them?

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Sermon Notes

“Once you see it, you can’t un-see it!”

I sometimes wonder if we avert our gaze and choose to not see some things, for fear that, once seen, we will feel obligated to respond.

It is said that the opposite of love is not necessarily hatred, but indifference. That’s similar to not seeing / ignoring / not bothering.

Sure, we are overwhelmed with needs of the world – people we know, people we don’t know, people we can see, people we can’t see but of whom we hear in the news, people we love, people we don’t love – or at least, don’t like ... and then there are our own needs too!

“Stop the world – I want to get off!”

We may have what I call “neighbour fatigue” from trying to follow Jesus’ injunction to be a neighbour to those we encounter – as told in his other

parable-story that we call “The Good Samaritan”, featured in our Gospel reading only a couple of months ago and repeated over two Sundays, so rich is the story and so challenging its message!

We need to acknowledge that we cannot fix everything and everyone, and we are not the Saviour of the World – not me, individually, and not even us, collectively, although that is an important way to view living our life, in community and in conjunction with others. It’s apparently what God intended.

In that vein, I love this teaching, attributed to a famous rabbi, Rabbi Tarfon, offering commentary on fulfilling the Law of God to love your neighbour as yourself, whilst acknowledging that it can be overwhelming:

You are not obligated to complete the work.
But neither are you free to abandon it.

Rabbi Tarfon
Pirkei Avot (via the Mishnah)
(told by Prof David Bonninger at
St David’s re Micah 6.8)

We are also reminded of the Hebrew prophet Micah, who said:

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6.8

Last Sunday at the end of the 9.30 service:

“Interview” of Jenny King (Careforce – lead volunteer of a team of carers)
Overwhelmed, not able to meet all the needs presented.

But there’s no giving up, in the face of that, no giving in to despair.

Quiet ‘getting on with the job’.

Because those who have needs are seen, and acknowledged, and helped to the extent possible. They are not dismissed.

Starfish story

(every time I tell it, some tell me they’ve not heard it before, so I don’t worry if some have heard it several times)

Walking along a beach where spring tide had washed hundreds of starfish now baking in the sun beyond reach of low-tide waves, one man would stoop to pick up a few and fling them back into the ocean. His friend eventually asked, “why

on earth are you wasting your time doing that? There are hundreds here, and they'll die in the hot sun, but you can't make a difference?" The other man stopped, picked up one more and flung it into the cool waves, and said:

... "There! It made a difference to that one!"

**I close with a few sentences repeated from today's NT reading,
from the First Letter to Timothy**

7 ... for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it;
9 But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

17 As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, 19 thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

Who do you see?

Who do you prefer to not see?

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**1 Timothy 6.6-19**

6 Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; 7 for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; 8 but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. 9 But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

11 But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you 14 to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. 16 It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen.

17 As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, 19 thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.