

Sunday 16th February 2025

The Sermon on the Plain

*Blessed are you who are poor, hungry, weeping,
have people hate you and denounce your name.*

*Woe to you who are rich, happy, have full bellies,
and are revered by others.*

Is Jesus suggesting we need to be miserable to enjoy great rewards in heaven? If we have a comfortable life and enjoy the respect of others, do we have no chance of entering the pearly gates? Is that really the way a loving father would behave towards his children?

If it is, please don't believe another word you hear from me, because that is not the God of love I believe in.

My God of love wants to share all that he is with us, but because love makes no demands of others, he does not force us to accept his gift. We must choose to accept his gift, or not. It's not an easy choice, because oneness with God means striving to become love as God is love. It must be a free choice on our part.

Being fair and just, God insists that we make a fully informed choice. For this reason, he has placed us on earth where we can experience both the joy of love, which is an experience of God *en-joy-ing* us, and the absence of love, which is an abuse of the power that humans have, to take advantage of others. We need to experience both love and absence of love, to be able to make an informed choice. This is why God allows bad things to happen to good people.

When we are hungry, poor, reviled and denounced through no fault of our own, we have a choice. We can fight back by mobilising our friends and resources to grab what does not belong to us and take advantage of others. Alternatively, (as we regularly hear from those who have visited the Highveld diocese in South Africa,) we can choose love, and share what little we have, including our time and our effort, with those around us. This tends to be the more common response of those who have nothing, because when

you have nothing, pride and self-righteousness don't get in the way.

Jesus is not suggesting that our lives should be miserable, nor that we should reject some level of comfort. Rather he is recognising that when you have nothing, there is a much lower risk of pride and self-righteousness preventing you from getting your hands dirty to help others. It's very difficult to refuse to help others, if you can, when you yourself, need help.

In helping others, we become love as God is love.

When we live a wealthy or even just a comfortable life, we are tempted by society to compare ourselves to others and strive for more materialism to increase our perceived status. Our consumer society cons us into spending money we don't have on things we don't need, to impress people we don't know and who, frankly, could care less. We are tempted to display our wealth with fancy cars and eat in the best restaurants, as we strive to increase our power over others to bend them to our will. We might ostentatiously make financial contributions to charities, but give little of our time to others, unless it can be used to promote our status. Unconditional love for others is rarely part of a wealth accumulating agenda.

Wealth and status need not prevent us from choosing love. Materialism just makes it a lot harder to ignore the opinions and trolling of those who feel threatened by our failure to conform to the values of a consumer society or social class. Pride and self-righteousness, enabled by wealth, make it impossible to love as God loves. Wealth allows us to stand above and apart from reality, disabling us from "*entering into solidarity with human suffering and human sinfulness. Jesus [however,] does this throughout his life by touching lepers and eating with sinners. He goes out of his way to bless those who are hurting. But we don't know how to do that as long as we place ourselves higher than another, believing we're not sinners or fellow sufferers.*" - Richard Rohr: *The Tears of Things*

Learning to love one another, including our enemies, will always risk rejection from those whose values are different, but the fact remains that if we want to become one with our God of love, we need to conform to his nature, by striving to learn to love just as Jesus loves us. Jesus warned us that this would not be easy. His sermon on the plain is no more, nor less, than confirming the consequences our failure to love.

God bless. Des Robertson.

READINGS

COLLECT

Almighty God, who alone can bring order to the unruly wills and passions of sinful humanity: give your people grace so to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, among the many changes of this world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

Thus says the Lord: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord. They shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit. The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse – who can understand it? I the Lord test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.

Jeremiah 17:5-10

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 1

Response: **Blessed are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked.**

Blessed are they who have not walked
in the counsel of the wicked:
nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the assembly of the scornful! **R**

Their delight is in the law of the Lord:
and they meditate on his law day and night.
Like a tree planted by streams of water
bearing fruit in due season,
with leaves that do not wither: **R**

Whatever they do, it shall prosper.
As for the wicked, it is not so with them:
they are like chaff
which the wind blows away; **R**

Therefore the wicked shall not be able to stand in the judgement:
nor the sinner in the congregation of the righteous.
For the Lord knows the way of the righteous:
but the way of the wicked shall perish. **R**

A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

If Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ – whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia! **Alleluia!**

Blessed are you who are poor, says the Lord,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St Luke **Glory to you, O Lord**

Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them. Then he looked up at his disciples and said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is

what their ancestors did to the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.'

Luke 6:17-26

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Post Communion Prayer

Merciful Father,
who gave Jesus Christ to be for us the bread of life,
that those who come to him should never hunger:
draw us to the Lord in faith and love,
that we may eat and drink with him
at his table in the kingdom,
where he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

Amen

Caerleon & Ponthir Churches Together
LENT LUNCHESES 2025



Lodge Farm Church
12 noon - 1.30 p.m.
March 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th
April 3rd, 10th
All welcome
Good food and fellowship
Donations to charity



"THE 100 CLUB"

You are invited to become a subscriber to this church fundraiser. For £24 per year, payable in advance, you will be allocated a number. Every month, one of the numbers will be chosen at random and the winner will receive a prize of £25.

You may hold more than one subscription, and we need a minimum of 50 to make this viable.

Please complete the form below and return it to Carol Wessel (0795 277 2468)

Name

Contact

I enclose payment of for..... subscription(s)

Signed



SERVICES

You are all invited to join us in our worship in person or watch via livestream on Sunday mornings from St Cadoc's.

Sunday 16th February

10.30am Sung Eucharist Service, led by Rev'd Michael Jarman. Charles Williams CinW primary school.

Wednesday 19th February

10.30am Said Eucharist at Caerleon Town Hall - Rev'd Alan Maunder presiding
10.30am Churches Together Memory Cafe at Lodge Farm Church, Caerleon
4.00pm BMS Clergy Meeting, Ty Williams, Ss Julius & Aaron
7.00pm Bell Ringing Practice

Thursday 20th February

7.00pm St Cadoc's choir practice, Lodge Farm Church.

Saturday 22nd February

10.00am to 1.00pm MA Stewardship Course (Part 2), St Andrew's, Lliswerry
2.15pm to 3.00pm Visiting Bellringers

Sunday 23rd February—Creation Sunday

10.30am Sung Eucharist Service, led by Rev'd Alan Maunder. Charles Williams CinW primary school.

Message from Rev'd Sue

Many thanks for all the messages of support as I prepare for surgery and post operation recovery. I have been truly blessed by the love, kindness and generosity of everyone. Pastoral concerns and enquiries regarding the occasional offices to be directed to Fr. David during my post operation recovery.

Easyfundraising total for St Cadoc's Refurbishment Fund has now reached £2624.50

Please support us today at <http://efraising.org/XW7a62zaYB>.

Sponsor a chair total including Gift Aid is currently £13427.05. To find out how you may sponsor a chair, please go to <https://stcadocscaerleon.uk/st-cadocs-church-refurbishment-appeal/checkout.justgiving.com/53lh55wm54>

Thank you for your continuing support.



All proceeds to go to the St Cadoc's Church Refurbishment Appeal



COME AND JOIN US
AT CHARLES WILLIAMS CINW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tea and Cakes

SAT 15th FEBRUARY 2025 2pm to 4pm

Valentine's Day
Craft for children



ST DAVID'S DAY POEMS AND PINTS FUNDRAISER

Friday 28th February 2025 at 7.00pm
at The Red Lion, Caerleon

Ticket £10 to include lamb cawl / vegetarian option available

For tickets and more information, contact Tim Ford (07711 683454)



CONTACT

If you have anything you'd like to communicate to the people of St Cadoc's, please let Rev'd Sue know. Also, if Rev'd Sue can be of help to you at any time, please get in touch!

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