

livingtheword

www.livingtheword.org.nz

Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Reading 1 Ecc 1:2; 2:21-23

Vanity of vanities, says Qoheleth, vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!

Here is one who has labored with wisdom and knowledge and skill, and yet to another who has not labored over it, he must leave property. This also is vanity and a great misfortune. For what profit comes to man from all the toil and anxiety of heart with which he has labored under the sun? All his days sorrow and grief are his occupation; even at night his mind is not at rest. This also is vanity.

Reading 2 Col 3:1-5, 9-11

Brothers and sisters:

If you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.

Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry. Stop lying to one another, since you have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed, for knowledge, in the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all and in all.

Gospel Lk 12:13-21

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me." He replied to him, "Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbitrator?"

Reflection Process / Questions

- **5 mins Reading** - underline a word or idea that strikes you
- **5 mins Writing** - write what you have heard, write your response to a reflection question(s) that attracts your attention
- **5 mins Sharing / Praying** - share with a friend or pray to God about livingtheword you have heard.
- Ecclesiasticus comes from the Greek word for the 'person who gathers the assembly together'. The word 'vanity' could more accurately be translated as 'breath' or 'vapour'. Feel the words and the profound questioning going on in the text. Respond in one sentence what motivates and gives your life direction and purpose. What are you really living for?
- Paul continues to teach the Colossians about Baptism. The baptism ceremony involved taking off their old clothes, being plunged into water as if being plunged into the earth like Christ to 'die'. They would rise and be anointed with oil, and be clothed with the white garment of the 'new self'. These external signs were symbolising a change within the person. A baptised christian is now dead to the world and alive with Christ. Consider a phrase such as 'Sport is his life', or 'Music is her life'. What does it involve do have an all encompassing pursuit or hobby? What is Paul suggesting by a favourite phrase he develops in this letter 'Christ your life'?

Then he said to the crowd,
“Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions.”

Then he told them a parable.
“There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. He asked himself, ‘What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?’ And he said, ‘This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I shall say to myself, “Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!” But God said to him, ‘You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?’

Thus will it be for all who store up treasure for themselves but are not rich in what matters to God.”



“God said to him,
‘You fool, this night your life
will be demanded of you.’ ”
Luke 12:20

- Rabbi’s were expected to make decisions on religious and civil matters. Yet Jesus chooses not to be the ‘judge’ of this inheritance dispute. He is not interested in property but he is interested in talking about ‘greed’. St Paul in the second reading referred to greed as ‘idolatry’ - replacing God. Have you ever considered your answer to the question: ‘What is enough?’ (money, car, savings, food allowance, clothing). What is a benchmark that when you have reached it you now have a duty to ‘share’? On a spectrum of ‘getting and ‘giving’ where would you mark your lifestyle?
- Building up supplies, having enough to ‘rest, eat, drink, be merry!’. Isn’t this what we all hope for? Isn’t this a nice picture of retirement? Satisfaction? And yet this text is one of the few times in the Gospels when God actually ‘speaks’ in a parable: “fool”. Why is personal comfort and material care of our families not enough?
- ‘I work to pay bills’ is a humorous phrase. Yet it indicates a trap we can so easily walk into. What debts, hire purchases, possessions are you ‘working for’? Are you investing your self and your fortune on projects and items that have no lasting significance?
- Being rich ‘in what matters to God’ is obviously not a property portfolio or a large amount of wealth. Find a way this week to open up a discussion with a friend what you think matters most to God.
- What is one action that you will do to ‘livetheword’ this week?