

livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Reading 1 Am 6:1a, 4-7

Thus says the LORD the God of hosts:
Woe to the complacent in Zion! Lying upon beds of ivory, stretched comfortably on their couches, they eat lambs taken from the flock, and calves from the stall!

Improvising to the music of the harp, like David, they devise their own accompaniment. They drink wine from bowls and anoint themselves with the best oils; yet they are not made ill by the collapse of Joseph! Therefore, now they shall be the first to go into exile, and their wanton revelry shall be done away with.

Reading 2 1 Tm 6:11-16

But you, man of God, pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Compete well for the faith. Lay hold of eternal life, to which you were called when you made the noble confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you before God, who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus, who gave testimony under Pontius Pilate for the noble confession, to keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ that the blessed and only ruler will make manifest at the proper time, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, and whom no human being has seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal power. Amen.

Gospel Lk 16:19-31

Jesus said to the Pharisees:
"There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have

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.
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- Amos continues his public speech in Jerusalem against the incredibly wealthy who are so 'satisfied' with beautiful beds, couches, food, wine, music concerts, beauty oils and cosmetics. 'They are not made ill by the collapse of their fellow people (Joseph)'. How does wealth manage to create a 'blindness' to the poor? Can you remember any experience where you had your eyes opened to the cry of the poor? What happened?
 - God's covenantal relationship in Dt 15:4 stated that 'there should be no poor among you because the Lord will richly bless you'. Implied in this is the richly blessed sharing with others to ensure all are looked after. Have you realised a christian religious commitment / covenant also involves a social obligation / covenant toward the 'poor'? How are you currently expressing this commitment in your lifestyle?
 - Some scholars consider this passage from the Letter to Timothy could come from an Ordination Ceremony. Do you have 'courage under fire', like Jesus before Pontius Pilate, to give your testimony and confess your faith in the most difficult of circumstances? Where and when do you find it hard?

eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores.

When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.'

Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.'

He said, 'Then I beg you, father, send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.' But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.'

He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' Then Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.'"



"The rich man cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me!'"
Luke 16:24

- Purple clothing was the ultimate sign of luxury and wealth because its source was a rare shellfish and insect being crushed. It was the ultimate in 'branded' clothing to distinguish a person who had wealth. What symbols of wealth are worn or shown today? Do you belong to this 'system'? What does it mean to you?
- The Great Reversal of fortunes is a theme of the Gospel of Luke. The Rich will be brought low, the poor will be lifted up. However it is not riches themselves that are the problem (Abraham himself was a very rich man!). It is the cycle of wealth to so preoccupy and claim ones attention and energy so that the needs of others go unnoticed. The rich man does know Lazarus because he calls out his name. However there is a failure of conversion. He cannot bring himself to share of his wealth. The Rich Man claims he did not have a warning that this reversal would happen. If this parable truly describes what will happen in the after-life, what does it demand of you? What would it take for your to 'share your wealth'? Have you given generously to the poor recently? Have you considered the difference between charity and true justice?
- The Parable of Lazarus could illustrate our Eucharistic Communities. We who are richly blessed, in our best Sunday clothes, celebrating in our liturgy God's great blessing and Eucharistic Banquet, while there are so many poor sitting in the nearby streets and alley-ways. Jesus, in the Gospel of Luke, refuses to allow his disciples to feel comfortable and satisfied with the default settings of the world. The costly and inclusive hospitality of God is something we are called to witness to. What obstacle to a deeper conversion to the poor sits in your way?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?