

04<sup>th</sup> August 2019 (18<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

Ecclesiastes 1:2,2:21-23; Psalm 89(90):3-6,12-14,17; Colossians 3:1-5,9-11; Luke 12:13-21.

**'Life is not made secure by what we own!'**

What is the true meaning of life? For Jesus life is to be part of God's kingdom, obeying God's will; 'your kingdom come, your will be done!' Life on earth is the beginning of true life, and should lead us to the fullness of life in God.

Today's gospel starts with the request from someone in the crowd asking Jesus to mediate between his brother and himself over their parents' will. Jesus wisely refuses to get involved, pointing out that it is not his role to sit in judgement over earthly disputes; his role, rather, is to help us look forward towards the fullness of God's kingdom!

The question in today's reading is not whether there should be any inheritance, not even whether it should be fairly shared among brothers and sisters, but rather what is true wealth! The problem between the two brothers is their greediness!

Jesus explains this with a simple parable. The landowner's crop produces more than is expected and so the problem arises regarding where to store this abundant crop! Jesus warns that all this is futile, as the man dies unexpectedly!

Perhaps one of the first signs that something is not right in this parable is when we notice that there is only one actor in the story, the landowner; moreover, when he talks, he only speaks to himself! One can compare this parable to the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin where the shepherd and the woman call their neighbours to a celebration because they have found what had been lost!

Wealth is a gift; the abundance of crop could very easily have been seen as an image of God's bounty and greatness. In the parables God is always shown as a bountiful and generous God! The landowner does not have the life of God in him; his actions do not reflect God in any way. Rather, he is closed onto himself; his only concern being 'where do I store all this wealth?' What the landowner does not realise is that there is much more to life than property.

The landowner has no time to thank God for his blessings; he does not look around to share with those in need around him. His immediately plans to build greater barns to store his harvest so that he can lie back and enjoy this windfall.

Jesus invites us to reflect on the fact that there is more to life than wealth. While it is not good to live in material poverty, greed does not achieve any benefits. It is good to be able to live a comfortable life, but wealth does not provide security. Life on earth has an end; at some point, we will relinquish all that we have stored away. Death is not the end of life, but only the beginning of the fullness of life. The demand will be made for the landowner's 'soul,' and he has to give account of his life on earth in front of the One who is the fullness of life; what can he show in his favour? While the crop in his barns may have made him enviable here on earth, it does nothing to gain him any wealth in front of God!

Last week Jesus invited us to pray: 'your kingdom come!' How do I prepare to participate in God's kingdom here on earth and later in heaven? The wealth I have is given to me in stewardship, to share with those who are in need around me. My generosity, living in the image and likeness of God who is generous in his love, gains me true wealth in the real life of heaven.

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