



## Second Sunday before Advent: 15<sup>th</sup> November

Father God help us to come to you this morning with open and thankful hearts. Fill us with the joy and peace that comes with knowing you. Be with us as we walk in your light, rejoice in your love and reflect your glory.

**Amen**

### **Hymn 606: Soldiers of Christ arise**

#### **Welcome**

The Lord be with you,  
**and also with you**

#### **Prayer of Preparation**

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen**

#### **Prayer of Confession**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: The first commandment is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself". There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen**

Lord have mercy  
**Lord have mercy**  
Christ have mercy  
**Christ have mercy**  
Lord have mercy  
**Lord have mercy**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in life eternal through Jesus Christ our lord. **Amen**

## Gloria

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.**  
**Amen.**

## Collect

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life: grant that we, having this hope, may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear in power and great glory we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

## New Testament Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1 – 11

Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

## Hymn 69: Be thou my guardian

## **Gospel Reading: Matthew 25:14-30**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

**Glory to you, O Lord**

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

“After a long time, the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

“The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

“Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So, I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So, you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

“So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ**

## **Sermon: Rev’d John Pinder**

From time to time we hear of people discovering Roman or Saxon hordes buried in the ground. There was the TV series, ‘the detectorists’ I was in the British Museum a year ago and was struck by the sheer quantity of treasures discovered over the last few years. It’s just amazing to me how so many artefacts have been preserved in the ground for hundreds of years. If they hadn’t been buried I am sure they would have been lost or damaged.

That's all a strange twist to the parable of Jesus. Human greed has been forever with us – the desire to make a quick buck, whether it's from the national lottery or investing in rather dubious enterprises. I do feel sorry when I hear of someone who has been conned into participating in a fraudulent scheme to make money even though it's their greed which has caused their downfall. Similarly there is a general feeling of ... contempt, envy? of people like hedge fund managers and investment bankers who indulge in dubiously moral practices. So I would say at face value, this parable of Jesus moves in areas of moral ambiguity.

I am intrigued by the use of the word 'talent' in the parable, because we seem to be talking about two different things. The talents that Jesus was referring to were gold or silver bars – in other words, representing large sums of money. When we talk about talents we mean something rather different. So I looked the word up and the derivation is the same, so I can only conclude that it's this very parable that has brought the two meanings together, with the implication that when Jesus is talking about gold bars, he actually means peoples' skills and abilities. But even if that's the case, it still leaves me feeling perplexed. If you have lots of talents, you are rewarded. If you only have a small talent you will suffer. What I suppose I am saying is that I would be happier if Jesus had reversed the order and told how the man with five talents had buried them and the one with one talent had used his ingenuity to double his capital.

So what talents do we have and how do we use them? One of the problems is that we are often far too modest about our God given talents – we are reluctant to acknowledge them. Many of us will have had to fill in questionnaires or appraisals or whatever, encouraging us to list our gifts and skills on the one hand, and our shortcomings and failures on the other so for example 'looking back over the past year, list the things that have gone well and the things that have gone badly.' Even the clergy are subjected to such reviews.

So it comes as rather a relief when we turn to what Paul is saying to the epistle. Because although Paul has a divisive world view with a very clear distinction between believers and non believers he is wonderfully positive and encouraging towards his congregation in Salonika.

'Since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.' The very fact that we are baptised members of the Body of Christ means that we have been given grace in abundance. God has called us and he has given us all the talents which are associated with the gifts of his spirit. In God's eyes, the talents that really count are not to do with our IQ or even QI, not to do with our IT skills, or our texting skills, our good looks, our good health. I don't think Paul would have scored very highly in any of these. The talents that count are the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of salvation, courage to speak out for truth and justice and a willingness to share the good news of the kingdom. We don't need a high IQ to learn from Jesus what it means to love and who we are to love. We don't need to be very sophisticated to humbly put our faith and trust in Christ and so we begin to understand that if only we can truly accept what the spirit is giving us, we shall indeed be multi talented and we shall be able to use those talents very profitably indeed by helping others as well as ourselves to come to a loving, trusting relationship with God our Father. Amen

## Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## The Peace

Take a moment and offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for each other and our church family church community. Maybe call or text someone who would enjoy sharing the peace with you.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy, that you may be kept safe and blameless in spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

## Hymn 70: Be thou my vision

### Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours.  
Now and for ever.  
Amen.**

## Hymn 72: Bind us together

## Remembering the Lord's Supper:

Take a moment to remember the final meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. As we think about this meal - with the washing of feet and bread and wine shared with friends - we remember Jesus' offering of himself on the cross. We rejoice in his resurrection from the dead and look forward to the coming of God's Kingdom. While we cannot receive Christ in the sacraments in the usual way, we can be the presence of Christ in our homes and communities and we can be a praying presence wherever we are.

## Hymn 195: From heav'n you came (the servant King)

### Closing Prayer:

Lord God, we thank you for this time of worship; may your love and peace remain with us in the coming days. Be with us in all that we will think, say and do so that our lives may reflect your glory. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
**In the name of Christ. Amen**

**If you have any prayer or pastoral needs, please don't hesitate to contact**  
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