



St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey
Sunday, 31 July 2022 – Trinity 7
Readings: Colossians 3: 1-11 & St Luke 12: 13-21
Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard

Travel broadens the mind

When David and I have been on our travels, we enjoy the sights and sounds, however, if travel teaches us anything, then it is the smells that often give the greatest indicator, of the state of a nation's equality or, lack of it, amongst its people. Glitzy streets on one side of a city wafting savoury smells from opulent restaurant frontages conflict with the other side of a city, where raw sewage flows down dirt tracks besides which, mothers and their emaciated children peep dejectedly out of wooden shacks. Sometimes David and I have learnt lessons the hard way. The most shameful display of inequality we witnessed on a cruise, was when we treated ourselves one evening and, so dearly wished we hadn't. We had booked into the specialist steak restaurant and were studying the menu, when a wealthy couple was shown to the table next to ours and offered menus. To be factual, the woman was as slender as a lathe so, our ears came out on stalks when we overheard her order the 32oz steak: how on earth would she manage to eat it? The steak duly arrived on a platter such, was its proportions. Her partner raised a whimsical eyebrow to which she retorted, "Of course I'm not going to eat it! I only ordered it to, see what it looked like." To have such wealth and flaunt it seemed to be the cruellest form of greed before waiters, mostly from countries, whose families doubtless relied on every single penny that was sent home, so that they might eat. This reinforced our responsibility not to waste food but take sufficient only for our needs and no more. Which brings me on to the Bible readings. Let's explore what they have to say about greed before moving on to the remedy.

The diversity of greed

In Colossians, St Paul states "Greed is idolatry". In Luke, Jesus referring to greed says, "One's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." His parable of the rich man sitting back fatly surveying his stored wealth when that night he would die, is a salutary way of saying, "You can't take it with you when you go!" How true. But do we recognise greed when it sneaks up upon us? Using the Collect as a checklist, are our hands so full of possessions that our hearts are empty? Are we in danger of forsaking our 'Lord, of all power, the author and giver of all good things', without whom we'd have nothing? Do we actively ask God 'to graft in our hearts the love of his name, true religious and nourish us with all goodness?' The crux of the matter is, what we crave can become all-consuming or, as Paul said "Idolatry". Money may be one thing. Which of us does not wish to have financial security? But we know that there comes a point when enough, is more than enough. Or, there are those greedy for recognition for who they think they are and for what they do. Or, some crave to be in control directing the lives of others to the extent that they cannot live

fully as God intended. Conversely, some view the world as so challenging that, self-absorbed, they are greedy for their personal space that they might be left alone. Greed takes so many different forms but all are wasted opportunities.

The remedy for lost opportunities

So, what is the antidote? Have you ever thought what you might change if you could live your life backwards? Perhaps, we would do some things differently, so that our actions did not hurt the lives of others. Whilst we cannot change the past, it is heartening to be reminded that Jesus achieved the ability to reverse the hold of sin and death over us, so that our misdeeds can be forgiven and cancelled. The Post-Communion Prayer gives us the words we need, 'Lord God, whose Son is the true vine and source of life, ever giving himself that the world may live: may we so receive within ourselves the power of his death and passion that, in his saving cup, we may share his glory and be made perfect in his love.' The word 'share' is key. Irrespective of our material means, if God is working through us, we all have his gifts and fruits to share. There's love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, forgiveness, wisdom, understanding, self-control, to mention just a few. They cost absolutely nothing financially, but to those who receive what we share, it's utterly priceless and transformative.

What, in simple terms, can we do?

To wrap up, Nick Knowles the presenter of the TV series *DIY SOS*, often closes a programme with, "We can't help everyone but, we can all help someone." Through Jesus Christ, let's ask for his help to find even more ways of sharing his love with others. Amen