



A Reflection for Seventh Sunday of Trinity Readings - Colossians 3.1-11 & Luke 12.13-21

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.' But he said to him, 'Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?' And he said to them, 'Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.' Then he told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.'

Ask, Seek and Knock. Jesus' teaching is so wonderfully depicted in the painting 'The Light of the World' by Holman Hunt. Jesus stands by a door that does not have a handle for him to open. There is only one handle and this can only be opened by you and me. For the door is symbolic of our lives as Jesus patiently waits. A powerful image of the love of God not seeking to force a way into a person's life.

Jesus believes in personal responsibility and only we can open our life to Jesus.

A person in the crowd asks Jesus to make a decision for him. 'Tell my brother to divide the family inheritance'. No, is Jesus' response. That is your personal responsibility to work this out with your brother. Jesus does not accept the transference of responsibility that this man is seeking to employ and he simply returns the question.

Jesus is clear that the man in the crowd is to take personal responsibility for his life.

We live in a society that does seem to encourage the avoidance of personal responsibility but Jesus asks us to take this very seriously.

It may be far easier to allow ourselves to follow a prescriptive way of being. That is exactly what the Jews were doing at the time of Jesus with the adherence of hundreds of rules but Jesus tore that way of being apart. We are invited by Jesus to make decisions for ourselves that are motivated out of unconditional love. Otherwise we can be totally consumed in living lives that have no meaning. We only think of our self interest as Jesus taught with the example of the man and the building of a new barn. We are invited to allow the Jesus Story to become integrated in our own story as we decide to follow Jesus every moment of everyday.

Thank you for reading and keep safe.

The Reverend Nick Devenish

*Night Prayer from Cartmel Vicarage is live streamed from 9.00pm week nights on Facebook and will be back soon.
Keep connected by going to the Cartmel Priory Facebook page.*

Image - 'The Walk to Emmaus' by Lelio Oisi