

Harvest Thanksgiving Luke 12:13-21. 2017

HYMNS: 567, 560, 564, 568, 284, 122.

INTROIT: Psalm 65

P You receive praise in silence in Zion, O God, and vows to You will be fulfilled.

C **O You who hear prayer, to You all human beings will come.**

P Iniquitous things have been prevailing over me. You Yourself will provide atonement for our rebellious actions.

C **Blessed is the person whom You choose and whom You bring near, that he may dwell in Your courts! We shall be satisfied with the good things of Your house, the holiness of Your temple.**

P You answer us in righteousness with awesome deeds, O our saving God, the Confidence of all the ends of the earth and of the most distant sea.

C **He is the One who sets the mountains in place by His strength, the One who puts on strength like a waistcloth.**

P He is the One who calms the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the peoples.

C **Those who live at the ends of the earth have been in awe of Your miraculous signs. You make the places where morning dawns and the places where evening fades shout for joy.**

P You have taken care of the land and have caused it to overflow. You have enriched it abundantly. The stream of God is filled with water. You are providing their grain. For that is how You have prepared it.

C **You have given its furrows their fill of drink, and levelled off the edges of its furrows. You soften it with gentle rain, and bless its growth.**

P You have crowned the year of Your goodness, and Your wheel-tracks drip with fat.

C **The pastures in the desert overflow. The hills are robed with joy.**

All **The meadows are clothed with flocks, and the valleys are covered with grain. They are shouting for joy. Indeed, they are singing.**

COLLECT: Almighty God, whom to know is everlasting life, grant us to know Your Son, Jesus, to be the way, the truth, and the life that we may boldly confess Him to be the Christ and steadfastly walk in the way that leads to life eternal; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

READINGS:

Old Testament: Deuteronomy 22:1-11

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Gospel: Luke 12:13-21

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all Amen.

The text for our sermon for this Sunday is written in the book of Luke 12:13-21 which was our gospel reading before

13 Someone in the crowd asked Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me!”

14 Jesus asked him, “Man, who appointed Me to be a judge or an arbitrator over you?”

15 Then He told them, “Beware, and be on your guard against all greed! For a person’s life does not consist in how plentiful his possessions are.”

16 Then Jesus told them a parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. **17** He thought to himself, ‘What am I to do? For I have no place to store my produce.’”

18 “Then he said, ‘This is what I shall do: I shall pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and I shall store my grain and all my other goods in them. **19** Then I shall say to myself, “Soul, you have many good things stored up for many years. Take life easy, eat, drink, and enjoy yourself!”

20 “However, God said to him, ‘You fool, this very night your life will be demanded of you. Then who will get the things that you have prepared?’”

21 Jesus said, “So is he who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

Lord God, Heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. **Amen.**

Dear friends in Christ,

Peace be with you

This morning is a time for thinking about the Fourth Petition of the Lord’s Prayer ... Give us this day our daily bread. Martin Luther explains this petition with these words:

What does this mean?

God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread?

Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land animals money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbours, and the like.

The struggle for us is that God, as the creator, provides all these things in a very natural way ... a way that is so natural that we can easily forget who really provides the necessities of life. We drive down the road and see the crops and are properly thankful for the farmers who plant, care for, and harvest the crop, but it's all too easy to forget the God who provides the farmer with his mind, wisdom and strength ... who also provides rain and sun ... who even supervises the growth process in both plants and animals.

When God created the world, He gave mankind the opportunity to cooperate with Him in caring for the world. **Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden, to farm it and to take care of it.** [Genesis 2:15.] The work was to be a joy and a reason for giving thanks. Tragically, mankind fell into sin and broke the universe. The work that was once a joy became a dull, boring, frustrating chore. Man’s mind was also corrupted. Now it was all too easy to forget the Lord who is the source of all gifts. It's all too easy to worship the creation instead of the creator.

That's what happened to the rich man in the parable that Jesus told in this morning’s Gospel. He forgot the source of his good fortune. He forgot the God who made him and blessed him. He forgot it was God that brought him to that ... **place and has given "him" this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.** He forgot that it was God that gave him the ... **produce of the land, which You, O LORD, have given him?** He forgot to ... **set it down before the LORD, "his" God, and worship before the LORD, "his" God!**

11 **Then you shall be glad about all the good things that the LORD, your God, has given to you and your family, together with the Levite and the foreigner who is living among you!** [Deuteronomy 26:9-11.] He wasn't interested in the things of God. Instead, he was interested in happiness. He was interested in the pleasures of this life. He was interested in himself instead of being interested in God.

The psalms have a word for those who are not interested in God. Twice, the psalmist says **“The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”** [Psalm 14:1 and 53:1.] That's exactly what God called this rich man. God said to him, **‘You fool, this very night your life will be demanded of you. Then who will get the things that you have prepared?’** As Jesus said at another time, **“For what good will it do a person if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a person give in exchange for his soul?”** [Matthew 16:26.]

The problem is not that the rich man was rich. There are plenty of examples of men in the Bible who were both wealthy and faithful. The problem is, with all of his planning ... with all of his business savvy, he forgot the most important planning of all. He forgot to plan for his eternity.

Jesus told this parable because someone asked him to intervene in a dispute over an inheritance. Jesus sensed that this was ultimately not a matter of equitable distribution of wealth. This was a request triggered by greed and covetousness. The parable was designed to put that man in his place, and it still does that for us today.

Disputes about an inheritance or any other kind of wealth arise because people set their hearts on the wrong kind of riches. God offers us a better way to live, a way not dependent on earthly wealth for success, nor on bodily pleasures for true happiness. The riches that last, the joy that is eternal, will never be found in the things of this world. They are gifts of our gracious God, who gives us both eternal riches and unending joy through eternal life in his Son, Jesus Christ.

Our Lord Jesus came into this world as King of kings and Lord of lords. Yet He had no home, no fancy clothes, no comfortable bed. Still, on the Last Day, every knee will bow before Him. Why? Because He was poor? No, because He faithfully carried out the Father's will to save us. Christ Jesus, true God with the Father, but also true man by virtue of the body and human existence He received from His human mother, came to redeem us and to buy us back for God. He sacrificed His life on the cross to atone for our disobedience. Through His innocent death and victorious resurrection, He has reclaimed us as God's sons and daughters.

We have now been assured of an eternal home with Christ in heaven. We have a priceless inheritance, but it's not measured in houses or land or crops, or in dollars or insurance policies. It's as the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to write, **"If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."** [Galatians 3:29.] As God's children, through faith in Christ, we are destined to inherit everything that is His, and that means everything! How poor, then, are those, like the rich man in this parable, who counted their wealth only in terms of crops and barns and money and comfort! Rich fool? Fool for sure, and in the end, not even rich!

We can and we should give thanks to Almighty God for the material blessings He gives to us. However, as great as these blessings are, the time will come when they will all slip away from us. It's then that we face either eternal poverty or eternal wealth. Through the work of Jesus Christ, we can be confident that we will inherit eternal wealth ... life lived forever in God's love.

I wonder how many Christians are like the rich fool? Do they have a general feeling of happiness for their wealth, but they have no idea who to thank. I wonder how many there are who not only give thanks for their earthly well-being, but they also give thanks for the forgiveness, life, and salvation that they receive by faith in Jesus Christ? There are lots of Australians who are not Christians who can have thankful feelings, - but their thanks will go to a false god - a god who doesn't exist. Only true Christians give thanks to the true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen

3th Hymn: 564,

Prayer for the Harvest Festival.

P Our heavenly Father cares for us and knows our need. In our prayer, let us strive first for His kingdom, and, as we cast our cares on Him in the name of Jesus, we will receive His righteousness and protection.

Brief silence.

P Creator of all things, Ruler of the changing seasons, Lord of the harvest, the heavens tell of Your glory and the earth and sea declare Your power. We praise you, Father of all people, for this spinning planet which supports abundant life; for this country; for the fertile ground; for the life in seed and for the miracle of growth; for the harvest of field, garden and orchard; and for the produce of the sea. We thank you for supplying us with food for our bodies; for stimulating our minds with knowledge; and for nourishing our souls with the truth of Your Word. - Most of all, Father, we thank and praise You for Jesus Christ - the very best of all Your gifts; for the guidance He gave by His life; for the salvation He won for us by His death; and for the hope of eternal life we have through His resurrection..... Lord Jesus, in your mercy:

C Hear our prayer.

P Eternal Father, You are strong to save. - Look in mercy on Your holy Church and grant steadfastness and courage so that the Word of truth may be proclaimed to the ends of the earth. - Defend all who confess Jesus as Lord and Saviour so that Satan may have no power over them. - Give all of us the desire to hear Your Word preached in its purity so that we may be refreshed by the life You freely give..... Lord Jesus, in Your mercy:

C Hear our prayer.

P Eternal Father, You are strong to save. - In Your wisdom you have established the nations of the earth and those who govern. - Give wisdom, patience, and compassion to all the leaders of our nation - that in these perilous times their actions may serve the cause of justice and peace. Restrain and thwart all those who act contrary to your will so that peace may reign among us..... Lord Jesus, in your mercy:

C Hear our prayer.

P Lord Jesus, many people have full larders – with food enough and then some to spare. Yet inwardly they have a spiritual hunger which remains unsatisfied. You, Lord Jesus, are the Bread of Life – without You our hearts go hungry and our lives are empty. Send Your Holy Spirit to the spiritually hungry that they may feed on You through Your Holy Supper by faith and grasp the abundance which You came to bring all people..... Lord Jesus, in Your mercy:

C Hear our prayer

P Lord God, unless You care for us and give us what we need, all our work is in vain. - As You have said **“The harvest is great, but the labourers are few.** Therefore we earnestly pray to You the Lord of the harvest to provide us with labourers. Keep our hearts and minds set firmly on Your word, so that we may always trust in You, and be generous with the gifts You have given us. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

4th Hymn: 568,