

2022-07-31 ... 8am Communion Sermon

Colossians 3: 1 – 11; Luke 12: 13 – 21

'Greed'

Is there some deeper sin beneath the apparent ungodliness of hoarding wealth? As we see – from life around us as well as our Bible passages – accumulating stuff doesn't make a person happy. But is this the whole story? Jesus' words in today's gospel suggest that there is:

“Be on your guard against every kind of greed.”

Think back to the early days of the Covid pandemic – we saw, at first, a most impressive drive to devise, test, evaluate and license a whole range of vaccines against Covid-19. But then hoarding set in. Sometimes, as when the UK secured the promise of enough vaccine to vaccinate its population several times over, it was called prudence. Later it was vaccine nationalism. Some people insisted that the nation devising the vaccine should get first access to it, regardless of need. Others sought to disparage a vaccine they hadn't produced or procured in sufficient supply, regardless of the consequences of thereby encouraging vaccine hesitancy. What lay behind this rather shocking display of school-playground mentality? 'It's my ball and he's not playing with it!' 'It's a rotten ball and I wouldn't play with you even if you let me!'

Covid vaccines proved a kind of possession that illustrated all too clearly how our possessions, even good and useful ones, can come to be seen as our only protection against a hostile and dangerous world – or our leverage against opponents. We can forget about trusting in God whilst being generous to others. We can become possessive and defensive, trusting that what we own will protect us from all difficulty – other people, from impending emergencies or unseen dangers.

So, richness in possessions of all kinds really does seem to militate strongly against trust in God. What we have can mask our real needs, and leave no room for faith to squeeze in, never mind to permeate all of our attitudes and actions. Possessions can perpetuate and build fear of loss; and that inhibits hope, as well as love, compassion and generosity.

But it's very hard to shake off our trust in possessions completely. Perhaps we should at the very least wind it down a bit!.

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