



**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

***The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity / Creation-tide***

**Gospel Reading: Luke 14:25-33**

**The Cost of Discipleship**

<sup>25</sup> Now large crowds were travelling with him; and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> 'Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup> For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, <sup>30</sup> saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish." <sup>31</sup> Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

**Other Readings: Deuteronomy 30:15-end      Psalm 1      Philemon 1-21**

**Homily**

There is a fable written by Terry Jones about a glass cupboard, or cabinet. Although it appeared empty you could take out of it anything you wanted, a cool drink, new shoes, or even a bag of gold! But, and as always in such tales the 'but' is important, ... for you had to remember that whenever you took something out, you had to put something back in.

One day the cabinet was stolen by three thieves. 'Hooray', they said. 'Now we can take out as much gold as we like!' And they did, over and over, and over, day and night, day after day, week after week. Finally, one of the thieves could stand the obsession no longer and he smashed the glass cabinet, at which, the thieves fell dead on their mountain of gold. When the King who had owned the cabinet eventually found it, he said, sadly, 'If only those thieves had put something back in each time, they would be alive to this day.' The King's servants were then commanded to gather up all the pieces of the cabinet, which were then melted down and made into a globe to remind everyone that the world is as fragile as that glass cabinet!

In this tale the obsession with material things destroyed both the thieves and the cabinet and acts as a warning to humanity, a reminder that our proper relationship to possessions and to our world should be one of 'give and take'. The cabinet was able to provide that which people requested, and whilst they, in turn, gave something back, there was harmony. But when the thieves lost sight of their relationship to the cabinet – that which furnished them with unending treasure, when the balance of give and take was broken, when there was no sense of

responsibility to offer anything into this gifting, no mutuality, then both people and cabinet were doomed to destruction.

Today's Gospel reading teaches us about right relationships – with Jesus, with those we love, with our possessions, and indirectly, though crucially, with our world.

It's not an easy passage to hear or read given its apparent instruction to *hate*, and in order to understand the message Jesus wanted to convey, we need to know more about the context into which He was speaking, and what his words meant to their original listeners.

Today the word *hate* carries with it a meaning of intense adverse feeling. When a person says they *hate* someone or something they are expressing extreme loathing, revulsion, disgust. This was not so in Jesus's time. To *hate* someone or something meant that they were to be placed in a lower position to someone or something else. Jesus wasn't asking his disciples, his followers, and us, to hate our parents and families in the sense of the word as we understand it; rather, He was and is teaching us to prioritise the relationship we have with Him, placing it above all other relationships and things, to acknowledge that God reigns supreme in our lives.

Jesus wants us to put God first, not because He is jealous of our bonds with others, but because, with God at the centre of our lives, everything else falls into place. Our relationships with other human beings, our attachments, our wants, desires, and our actions and behaviours towards the world we inhabit are then all informed by our love of God; and in giving our lives and our love back to God, we find we are richly blessed. With God as our life's focus we live more effectively and fruitfully - for the benefit of others and to the benefit of the planet. We love our families more generously if we love God first; we have a healthier connection to possessions if we love God first; and we have a greater understanding of our responsibilities to others and to God's good creation if we place Him first.

On thinking back to the fragility of the glass globe in our fable, we are reminded of the vulnerability of our own world. Western nations are said to consume 10 times more of the earth's resources than poorer nations. If our attitude to what we take from the planet, and what we put back into the planet is informed by our love of and commitment to God, whom we place first in our lives, it too will be healthier.

Are there people or things to which you ascribe a higher meaning than God? This Creation-tide as we give thanks to God for all He has provided, for the beautiful, yet fragile world he designed and sustains, may we live out our gratitude by committing to placing Him first in our lives. We take much from this world, but God has provided us with a way to redress the balance which positively and richly affects all our behaviours and our relationships. The final verse of the hymn *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* by Isaac Watts reminds us what we should give back to God:

*Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small.  
Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.*

## Conversation Questions

1. *What could you do this week to live out single-minded, devotion to Jesus? Prayer? Bible reading? Care for others?*
2. *Where does your relationship to shopping or buying stuff need to change so that you reuse, recycle or repurpose stuff rather than buying more?*
3. *Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you? What is it?*
4. *What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith*

## Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

## Collect of the day

*Almighty and everlasting God,  
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray  
and to give more than either we desire or deserve:  
pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,  
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid  
and giving us those good things  
which we are not worthy to ask  
but through the merits and mediation  
of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.*

*(or)*

*God of constant mercy,  
who sent your Son to save us:  
remind us of your goodness,  
increase your grace within us,  
that our thankfulness may grow,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England, material from which is incorporated in this service paper, is copyright © The Archbishops' Council, 2000. Scripture passage from the New Revised Standard Version (Anglicised) copyright © 1989, 1995 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.