



## Parish of Finchampstead and California

# THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

6 - 11 JULY 2020

## INTRODUCTION

The NT readings for Morning Prayer continue their progress through Luke's Gospel; each day's thought is based mainly on the parts of the readings in bold type.

## MONDAY - Luke 17:20-37

**<sup>20</sup> Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, 'The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; <sup>21</sup> nor will they say, "Look, here it is!" or "There it is!" For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you.'**

<sup>22</sup> Then he said to the disciples, 'The days are coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. <sup>23</sup> They will say to you, "Look there!" or "Look here!" Do not go, do not set off in pursuit. <sup>24</sup> For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. <sup>25</sup> But first he must endure much suffering and be rejected by this generation. <sup>26</sup> Just as it was in the days of Noah, so too it will be in the days of the Son of Man. <sup>27</sup> They were eating and drinking, and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed all of them. <sup>28</sup> Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot: they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, <sup>29</sup> but on the day that Lot left Sodom, it rained fire and sulphur from heaven and destroyed all of them <sup>30</sup> —it will be like that on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. <sup>31</sup> On that day, anyone on the housetop who has belongings in the house must not come down to take them away; and likewise anyone in the field must not turn back. <sup>32</sup> Remember Lot's wife. <sup>33</sup> Those who try to make their life secure will lose it, but those who lose their life will keep it. <sup>34</sup> I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. <sup>35</sup> There will be two women grinding meal together; one will be taken and the other left.' <sup>37</sup> Then they asked him, 'Where, Lord?' He said to them, 'Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.'

## ***Thought for the day***

*In Matthew's Gospel (24:36-41) the equivalent passage to this one is followed by the instruction to 'keep watch, because you do not know when your Lord will come'. With a different emphasis Luke prefaces the ominous OT references to destruction (the flood and Sodom) and the personal warnings with a question about the Kingdom of God (v20-21). On their own these verses make an important point - that the Kingdom is more about God-directed relationships and attitudes than about visible events. This wisdom is worth thinking about, since it's still relevant, but the transition to very visible and worrying events in the rest of the passage remains unexplained.*

## **TUESDAY - Luke 18:1-14**

<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. <sup>2</sup> He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. <sup>3</sup> In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, "Grant me justice against my opponent." <sup>4</sup> For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, "Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'" <sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?'

<sup>9</sup> He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: <sup>10</sup> 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. <sup>11</sup> **The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income."** <sup>13</sup> **But the tax-collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."** <sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.'

### ***Thought for the day***

*The simplicity of the tax-collector's prayer (v13) has been slightly expanded in the Jesus prayer - Lord Jesus Christ, son of the living God, have mercy on me a sinner - which combines affirmation of Jesus with confession and supplication. Many people find this a helpful and easily memorised prayer, especially for times when they don't know what to pray. We know Jesus wants us to be like the tax-collector, but isn't it so easy to lapse into Pharisee-speak, even if not in our prayers, certainly in our thoughts?*

## **WEDNESDAY - Luke 18:15-30**

<sup>15</sup> People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. <sup>16</sup> But Jesus called for them and said, '**Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. <sup>17</sup> Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.'**

<sup>18</sup> A certain ruler asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' <sup>19</sup> Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. <sup>20</sup> You know the commandments: "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honour your father and mother.'" <sup>21</sup> He replied, 'I have kept all these since my youth.' <sup>22</sup> When Jesus heard this, he said to him, 'There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' <sup>23</sup> But when he heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich. <sup>24</sup> Jesus looked at him and said, 'How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup> Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.' <sup>26</sup> Those who heard it said, 'Then who can be saved?' <sup>27</sup> He replied, 'What is impossible for mortals is possible for God.'

<sup>28</sup> Then Peter said, 'Look, we have left our homes and followed you.' <sup>29</sup> And he said to them, 'Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, <sup>30</sup> who will not get back very much more in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.'

## ***Thought for the day***

*While Jesus' camel and eye-of-the-needle analogy seems to deny any possibility of entering the kingdom of heaven for the wealthy (v25), he goes on to suggest that God's grace may provide a way (v27), and that the sacrifices of his own followers will be rewarded (v28-30). But in the first part of today's reading - verses 15-17, one of the best known but least regarded of Jesus' sayings - it all seems much simpler: we are to be like young children, presumably to 'trust and obey'. Easy to say, hard to do.*

## **THURSDAY - Luke 18:31-43**

<sup>31</sup> Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, 'See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. <sup>32</sup> For he will be handed over to the Gentiles; and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon. <sup>33</sup> After they have flogged him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again.'  
<sup>34</sup> But they understood nothing about all these things; in fact, what he said was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

<sup>35</sup> As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. <sup>36</sup> When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. <sup>37</sup> They told him, 'Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.'  
<sup>38</sup> **Then he shouted, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.'** <sup>39</sup> Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me.'  
<sup>40</sup> Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, <sup>41</sup> 'What do you want me to do for you?' He said, 'Lord, let me see again.'  
<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight; your faith has saved you.'  
<sup>43</sup> Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.

## ***Thought for the day***

*This man was an embarrassment to other people in the crowd but he was persistent. And, although he was blind, he had a special insight into who Jesus was - not just Jesus of Nazareth but Jesus of David, quite a different thing: that allusion to royalty is precisely what Jesus himself will proclaim when he rides into Jerusalem on a donkey (next Monday's reading). Jesus sums up the man's refusal to be silenced, his insight, his persistence as his faith. Would he say the same of us?*

## **FRIDAY - Luke 19:1-10**

<sup>1</sup> Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. <sup>2</sup> A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was rich. <sup>3</sup> He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. <sup>4</sup> So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, '**Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.**' <sup>6</sup> So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. <sup>7</sup> All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.'  
<sup>8</sup> Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.'  
<sup>9</sup> Then Jesus said to him, '**Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.**' <sup>10</sup> **For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'**

## ***Thought for the day***

*Jesus knew who it was up the tree, and he honours Zacchaeus by inviting himself to his house, the very house self-respecting Jews would refuse to enter. By welcoming Jesus and by acting to offset the ill-gotten gains of tax collecting, Zacchaeus acknowledges the*

*honour Jesus does him. But Jesus takes things a step further in verse 9 - salvation has come to this house: his name means 'God saves' so what he says is true twice over. At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow (Philippians 2:10) - Zacchaeus' and all of ours. And salvation will come to our homes and hearts as surely as it came to Zacchaeus'.*

## **SATURDAY - Luke 19:11-27**

<sup>11</sup> As they were listening to this, he went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. <sup>12</sup> So he said, 'A nobleman went to a distant country to get royal power for himself and then return. <sup>13</sup> He summoned ten of his slaves, and gave them ten pounds, and said to them, "Do business with these until I come back." <sup>14</sup> But the citizens of his country hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, "We do not want this man to rule over us." <sup>15</sup> When he returned, having received royal power, he ordered these slaves, to whom he had given the money, to be summoned so that he might find out what they had gained by trading. <sup>16</sup> The first came forward and said, "Lord, your pound has made ten more pounds." <sup>17</sup> He said to him, "Well done, good slave! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small thing, take charge of ten cities." <sup>18</sup> Then the second came, saying, "Lord, your pound has made five pounds." <sup>19</sup> He said to him, "And you, rule over five cities." <sup>20</sup> Then the other came, saying, "Lord, here is your pound. I wrapped it up in a piece of cloth, <sup>21</sup> for I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man; you take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow." <sup>22</sup> **He said to him, "I will judge you by your own words, you wicked slave! You knew, did you, that I was a harsh man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? <sup>23</sup> Why then did you not put my money into the bank? Then when I returned, I could have collected it with interest."** <sup>24</sup> He said to the bystanders, "Take the pound from him and give it to the one who has ten pounds." <sup>25</sup> (And they said to him, "Lord, he has ten pounds!") <sup>26</sup> "I tell you, to all those who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. <sup>27</sup> But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and slaughter them in my presence.'"

### ***Thought for the day***

*The so-called parable of the Talents is usually read from Matthew's Gospel (25:14-30), where it is simpler and not confused by the plot and eventual massacre of rebellious citizens. Even there the cautious third servant is likely to evoke our sympathy. But as soon as we look beyond the money to Jesus' underlying point, which is to do with talents in the sense of personal skills or attributes, we realise how far he falls short of reasonable expectations. God wants us to use those talents he has given us in his service. Not to do so is to turn our backs on him and to deny all that he is - just as Peter did to Jesus after his arrest (Luke 22:54-62).*