



NEWCASTLE DIOCESE GENEROSITY WEEK 2024

Sermon Starter

Matthew 6:19-33

‘Where Your Heart Is’

Matthew 6:19-33

19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy,^[c] your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eyes are unhealthy,^[d] your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. 25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life^[e]? 28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Notes

Our gospel reading finished with the very well-known exhortation to seek the Kingdom of God first. In other words, to pursue the values the Kingdom of God over and above anything else we might wish to do in life.

So every now and again it can be helpful to undertake a little self-review. It's all very well thinking I'm pursuing the Kingdom of God, but how do I know I really am?

One way is to have a little look at what we do with our money. Jesus' comment "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also", demonstrates he saw the link between faith and finance only too clearly. He knows that our money, either overtly or sub-consciously, follows the things we hold to be important in life.

That means one way we can ask ourselves what we really consider to be our top priorities is to review what we are doing with our money. If we see giving to our local Church as a duty, an obligation, something we have to do, it's never really going to work for us in our hearts. We're unlikely to be the cheerful givers mentioned in 2 Cor 9: 7.

However if we are giving to our Church because we love it, want to support it and stand alongside our Church and our Diocese in all we are trying to achieve - it's different. We are giving so something bigger than and beyond us. We are giving as an expression of our faith.

But we should acknowledge some people are struggling during this cost of living crisis. So stress we can not say how much a person should give. It must be a private decision between that person and God.

We can however draw attention to instances in the Bible where people still gave, notwithstanding very challenging circumstances of their own. 2 Cor 8: 2-5, Mark 12:4 4, 1 Kings 17: 12 & 15

Finish by inviting people to review whether what they give to the Church still reflects their priorities – what they believe, or whether somehow our giving has slipped out of synch with our values as people of faith.