

Thought for the Day 16th June 2020 from Nigel Greenwood

Luke 12.13-21

Today's reading from Luke's Gospel considers the parable of the rich fool, in which Jesus was asked to arbitrate on the division of a family inheritance however, as so often, Jesus took the opportunity to focus on a matter of principle rather than get involved in a family dispute.

In front of the crowd, he told the family to take care and be on guard against all kinds of greed, before going on to make one of his profound and indeed timeless statements: "life does not consist in the abundance of possessions".

In the parable, Christ warns against storing up treasures on earth – for as the saying goes, we can't take it with us! This surely brings a timely warning against prioritising materialism against those things which really matter. It challenges us to consider the values which we hold and the assumption that wealth or possessions can in themselves bring happiness – but rather how we use our resources for the common good.

Mother Teresa gives us clear guidance on how we should respond: "I used to pray that God would feed the hungry, or do this or that, but now I pray that He will guide me to do whatever I'm supposed to do – what I can do. I used to pray for answers, but now I'm praying for strength. I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us – and we change things".

The passage ends with an exhortation to be 'rich toward God' – an intriguing phrase about which much has been written. Perhaps a simple explanation would be that we should always hold God above our earthly possessions, using our gifts and resources to apply our faith in our daily lives by following the great commandment to love our neighbours.

The following link takes us through the parable: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yyVzsUK5ak>