Prayer before the talk.

Lord uphold me, that I may uplift thee!

And grant that the words from my mouth and the meditations our hearts will always be acceptable in your sight, now and forever! Amen.

“LAST WILL BE FIRST AND FIRST WILL BE LAST!” Matthew 20: 1-16. Sunday 24. 9. 23.

Today we heard from the gospel of Matthew that the giver of gifts, wages, remuneration has the

right to be more generous, at his/her will if they so choose and ought not to be criticised for their

generosity!

Not the kind of thinking that would go down well with the Union Movement, I would say!

In the parable, of “The Workers in the Vineyard”, the earliest workers probably worked for about

12 hours. The 9 am starters worked for 9 hours. The midday workers must have worked 6 hours.

The 3pm starters, for 3 hours, but those hired at 5pm only worked one hour, yet every worker

 including them, was given the same wage!

WHAT DO WE THINK ABOUT THAT? ( they each agreed to work for that wage at their time of

 hiring)

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Being a Christian is a lot like that, it’s not an easy ride!

In earlier chapters of Matthew’s gospel, he catalogues what it takes to BE a Christian, not to just

LOOK like one.

In Chapter 5: 13-16. Jesus says we must be like SALT and LIGHT.

HOW CAN WE DO THAT? ( we must maintain our enthusiasm and shine like bright lights.)

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In 5:38-42. We’re told not to seek PAYBACK / REVENGE, that’s God’s job.

Instead we are cautioned to TURN THE OTHER CHEEK, give extra.

WHEN HAVE YOU FELT LIKE EXTRACTING PAYBACK?

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Then in Matthew 5:43-48, Jesus says we must LOVE our ENEMIES for, “ Even tax collectors love

 their friends and relatives.” That’s too easy!

HOW CAN WE SHOW LOVE FOR THOSE FOR WHOM WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO DO SO?

( the pantry, food parcels for those who need them, random acts of kindness as/when the

opportunities arise)

………………..

Moving on to Matthew 6:1-3, we are asked TO GIVE, but to do so QUIETLY and without fanfare,

For God, seeing you do so secretly, will reward you openly, in some unexpected way!

IN WHAT OTHER WAYS CAN WE BE GIVING? ( Advise, when it’s sought. Assuring folk that if you

 can be of assistance, you will be.)

………………..

Matthew 6 :9-13, which has the lot. THE LORD’S PRAYER.

PRAYER is us, talking to God and in this prayer we have praise for God, requests for our

 human needs for ourselves and others, asking forgiveness for our short comings and

 forgiveness for others’ shortcomings, plus finishing with an appeal to God to keep us away from

Evil and wrong doing.

( Talk to God, every day, to start with, and you’ll soon find yourself in constant contact with God

moment by moment, as the need arises)

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In Matthew 6:19-21, We are warned about becoming ACQUISITIVE in nature by spending our

lives acquiring perceived treasures, and as v 20/21 say, “ Instead, store up your treasures in

heaven where moths and rust can’t destroy them.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

WHAT ARE SOME OF THOSE EARTHLY TREASURES? HEAVENLY TREASURES?

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Matthew 6: 25-34, tells us to STOP WORRYING!

The Moslems, with whom we share a background through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Esau in

the OT, read Genesis, have a saying which I greatly respect which is “Allah Kareem “,

 translated to us it means , “ God will provide” Great Faith!

WHAT DO WE WORRY ABOUT? ( money, kids, neighbours, the world situation, war)

………………..

NOT JUDGING OTHERS

Matthew 7:2 says “God will be as hard on you as you are on others! He will treat you exactly

the same as you treat them. 7:5 “ First take the log ( of wood) out of your own eye. Then you

you can see clearly how to take the speck ( or splinter) out of your friend’s eye!”

( Address your own faults and you’ll be far too busy to find fault with others)

………………..

THE GOLDEN RULE Matthew 7: 12 and verse 7

“Treat others as you want them to treat you. This is what the Law and the Prophets are all about.

Ask and receive, search and you will find, knock and the door will be opened for you!”

God, our Heavenly Father, likes to be asked.

HOW CAN WE ASK! SEARCH, KNOCK? (Study Scripture, ask God for enlightenment)

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Matt 10:16 , cautions us to , “ be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves”

What does that mean?

When TROUBLE COMES , Matt 10:20 tells us that Gods Holy Spirit will tell us what to say .

…………………

WITNESS

To follow Christ we must be prepared to make no secret of the fact that we are his followers,

as in Matt 10 :32-39, v 38, “ Unless you are willing to take up your cross and follow, you are not a

disciple.”

EXAMPLES OF WITNESS (other than pantry, food parcels, advise.)

………………..

SOUL REST. Matt11:28 , Jesus says “ If you are tired from carrying heavy burdens, come to me

and I will give you rest!

(Commit your problems to God and he will bear them and solve them for you.)

………………..

GOOD TREES BEAR GOOD FRUIT. Matt12:33.

What are some of those fruit which should be evident in us? Galatian’s 5 : 22,23.

( God’s Spirit makes us loving, happy, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle,

and self controlled. There no law against behaving in any of these ways.”

………………..

Matt 18: 1-5 Cautions us to TREAT ALL CHILDREN WELL, for in their humility they are already

fit for heaven. Strive for humility, how? ( ( Treating them with your Fruit of the Spirit)

Some folk say there’s no such thing as a bad child, only bad parents! Agree/disagree.

………………..

WORSHIP GOD! NOT MONEY and WEALTH.

The rich young ruler from Matthew 19 had everything. Good looks, wealth, property and

prosperity, plus a good education and knowledge of the Law and the Prophets.

But he wanted more, he wanted to be a follower of Jesus.

What stopped him from becoming a Christian when he asked Jesus, “Teacher what good thing

must I do to have eternal life?” (He was not prepared to give up his wealth and share it.)

So Jesus says, it’s easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than fir a rich person to

get into heaven.

 We see from those examples of the requirements for following Jesus, not everyone

chooses to take up the challenge.

 Jesus forces no one, he spells out the ground rules by his example and leaves you to think

 it over. He created you with the free will to decide for yourself.

We soon discover that we need God’s help, to get us through, day by day.

God, our Heavenly Father loves to be asked for help, just as we earthly parents do.

Is the price too high to pay, like the rich young ruler?

No! His service is perfect freedom!

Just be prepared to be last or first in God’s Glorious Kingdom! Amen

Leone Fairweather.

Wednesday 20th September, 2023.