

14 THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Isa 55: 1-9

Ps 63: 1-9

1Cor 10:1-13

Lk 13: 31-35

Rev'd Robert Lamerton

(transcribed from notes that were used for the 8am sermon and changed at 10am)

Recently I had cause to be in Howard's Storage World --- and before you get the idea I am looking for sponsorship --- hear me on!

I was amazed at how storage has become big business

- storage for CD's
- storage for clothes
- storage for rubbish
- storage that stacks
- storage that folds
- storage that slides

So I looked up storage in the Yellow Pages – five storage places have full page ads in the yellow pages – I can't tell you what they are... that would be advertising!

....

I can recall helping the Barrington-Knight's extricate their property from storage. People pay good money just to store their stuff.

But then if it is in storage and not used for six months or a year – Do you really need it? I heard a woman who had been in Mongolia and living much more simply. She was reflecting on twelve months away and all that she had in storage – things she hadn't needed or used or even missed!

Before I began theological studies in 1974 (thirty years!) I travelled for over six months with all I needed in a back pack.

When Sandy and I were married I had a record player and LP's (that's what we used before CD's!); a table, a chair, a desk lamp and two bean bags! All these years later our son Gareth has more than that in his bedroom!

So much stuff! Eric Bidd wrote a song about it --- Too Much Stuff!

But how much of it is necessary?

All those years ago as the people of Israel were about to return to their homeland and to Jerusalem, Isaiah proclaimed these words of God:

All would share in God's blessing
food and drink
wise leadership (David!)
and nations would look to them

BUT it was dependent upon them seeking the Lord

being grateful/using wisely/sharing wealth

When we take time to stop and look around us and not be greedy there is usually enough for our needs.

Paul writing to the Corinthians recalled God's provision in the wilderness

the escape through the sea
the manna which fed them
and
the water from the rock from which they drank

but he points out that by their behaviour they showed how little they valued what they had received from God.

How much do we value the gifts of God //

Injustice, immorality, and greed mean that some in our society have more than they need while others miss out.

Real Estate advertisements point out how their [customers] achieved the highest price in this street or suburb. Surely the real test is a fair price for buyer as well as seller!

Whenever anyone takes a little more than their share --- someone else must be missing out!

[This week, the issue has been the funding of State Schools compared with Private Schools

and yes, it is important to maintain a strong State Education System, but it seems to me the funding formula and mix of State/Federal funds makes it difficult to compare

Surely working out the cost to put a child through a particular year at school and providing the same for each child would at least make this picture clearer.]

Back to the St Paul! He was reminding the Corinthians of the dire consequences of treating their spiritual inheritance too lightly. So he pointed out that even though their ancestors had been the recipients of God's gracious provision

escape to freedom through the sea
being fed in the wilderness
and provided with water

by a combination of divine intervention and natural event

that they still forgot their inheritance and were ungrateful and unjust and suffered as a result.

Paul says to the Corinthians that although they are

1. baptised
- 2 & 3 share the bread and drink of communion

they too can make the same mistake and cut themselves off from God's blessing.

Paul counsels alertness "watch out that you do not fall" but also reminds his readers that "God is faithful", "he will not let you be tested beyond your strength".

It is the same sort of challenge faced by Jesus in the wilderness --- to hold on to faithfulness to God in spite of temptation.

Finally, in the gospel we are reminded that Jesus is on the way to Jerusalem. False warnings by those who pose as friends will not frighten or intimidate him from his course.

The hope for Jerusalem as a place of peace and sign of God's promise which had existed for centuries had never been realized and Jesus points out that it is where the prophets have been killed because Jerusalem failed to recognize or welcome God's agents the prophets and Jesus.

In Lent we need to re-think our commitments. To reflect on and be thankful for the abundance of God's blessing – to weigh up what stuff enables us and what stuff is a burden tying us down.

We need to re-think what our baptism means, what this Eucharist is all about and how Christ is close to us.

The gospel confronts us with people who were not true friends of Jesus and even who were downright enemies.

As we weigh up what we have and how we can share what being disciples of Jesus really means I want to draw your attention to next week's Walk Against Want. Trisha Hepworth will be walking. Speak to Trish if you want to join her or sponsor her.

And remember the Anglican Board of Mission envelopes for Lent.

Finish with Eric Bidd singing "Too Much Stuff"