

The pairs are:

the "poor" (v. 20) and the "rich" (v. 24);
the "hungry" (v. 21a) and the "full" (v. 25a);
the sorrowful (v. 21b) and the joyous (v. 25b); and
the persecuted (v. 22) and the popular (v. 26).

The "poor" (v. 20) are those who acknowledge their dependence on God; the "rich" (v. 24) do not want to commit themselves to Jesus and the Kingdom; they are comfortable with the existence they have now. The Greek word translated "consolation" (v. 24) is a financial term: the "rich" do not realize what they owe to Jesus. The "hungry" (v. 25) hunger for the word of God, the good news; the "full" are the materially satisfied. In v. 22, "exclude" means socially ostracized and excluded from the synagogue and Temple. The "Son of Man" has a corporate sense: it includes Jesus and his followers: they will be persecuted, as Israel ("their ancestors", v. 23) persecuted Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Amos, but "in that day" (at the end of the era), they will be rewarded. Jeremiah 5:31 says that people spoke well of "false prophets" (v. 26).

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~ Notices ~

Prayers - Prayers are said daily for the welfare of our community, our nation and the world. If you have any particular issue that you would like to be prayed for, do please email me on frkevinobrien@me.com or call me on 065 672 4721.

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The 3rd Sunday before Lent (Year C)

Collect

Eternal God, whose Son went among the crowds and brought healing with his touch: help us to show his love, in your Church as we gather together, and by our

lives as they are transformed into the image of Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Suggested Hymns - *For the online service you might like to view these hymns with lyrics on YouTube.*

1) All my hope on God is founded

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YaP7CNrqF_k

2) Happy are they, they that love God.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGXs_LhURa4

3) God whose almighty word

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6G3vhBVPM4>

4) O Christ, the healer, we have come

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1O5vdLNE-Gw>

Jeremiah 17: 5-10

Thus says the Lord:

Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals
and make mere flesh their strength,
whose hearts turn away from the Lord.

They shall be like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see when relief comes.

They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord,
whose trust is the Lord.

They shall be like a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots by the stream.

It shall not fear when heat comes,
and its leaves shall stay green;

in the year of drought it is not anxious,
and it does not cease to bear fruit.

The heart is devious above all else;
it is perverse—

who can understand it?

I the Lord test the mind
and search the heart,

to give to all according to their ways,
according to the fruit of their doings.

Psalms 1

Blessed are they who have not walked
in the counsel of the wicked, ♦

nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the assembly of the scornful.

Their delight is in the law of the Lord ♦
and they meditate on his law day and night.

Like a tree planted by streams of water
bearing fruit in due season,

with leaves that do not wither, ♦
whatever they do, it shall prosper.

As for the wicked, it is not so with them; ♦
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.

Therefore, the wicked shall not be able
to stand in the judgement, ♦

nor the sinner in the congregation of the righteous.

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, ♦
but the way of the wicked shall perish.

1 Corinthians 15: 12-20

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.

Luke 6: 17-26

He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

‘Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

‘Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.

‘Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

‘Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

‘But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.

‘Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.

‘Woe to you who are laughing now,
for you will mourn and weep.

‘Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

Post Communion Prayer

Merciful Father, who gave Jesus Christ to be for us the bread of life, that those who come to him should never hunger: draw us to the Lord in faith and love, that we may eat and drink with him at his table in the kingdom, where he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

Commentary

Jeremiah 17:5-10

The ideas expressed in this reading are atypical for Jeremiah's time; they seem to reflect the thinking of later centuries, when books of wisdom literature (e.g. Proverbs, Wisdom) were written. God, through the prophet Jeremiah, contrasts the fates of the ungodly and the godly. The ungodly purposely “turn away” from God; they “trust” (believe) in humankind's power and strength. On the other hand, the godly truly “trust” in God. V. 6 likens the ungodly to a “shrub”: it dies in the desert sun. But the godly (v. 8) are like a “green” “tree”: sustained (“water”) and growing with the help of the “stream” (perhaps God's Spirit). They have nothing to worry about (“not anxious”, v. 8).

To ancient peoples, the “heart” (v. 9) was not only the centre of emotions, feelings, moods and passions but also of will and motive power for the limbs. The heart discerned good

from evil; it was also the centre of decision-making. Conversion to God's ways took place in the heart. In v. 9, it is said to be where evil begins. Only God can see clearly the intentions of the heart; only he can properly judge humans in their actions. God rewards people for the good they do, and condemns them for evil deeds. In v. 11, God reminds the reader that, in the end, wealth acquired unjustly does not benefit a person, for it does not extend his life. (The notion of life after death was yet to be realized.)

Psalm 1

This psalm contrasts the fate of the godly and the ungodly (as does our reading from Jeremiah). Vv. 1-3 speak of the happiness of the godly. They do not live as the ungodly do; rather they constantly (“day and night”, v. 2) and joyfully study and observe Mosaic law; their well-being is like trees which bear fruit; they are prosperous. On the other hand, the ungodly are like “chaff” (v. 4): in manual threshing, the wind blows it away; it is discarded. So, says v. 5, their fate will be disaster: they will be excluded from the fellowship enjoyed by those who follow God's ways, and will suffer – unlike the godly, over whom God keeps watch.

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

Paul continues his argument against those at Corinth who deny that Christians will be resurrected bodily. He has written of three basic doctrines he has received and passed on: Christ died, was buried, and rose. Perhaps he is countering some who attached all importance to the spirit, thus neglecting physical, earthly, living. Perhaps they, under the influence of the philosopher Philo of Alexandria, believed that they already possessed eternal life. For such people, resurrection would be meaningless. It was commonly thought that only the soul is immortal. He now confronts these people with a logical argument and the consequences of their denial, and tells the benefits of affirming resurrection. In v. 12, he restates a point: a tenet of our faith is that Jesus physically rose after being dead. He did this as a human being, so how can some argue that physical resurrection of humans does not exist? In vv. 13ff, he states five logical consequences if these people are correct:

Jesus was not raised (vv. 13,16);

Paul's (“our”, v. 14) preaching is “in vain”, unproductive, i.e. has not introduced anything new into his readers' lives;

the faith of his readers is “futile” (v. 17), ineffective, pointless, so they are still subject to God's wrath for their sins (vv. 14, 17); he has taught something about God which is not true (v. 15) and those Christians “who have died” (v. 18) are definitively lost (“have perished”).

Then v. 19: if our faith in Christ stops with his death (i.e. does not include his raising), we are living a hoax, and a tough one: Christian life involves suffering, disappointment, etc., so we are “most to be pitied”. Jesus' death alone doesn't gain forgiveness of sins (v. 17): it's his resurrection that does. If he did not rise, we are caught in affirming death rather than life. But, says Paul (v. 20), Jesus really was raised. In fact, he was the forerunner, the model for all those who have died (and of those yet to die). The “first fruits” of the harvest (the initial yield) was offered to God as a symbol of offering the whole harvest to him.

Luke 6:17-26

Jesus has ascended a mountain to pray. While there, he has chosen twelve of his disciples, his followers, to be apostles. Now he descends part-way, to a “level place”. There he finds other followers and many others, from Israel and beyond (“Tyre and Sidon”, v. 17). Many are healed, both of known “diseases” (v. 18) and of being possessed. Evil “spirits” made them ritually “unclean” so they were not permitted to share in corporate worship of God.

Luke tells us of four beatitudes (vv. 20-22) and corresponding woes or warnings of deprivation in the age to come. Some are “blessed” (happy) by being included in the Kingdom Jesus brings. The warnings are prophecies, cautions.