



Worship resources Trinity 14



If we did the work of last week well, we will find ourselves in a place of tremendous comfort, celebration and challenge this week. After reflecting on the difficult work of forgiveness, especially in the light of the significant moment of memory last week, we now move beyond just forgiveness, into the recognition that God seeks the best for us, and that we are called to actively seek the best for others. This generosity must work itself out in how we view and

treat others, in how we use and share our resources, and in how we engage in the struggle for equity and justice in our world.

May our worship this week lead us deeper into God's generosity and lead us deeper into lives of generous grace.

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

The First Reading - Exodus 16: 2-15

The Israelites complain that Moses has brought them out into the desert to die because they have no food. But God tells Moses to inform the people that God has heard their complaints and will send them food. Then, in the evening, quails fill the camp, and in the morning manna covers the ground.

The Psalm - Psalm 105: 1-6, 37-45

A celebration of God's action on behalf of the Israelites, remembering God's provision of manna and quail in the wilderness.

The Second Reading - **Philippians 1: 21-30**

The first church Paul founded in Europe was at Philippi. Some years later, from prison (probably in Rome), he writes warmly to his friends. Despite his circumstances, and sometimes a longing for his life to end, he believes he can still be useful to God. Let the readers, then, keep faith against all their adversaries.

The Gospel Reading - Matthew 20: 1-16

This well-known parable of the generous landowner helps us understand how God gives not what we might earn from him, but more than we could ever desire or deserve. In the kingdom of heaven there are no rewards, only grace for all.

[Click here to view the readings](#)

[http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Exodus
%2016:%202-15%0Acw%20Psalm
%20105:%201-6,%2037-45%0APhilippians%201:%2021-30%0AMatthew
%2020:%201-16](http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Exodus%2016:%202-15%0Acw%20Psalm%20105:%201-6,%2037-45%0APhilippians%201:%2021-30%0AMatthew%2020:%201-16)

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

Almighty and everlasting God,
Give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity;
and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise,
make us to love that which thou dost command;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect Two

Almighty God,
whose only Son has opened for us
a new and living way into your presence:
Give us pure hearts and steadfast wills
to worship you in spirit and in truth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

Jesus called us to follow a difficult path marked by the way of the cross. Let us offer our prayers for the church and the world and all who seek God that we may be strengthened to live more faithfully. We pray, "Lord, in your mercy," and respond, "Hear our prayer."

That the Church will repent of all the ways we seek comfort and ordinary respectability and learn, like Peter, that God is found wherever there is suffering and whenever we learn to give up our lives.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

That the people of ----- may find healing as they continue to uncover the hatred and violence that was part of their past and influences their present; and that divine wisdom might guide them as they respond to their past.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

That school teachers, daycare workers, babysitters, and all who care for children may return to their work refreshed, patient and compassionate, and that all of us will bring God's love to the children in our lives.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

That those adults throughout the Church of Ireland who will be confirmed may find new life in the process and teach all of us by their example how to die to ourselves.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

That all we as members of the parish of _____ may learn what it means to "take up our cross" in our weekday lives.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

That those who struggle with their faith, with illness, and with depression may find companions for the journey.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God of the cross, at times you speak to us with words of comfort and sometimes

you call us to suffer for the sake of the gospel. Give us ears to hear your voice and

courage to live ever more faithfully in following the difficult path that brings us closer to you. We pray through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

Let us offer prayers for all who labour in the vineyard of the Lord and for all in every danger and need.

For this holy gathering, and for the people of God in every place.

Lord, have mercy.

For all peoples and their leaders, for candidates for office, and for justice, mercy, and peace in the world.

Lord, have mercy.

For all who work for daily wages, and for their employers and managers.

Lord, have mercy.

For abundant fruits of the earth, and for safety from violent storms.

Lord, have mercy.

For the sick and the suffering, travelers and the victims of war, prisoners and refugees, and the dying and dead.

Lord, have mercy.

For our city and those who live in it, and for our families, companions, and all those we love.

Lord, have mercy.

Lifting our voices with all creation and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

Presider

Gracious and merciful God, who honors the last as well as the first, hear the prayers we offer this day and welcome your people into your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION

Lord God,
the source of truth and love:
Keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
united in prayer and the breaking of bread,
and one in joy and simplicity of heart,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS

God of all who wander in the wilderness,
you go before us as beacon and guide.
Lead us through all danger,
sustain us through all desolation,
and bring us home to the land
you have prepared for us. Amen.

O God,
from your providing hand even the dissatisfied and grumbling
receive what they need for their lives.
Teach us your ways of justice
and lead us to practice your generosity,
so that we may live a life worthy of the gospel
make known through your Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

God of miracles and of mercy,
all creation sings your praise.
Like the vineyard owner,
your grace is extravagant and unexpected.
Lead us to repentance
and the acceptance of your grace,
that we may witness to your love,
which embraces both those we call friend
and those we call stranger. Amen.

Almighty God,
You created the heavens and the earth,

And made us in Your image.
Teach us to discern Your hand
In all Your works
And to serve You
With reverence and thanksgiving;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Who is alive and reigns
With You and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and for ever.
Amen.

From Common Order

Christian Stewardship

Father, as we toil in the fields, we, too, grumble as others seem to have more than they have earned. Help us understand the tremendous generosity that we have enjoyed and guide us in learning how we can share that generosity in a hurting world. Amen. (*Matthew 20:1-16*)

Offertory Prayer

With open hands we receive and give;
With open minds we imagine and envision;
With open hearts we love and embrace,
With open lives we accept and include.
We, who have been given so much,
Share with You, our living Lord,
The gifts we have and the gifts we are.
Take them, take us,
Use them, use us,
To bless and transform
The needs of the world,
And all the children that You love.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

Philippians 1:21-30:

the dilemma - living in the world or retreating to a spiritual place where we are 'safe' - this isn't exactly Paul's dilemma - he's talking more literal life and death. but we can related to his dilemma maybe, by thinking of the "in the world" or "of the world" tug of war.

"live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" - yes. The hard thing about sharing the gospel is when the sharers aren't living the things they're sharing! We try, we are imperfect. But we need to try!

Matthew 20:1-16:

this is one of the hardest parables for us, I think. It goes against everything about our values - American work ethic and all. You work hard, you get rewarded proportionally. The idea that someone else could do less than us and get the same pay is totally frustrating, isn't it? This is the side of grace we don't like to hear about, I think. We struggle with whether or not we can accept grace for ourselves, but when it comes to who else gets God's grace, and how they get it, it becomes a lot trickier, and we wish there were more rules about it...

By Beth Quick

LECTIONARY NOTES 2

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

The central theme, that flows through all of this week's readings, is a simple one – God is compassionate and merciful, generous and forgiving. This is a fitting response to last week's focus on forgiveness, because we must recognise, if we are to take Christ's message seriously, that God seeks the best for people, and that God encourages us to do the same – which takes us beyond just forgiveness into a life of seeking the blessing of others. Jesus' parable demonstrates God's generosity and challenges us not to resent generosity shown to others, but to rejoice in it. Paul is a living example of this since, though he expressed his desire to come to his life's end and go to be with Christ, he was willing to continue to suffer and serve for the sake of the Philippian church which he had founded. Both Psalms celebrate God's generous goodness to God's people with Psalm 105 (which we have encountered before in the last few weeks) connecting with the continuous Old Testament reading (Exodus) in which God provides food for the Israelites in the wilderness in spite of their doubt and complaining. Psalm 145, celebrates, among God's mighty acts, God's forgiveness and the blessing God gives to God's people. Finally, Jonah is a mirror for us showing how bitter we can easily become when God shows mercy and generosity to others, and how easily we become ungrateful for what we have enjoyed, especially when we fall into a feeling of entitlement. The challenge of this week, then, is to learn to appreciate what we have received from our generous God, while celebrating God's generosity to others. This applies, most especially, to God's mercy and forgiveness and the welcome God gives to all people to share in God's reign.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: There are two ways this week's readings challenge us, as followers of Christ, on a global scale. The first relates to how we understand our faith, and our place in God's grace and generosity, in a multi-faith world. It is common for Christians to adopt a rather ungenerous view of people who are not "part of us", stating categorically that God's mercy and grace cannot extend to them unless they join our religion. It's like we've taken the message of God's grace and invitation and turned it into a message of "Christianity is the only way", which is not what the Scriptures say. It's like we want to determine who God can show generosity to and who not (like the first workers in the parable). But, all of the readings challenge us because they show radical, sacrificial generosity to those who don't deserve it – the complaining Israelites, the late-coming workers. Even Paul's self-giving for the Philippians falls into this category, although they may be considered 'deserving'. The second way in which we are challenged is in the practical use of the world's resources and how they are shared and distributed in the world. It is common for us to hoard our wealth for ourselves and share it only with our "allies" or those from whom we expect to receive something in return. It is also common for us to deny adequate resources to those with whom we disagree or from whom we can gain nothing. Because of this the world's resources, which are more than adequate to address the needs of the entire planet's population (our God is a generous God!) are not equitably shared, with the few enjoying more than they need, and the vast majority living with great lack and need. In the light of God's generosity, we cannot help but be challenged to change how resources are shared. In my home, South Africa, this is a particularly stark issue, because we have among the largest gaps in the world between rich and poor. Perhaps it's time for Christ followers to be more vocal and visible about embracing lifestyles of simplicity and sharing, and of voting and lobbying for an end to unfair trade subsidies and regulations, rampant and unregulated globalisation, and exploitation of workers and suppliers in countries where they do not have the political clout to ensure that they receive fair recompense for their work and resources. Buying fair trade, reducing our consumption and unnecessary waste, and contributing to respected and effective aid organisations are all ways of participating in sharing God's generosity with all.

LOCAL APPLICATION: It is disturbing the way in which God's generosity has been defined in many of our churches today. In a rather Old Testament view of things, we have made "health, wealth and happiness" equal to God's blessing, and sickness, poverty and suffering to be a sign of God's curse. Jesus consistently challenged this view in his day, and as Christ's followers we need to as well. This means we need to change both our understanding of God's generosity and our practices of giving, sharing and celebrating. First,

we need to recognise that those who are “blessed” receive blessing not for themselves, but for all – in order to share. Neither wealth nor poverty are signs of God’s approval or lack thereof. They are simply realities of the world and of life. But, they are also an opportunity to express the principles of grace and generosity that characterise God’s reign. Second, we need to move from our individualistic view of the world, to a more community-oriented one. There are always people, in any community or family, who are effective at accumulating wealth, and the onus is on them to share and support those who do important and necessary work (or are unable to work for whatever legitimate reason). In this way we become a source of God’s generosity to one another. But, it also goes further than the practicalities of economic realities. God’s generosity is also extended as an inclusivity to all people, even those who may appear, in our idea of “fairness” not to deserve it. This means that as we encounter those who work differently, live differently, believe differently and behave differently we are called, rather than to a position of judgement, to a position of generosity and kindness. If we can be generous with grace, with forgiveness, with seeking the best for others, and with welcoming all people into God’s community, we will find that we, almost automatically, begin to be generous with other things, including material wealth. And through our generosity, God’s generosity is manifest in our communities and our world.

SERMON OUTLINE 1

Mt 20:1-16 Labourers in the vineyard...

CG Montefiore: *one of the greatest & most glorious of all the parables Jesus taught...*

1. A Parable about Employment:- *A landowner went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard* The grape harvest in Sept was a race against time...

a) An Agreement - *v2 a denarius for the day* - for the 1st group at 6am - normal labourer’s wage - glad to get work...

b) A Grievance - all got paid the same - > v12 those *who worked only 1 hour are made equal to us - borne burden & heat of the day...* They begrudged his generosity - unfair in modern worldly/labour employment terms > strike action!

2. Enjoyment – of the landowner’s kindness - 2 thoughts...

a) the Master’s Generosity - knew the needs of the workers - home & family/personal & domestic - gave freely of his own to them and met their various needs...

b) the Lord's Grace – as those later workers hardly merited a full day's pay - so are we undeserving sinners - *by grace you are saved...* Those who came at *11th hour* are treated just the same as those who have laboured long for Christ in the world! No room for complaint!

3. Enrichment - in God's service we are blessed abundantly - *more than we either desire or deserve....*

4. Encouragement - It's never too late to come to Christ - cf the Penitent Thief on the cross:- *remember me...*

Jesus treats us all graciously & equally! No matter when or how a person comes to Christ, they will still be welcome! He will reward us - but we must come & offer ourselves to Him & His Service....

By Norman Porteous

SERMON OUTLINE 2

Matthew 20:1-16

The parable of the labourers in the vineyard, or possibly the parable of the gracious vineyard owner, needs little explanation in one sense. It tells us of God's radical and – for some – offensive grace. It is not a parable about a fair wage for a fair day's work or a handbook on workplace relationships. The parable is not about fair play, it is about God's grace, which does not rest on merit on long hours worked. The parable forces us to reflect on our response to the story. What do we think or feel towards the vineyard owner, and the workers who have borne the heat of the day as they worked, and the workers who were hired at the eleventh hour?

Grace is a word we cherish within the Church – it has to do with God's mercy towards undeserving people. However, if we overuse it, or misunderstand its radical nature, we can be in danger of devaluing it. Grace does not equal permissiveness. Grace challenges our understanding of God, our understanding of ourselves, and our understanding of our neighbour. God's grace is a consistent Biblical theme – in the story of Jonah when God spared Nineveh, in the parable of the rich Pharisee at prayer observing the 'sinful' publican, and in the parable of the Prodigal Son (or the parable of the Gracious Father and the resentful older brother). Divine grace is to be seen not as a reward but as God's free gift to all who turn towards Him or back to Him. Grace is nevertheless costly, and far from sentimental.

This parable challenges our sense of justice. From childhood we are told we will be rewarded if we behave well, and punished if we behave badly. However this is not the theme of the parable. We are not being encouraged to

use our good behaviour as a bargaining tool with the Almighty. The vineyard owner pays his workers not on the basis of their merits, but on the basis of his compassion. Viewed in that light, is such generosity unjust? Jesus believed in divine justice, but He had a greater belief in divine compassion. Our challenge, again, is to imitate that generosity, not begrudge it. God's goodness is for all, and intended for all. There is no hierarchy in His favour and He steadily refuses to choose between His children. He loves all, equally.

By Derek Browning, Morningside Parish Church, Edinburgh

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

America

The text is "As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways" (Is. 55:9). The introduction provides the contrast between Bible and lifestyle today - "Two attitudes vie for center stage in American life. One is a great sense of fairness and concern for equal rights: equal pay for equal work, equal opportunity for all. The other is concern for the underdog: joy when the last become first or the small college upsets a national power on an autumn afternoon; rooting against the Yankees in the "fall classic;" rags-to-riches success stories. Today's Gospel seems to challenge fairness, preferring concern for the "last.""

http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=2472

Day 1

Sermon on 'The Generosity of God' is based on Matthew 20. A longish sermon but with two very good illustrations - an encounter between a Jewish child and his Rabbi grandfather, and one about Louise Hay. The preacher says, "She is a famous author and philanthropist. She owns a publishing company, best-selling book and tape series, and a house by the ocean. Louise Hay was once asked what led her to her great work. Her response? She said, "It was simple. I just did the next thing in front of me and helped out where I could." (Jesus CEO; Laurie Beth Jones; pg. 131) The first choice we have in any opportunity is to be willing. I know it sounds simplistic--but it's nonetheless true. Louise Hay attributes her life success to the simple formula of being willing to do what comes next."

http://day1.org/1111-the_generosity_of_god

CHILDREN

Idea

Take a loaf of bread. Go through its 'life cycle' and explain to or drawing out from the children how a loaf starts as a grain, needs good soil and watering, needs to be added to other grains, needs to be harvested, processed, added

to, shaped, baked, wrapped, marketed and sold in a shop, before being bought and then eaten and shared.

We take it for granted as one of our basics in life, yet so much care, attention, effort and love has gone in to it in order that we might have it to eat.

We should not take our food and drink for granted, especially when so many people have little or nothing. God puts so much care, attention, effort and love into His provision for us because He loves us. We should not take God's provision for our needs or His love for granted. These too are basic to our lives, and are things not only to be enjoyed but also shared.

Sermons4kids

Theme: God provides for his children. Needed: A bucket of chicken nuggets and some rolls or biscuits. Contrasts the availability of chicken nuggets with the Israelites and the famine in the desert. Ends with importance of giving thanks to God.

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/dinner-on-the-ground.html>

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

[Blessed Assurance](#)

[Great Is Thy Faithfulness](#)

[O Food To Pilgrims Given](#)

[Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah](#)

[Glorious Things Of Thee Are Spoken](#)

[Your Grace Is Enough](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[Give Thanks](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[Never Let My Hunger Die](#)

[Hungry](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[Blessed Be Your Name](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

Please commend this resource to colleagues - they simply send an email to churchnewsireland@gmail.com with the message Passwords in the title