

what it's looking at. So long as our faith is pointing in the direction of the almighty, all-powerful and all-forgiving God and creator of the world, the size of the window matters little. My little faith, when I in humility recognise the truth of the matter, is only great when facing the great God. It's not about me, it's about Him.

I'll finish with a prayer attributed to Sir Francis Drake which speaks of the sea in more positive tones than the Bible passage, but also invites us in humility to act boldly for Christ.

Disturb us, Lord, when We are too well pleased with ourselves, When our dreams have come true Because we have dreamed too little, When we arrived safely Because we sailed too close to the shore.	And in our efforts to build a new earth, We have allowed our vision Of the new Heaven to dim. Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly, To venture on wider seas Where storms will show your mastery; Where losing sight of land, We shall find the stars. We ask You to push back The horizons of our hopes; And to push into the future In strength, courage, hope, and love.
Disturb us, Lord, when With the abundance of things we possess We have lost our thirst For the waters of life; Having fallen in love with life, We have ceased to dream of eternity	

Reminder

The Annual Parish Church meeting is Monday 16th November
at 7.30 via zoom or telephone

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85459278339?pwd=eUFvNmpBWjlrMmMkvN2xBVE9uS0JOZz09>

Meeting ID: 854 5927 8339

Passcode: 910300

To join the Zoom meeting by telephone dial 0203 481 5240

You will be able to hear what is being said by everyone and you
will be able to contribute to the conversation.

You will be charged for the call.



All Saints'
at the heart of the
community

2 BEFORE ADVENT Sunday 15th November 2020

Readings for 15 November

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 and Matthew 25:14-30

SUNDAY SERVICES

During this lockdown period the service on Sunday will be live
from the homes of members of St Philips.
The service starts at 9.30am and can be viewed either as it happens,
or later at <https://youtu.be/eWY5JXJysPA>

Downloadable children's resources on the service theme,
The Parable of the Talents,
can be downloaded here

https://www.dltk-kids.com/bible/jesus/parable_talents-activities.htm

Parents / carers may like to have some of these to hand
during the meditation part of the service.

Every blessing, Alan

Telephone services

There is a dial-in prayer service (c.30mins) at 6pm on Sundays.
The service allows you to speak and listen, to be anonymous or to take part.

To Join these calls, dial 0330 336 0036 and enter the PIN 716 416

Calls can be made from either a landline or mobile
and are at a local rate from your service provider.

Call Alan Stanley on 0113 281 2769 if you need help.

Letter from Andy 14th November

Joe Biden wins the American elections, there's progress on a vaccine that is 90% effective, the economy grew by 15% in the third quarter. There's lots of good news stories doing the rounds this week.

Donald Trump refuses to concede the election and could sow chaos in the last months of power, we're in the midst of a second lockdown that could knock the economy off course and as a nation we're the first European country to pass 50,000 Covid 19 deaths. There's a lot of bad news stories doing the rounds this week.

The gospel reading tomorrow is the parable of the talents where three servants are given varying levels of talents and told to make use of them while their master is away. Two make good use, doubling what they had, and one does nothing, too scared to gamble with his master's wealth.

The parable is a life lesson rather than an economics lesson and reminds us that each of us have opportunities. Opportunities to develop ourselves physically, emotionally and spiritually. Some have more opportunities than others, but all have some opportunities. Whether we grasp those opportunities or not is so often down to our perspective on life. If we only see the bad news we could easily be paralysed with fear and foreboding, not willing to take a chance to make a difference for ourselves or those around us.

If however we acknowledge the negatives, but also celebrate the positives of life, we are more likely to be open to new opportunities and chances to develop. We are fortunate in this benefice that there are many opportunities to develop our spirituality, from Alan Stanley's Bible discussions, to my own Rhythm of Life group, from On the Sofa videos to livestreamed and phone-in services, there is a plethora of opportunities.

The parable of the Talents reminds us that at the end of our time God will ask us what opportunities we took and how we responded to the opportunities there were before us. Let us seek the good and grasp what opportunities we can.

Blessings. Andy

Church open for individual prayer

All Saints' will be open from 11 to 12 am Wednesday mornings during lockdown for individual prayer.

Masks must be worn, and please use hand gel on the way in and out.

This will be a quiet time, a silent time.

Please do not chat in church.

Reflection on Luke 17:1-6 (Andy Nicholson)

In my role as a vicar I regularly come across people who say to me 'I used to be a Christian but ...' or 'I used to go to church but ...'. I imagine you know people like that and can fill in the dots at the end of those sentences. Today's passage indirectly speaks about those people, but more directly speaks about we who are the ones who become the dot, dot dot at the end of that sentence. It's also about humility, but I'll come back to that theme further on in the reflection.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to anyone by whom they come! It would be better for you if a millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea than for you to cause one of these little ones to stumble.

'Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive. And if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, "I repent", you must forgive.'

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' The Lord replied, 'If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea", and it would obey you.'

I'm guessing that when people start with a phrase like 'I used to go to church but ...' it ends something like 'but I had a bad experience with the vicar'.

It's easy – when hearing about someone who has lost their faith, or left the church due to some hurt caused by a previous vicar or church leader – to be puffed up with pride and think 'They were bad leaders, I'm so much better than them.' The problem is, I have to accept that in my time here in Barwick, Scholes and Thorner there are those who have left church because of my mistakes, my bad experiences, so when I read this passage about millstones and oceans I feel my neck tightening and fear the water.

Thankfully, Jesus doesn't end there, though the warning to all those who have responsibility to lead Christian communities shouldn't be taken lightly and requires a healthy dollop of humility. Thankfully, Jesus then goes on to talk about forgiveness and faith.

Forgiveness from God reminds us that we all make mistakes and need to come back to God and recognise the hurts we've caused each other. Jesus goes further. We're not just to forgive once, but every time – even if it's seven times a day! This needs to be put into the context of other parables and teaching and actions of Jesus, which makes it clear that we owe God everything, and that God out of his great generosity forgives us our enormous debt, and so us forgiving the little foolishnesses of our fellow travellers, is as nothing in comparison to what we have already been forgiven.

This leads me to two conclusions. Firstly, it develops a healthy humility in me, knowing how much I have been forgiven; and secondly, it helps me to be patient with those who make mistakes, knowing that we are all children of the same heavenly Father who loves and forgives us all.

This leads me on to the sentence about faith, where the faith the size of a mustard seed can uproot trees. It's been said that faith is like a window; it doesn't matter how big it is but