

# 25 Sep 2022

## **Worship Sheet for Sunday 25 September Children of Light (postponed from 18<sup>th</sup>)**

Ethics in business, in public life, in the Church and in our personal lives all come under the scope of the parable Jesus tells his disciples – the shrewd manager. Not that Jesus was advocating they (or we) act corruptly! He wants us to be wise and to take everything into account – not least what counts for eternity.

Call: We come today to worship God - to focus ourselves on what is good. We live in a world full of chancers-those who try to twist the rules and deny the evidence of our own eyes. We come seeking to be children of the light: help us to be wise to the world's ways and open to your Way for us. Let us worship God.

Pray : God, you are our Lord and Master, we bow before you in humble adoration. You created us in your image and gave us a world to enjoy and care for. We never cease to be amazed at the wonders of the changing seasons and grateful for the colours of autumn and the fruits of harvest that this time of year produces. The world is truly our food basket and we are reminded of how fragile it is and how easy it is to disrupt it by war and threat of war, by strikes and threat of dismissals. Lord, we have not been the stewards you asked us to be. Greed and a need for power has caused us to harm your world and scour it for every bit of profit. Forgive us for the part we play in harming our world and help us to find ways to repair past mistakes and poor choices. Give us courage to stand up to the powers who would continue to cause harm for profit. Help us pay attention to our local situation and to the acts that we can do to make a small change here and now. Teach us ways to continue co-creating with you instead of working against you. Remind us that even though we are only a small part in the larger story we are an important part just like all the others and guide us forward to make informed choices that bring benefit to the many and not just the few. We pray in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray saying: Our Father..

Reading Luke 16:1-16. The Shrewd Manager.

Thought It's hardly surprising that the parable of the shrewd or cunning manager has raised many eyebrows over the years. At first sight it does appear that Jesus is encouraging his followers to adopt corrupt or underhand practices. That, of course, doesn't square with Jesus' approach at all. His point is that human beings can be tremendously imaginative at finding ways to look after themselves, to line their pockets at the expense of others and to cover their backs. The example of the manager in the parable selling down what his master's creditors' debt on the basis of "something is better than nothing" and ingratiating himself to them as a result (in face of his impending dismissal) is an example of being shrewd. He expects his followers to uphold what is right and good and true (so corrupt practices are out!) but he does want us to think things be shrewd enough to take long term factors into account – not least heaven and eternity. It is so easy to think merely for the moment (giving priority to what might benefit us right away) instead of looking ahead and taking in a wider horizon, including heaven. Jesus cares about the here and now – but the here and now isn't the whole story. We need to take every aspect of life into account – body, mind and spirit – the practicalities of living in the real world, the place of faith and its implications for eternity. Let's not be short-sighted and imagine that only things that impact us materially over the short term matter, life for the person of faith includes heaven. This is the locus of faith – it is here where we show and receive love, it is where we engage in mission – but all that has a bearing on heaven and eternity – so let's be sure to take everything into account and act accordingly. Let us be wise in doing God's work well.

Praise CH4 599 Holy Spirit hear us.

Pray Merciful God, we come with thankful hearts, glad to know you love us as we are. We are grateful for the people in our lives, all who teach and care for us, all who feed us and keep us healthy. Lord, you give us families and communities to ensure we have full, healthy lives. You give us self-management to make our own decisions and choices. We are grateful for the

men and women who work in management positions, overseeing people and projects, dealing with bureaucracy and internal politics. We pray that you would guide them and help them take the hard decisions and make as good choices for everyone as possible. We pray for those pushed into making choices that they don't want to make, who are treated poorly by those who manage them. We pray that they would find ways to get out of these negative situations and find safety and freedom. We are grateful for the people who are gifted leaders, for all who encourage, teach and build others up. We pray that they would continue their good work and help others become like them. We pray for our brothers and sisters all around the world, for all who are trying to follow in your way and all who are seeking you, knowing that they are missing out on something wonderful but not sure where to find it. We pray for the churches trying to help people connect with you, for the people managing change in how we do church and how we engage with people who have no idea who you are or that you love them. Lord, whoever we are, wherever we live, we are your people and we long to be all you made us to be. Help us create good relationships and healthy churches where all are welcome and where your rules are followed faithfully. While we do pray for those locally who are in special need of your loving touch, the World Church is the focus of our prayer walk this week. SILENCE.

Hear our prayers silent and spoken for Jesus' sake Amen.

Blessing      May the Lord bless you. Amen.

#### **Notices**

- **Messy Church next Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 4pm**

To assist those unable to access material via the internet we have established a phone line where people can phone in to hear the mini service or sermon.

**01674 902624.**

To hear the mini service people just need to dial in and wait. To hear the sermon, after dialling you need to press 1 then #. In either case there is a few seconds delay while the message loads so tell folk not to hang up! If folk press 1 for the sermon before the intro finishes the system doesn't pick up on it and it defaults to the mini service. The message now says wait until after the tone before pressing 1 but give it a few seconds after that and do press # after pressing 1.

Sermon, prayers and news (or links to them) will be uploaded to our website [www.oldandstandrews.com](http://www.oldandstandrews.com) and the Old and St Andrew's Facebook page. Feel free to copy this and pass it on to Church members or friends who might not use the web or social media

Please continue to pray for one another and support where you can and remember that the congregation is united in love wherever we are and however we are worshipping.

**Stay safe! May the Lord bless you!**

Ian

*Rev Dr Ian A McLean*