

Lectionary readings: Jeremiah 32: 1-3a, 6-15: 1; Psalm 91: 1-6, 14-16; 1 Timothy 6: 6-19; Luke 16: 19-31

For reflection and prayer

- **Jeremiah 32:** Jeremiah bought a field in territory occupied by the Babylonians who would carry the people of Judah off to exile in Babylon. The buying of the field was a public demonstration of Jeremiah's faith, and a sign of hope that God's people would return after exile. I'm sure there must have been people who ridiculed Jeremiah, wondering what on earth he was doing buying land already in enemy territory. Faith isn't an easy option. It might be good for us this week to reflect on the kind of faith we have, remembering that Jesus said that, if we have faith like a tiny grain of mustard seed, we can do things that seem at first sight to be impossible. So let's each day this week exercise our little seed of faith and watch how God enables that faith to grow.
- **Psalm 91:** *'God alone is my refuge, my place of safety; He is my God and I am trusting Him.'* (v2) He delivers us from fear. Is that our experience? We might like to reflect on the fact that fear is always fear of the future, and that, if we live in the present, we have no fear. Why not try this week living in the present, leaving the past behind, for it has gone, trusting God for whatever lies ahead, and focusing on what is, accepting what is and enjoying God's presence now. *'When you call to Me, I will answer you.'* (v15) God, I believe, always hears us when we cry out to Him, but He doesn't answer us necessarily in the way we want Him to, so sometimes we miss His answer. Do we tell God what to do in our

prayers, or do we bring a situation to God, opening ourselves to Him, waiting and listening?

- **1 Timothy 6:** *'Since we entered the world penniless and will leave it penniless, if we have bread on the table and shoes on our feet, that's enough.'* (v7 The Message) I wonder what our motive in life is? What are we pursuing - wealth or deepening our relationship with God? Paul urges Timothy to pursue a righteous life - *'a life of wonder, faith, love, steadiness, courtesy ...'* (v11-12 The Message) *'Be rich in helping others ... be extravagantly generous.'* (v19 The Message) These are the real treasures that are precious in God's eyes. Lots to reflect on here this week.
- **Luke 16:** The rich man lived in luxury each day. That could describe us too! He had everything he needed - and more - during his lifetime. We, too, probably all have what we need and much more besides. The rich man was blessed with much wealth and many possessions. So are we. But how do we regard our wealth and possessions? As a right? As something we have worked hard for? Or as a gift to be used to bless others less fortunate than ourselves? At the heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is love, a love that is incompatible with living a selfish lifestyle, unmoved by the plight of others.

A prayer

Forgive us, Lord. The hungry faces stare at us through our television screens; the squatting figure on the pavement asks for money. We turn away, preferring not to see, preferring not to remember our common humanity, or the link between our plenty and their poverty. Forgive us, Lord, that we can live so easily with the needs of others.
(Donald Hilton)