

God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work (2 Cor. 9.8)

The behaviour of the rich man in this parable cuts him off from others. In the culture of Jesus' day, any decision about landholding and crops was made following hours of discussion with family, friends and neighbours. But this man only 'thought to himself' about what to do. And he became entirely self-sufficient and isolated. He was wilfully independent – 'going it alone' in a way that was entirely contrary to God's purposes.

The rich man was a fool because his determined self-sufficiency was essentially a denial of God as he planned to eat, drink and be merry, rather than recognise that his life and death were in God's hands.

St Luke places this parable soon after the parable of the Good Samaritan, who used his wealth for others, and the Lord's Prayer, which reminds us to trust God for our daily bread. This sets up a stark contrast with the selfish attitude of the rich man who planned to use his wealth to make himself unassailable.

Jesus follows the condemnation of the man's plans to build bigger barns to store his food, with praise for the birds who do not have barns, but trust God to feed them daily. The disciples were to learn from the example of the birds and to know themselves even more cared for than they were.

Living with trust like that towards God, leads the disciples and us to a way of life which isn't about trying to secure the future by building up possessions. It is about being free to love vulnerably and trustingly and thereby being rich towards God.

The parable, one of the chosen harvest readings, seems very relevant at this time. Shelves of loo roll in the supermarket have been empty again this week. No doubt pasta will follow. Perhaps understandably people want to stock up, but in the process we are creating the same shortages that we saw before.

Our Harvest Festival celebrations should prompt us to think again about the things we take for granted. We celebrate the goodness of the created world and remember God's generosity in providing enough for everyone to enjoy. Yet still in some parts of the world there are over full barns while in other parts there are empty shelves.

The effects of climate change and covid-19 are exacerbating food inequality in the world and the consequences will impact on us all. The passage reminds us that we have a common responsibility to one another: the treasures of God are not only for ourselves. **Amen.**