

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2021**  
**Trinity 19 (B)**

**Liverpool Parish Church**

**OT: Amos 5.6-7,10-15**  
**NT: Hebrews 4.12-end**  
**G: Mark 10.17-31**

### **Jesus, looking at him, loved him**

In preparing for this sermon the words-

Jesus, looking at him, loved him – struck me. Jesus simply loved this man, this rich man so described by Mark and in Luke he is described as a ruler and in Matthew as young- so a rich young ruler. Jesus loved him.

Jesus tells the young man to sell all that he has and follow him. I don't think that Jesus is saying to have wealth is wrong- however, if having wealth makes us rely on ourselves and not on God, then that is wrong. Self-sufficiency, whilst good in today's consumer society might be the preferred option- a complete and utter dependence upon God is what Jesus is teaching us in this passage.

I've been exploring and been interested in St Ignatius of Loyola for many years. As part of this exploration, I've been visiting St Beuno's in North Wales, a Jesuit retreat house for individually guided retreats every year usually around September or October. I was fortunate to go away from 1-3 October. As a working mum I can only usually manage a weekend away and to undertake that involves a military style operation in ensuring those I leave behind are well provided for. I have to be totally honest with you all- aside from anything spiritual or holy- the retreat is an opportunity for me to get away from it all, to rest, recharge and renew and to have all my meals cooked for me! I love the peace and quiet of the silent retreat and spending time in the grounds of the house and the various different chapels.

My spiritual director on the weekend was extremely wise and I learnt so much from her. In terms of dependence upon God, we identified together that I had been trying to go my own way a bit, to solve things in my own strength. Rather similar to the rich young ruler in some ways, I couldn't part from my way- my thoughts on how things should be, how people should respond in certain ways and situations. Whilst I don't have loads of possessions and money to worry about, I do think that I can resolve things that are way beyond my control. I needed this weekend to just take stock and come back to the understanding that I've always had- God's got this. As a further illustration of this, at the weekend I was reminded about the wedding at Cana in the Gospel of John- where Our Lady, Mary tells Jesus they have run out of wine and he appears to be a bit dismissive of her, he doesn't seem to want to know. She just says to the people serving at the wedding- do as he tells you. Mary tells Jesus the problem and leaves it with him. She doesn't go on and on- (like I tend to) she just leaves it with him and trusts he will sort it out. Wouldn't it be good if we could do that? To give something over to Jesus and to trust.

There could be any amount of issues and problems that we are trying to resolve in our own strength. Relationship difficulties, problems at work, being unemployed, debt issues, illness of a loved one- the list goes on. Whilst we have to be practical and live our lives and make decisions every day, we can trust that God has it in hand. Realistically- we couldn't say- 'I'd like to be a Doctor- help me Lord' and not actually apply to university to complete a degree in Medicine- there are parts for us to play of course. Ultimately we can do our part and then just as Mary handed the no wine situation over to Jesus- we need to hand over our concerns to God.

Later in the passage from Mark we are told, for mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible. What an amazing concept and we have heard that phrase before- In Luke the Angel Gabriel said to Mary, for nothing will be impossible for God. Mary

accepted that and her acceptance and obedience for God's plan is an example for us all. Sometimes, we need to learn to just let go, to let God be, to accept that 'God's got this'. It's really difficult and I can speak from personal experience, but remembering that God's got this, can bring immense comfort, no matter what the outcome. Just as Jesus looked at the young man and loved him, so our Father God looks at us, loves and says, 'I've got this'.

Amen

Revd Jennifer Brady