



SUNDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2023

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

**The Parishes of:** Bishop Auckland || Newton Aycliffe & Shildon || Willington  
Crook, Tow Law & Wolsingham || Tudhoe || Coundon, Ferryhill & Windlestone

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## ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

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### **32nd Sunday of the Year (A): Matthew 25: 1-13**

Estate Agents use it. Social media, insurance companies, the Police, the Church and just about everyone uses jargon. It's useful shorthand, saves longer descriptions. Problem is, without further detail we can't assume a common understanding of it.

Unpacking useful terms so we're all on the same page is at the heart of good, clear communication. Religious vocabulary can kick off interesting conversations. What do you mean by grace? What about salvation, peace, incarnation, reconciliation and even the word God?

Jesus talks about the kingdom of heaven. Matthew's Gospel gives us a series of stories to help how we might think about it. Let's agree he doesn't mean a place. More a mindset, a progressive journey into inhabiting God's teaching and values, adopting his attitudes and lifestyle. We're talking what the Scriptures describe as wisdom.

Today's Gospel fields a daft story. Like a barmy TV advert that's deliberately odd so that it sticks in your mind, this well-crafted tale contrasts good sense with foolishness. Put bluntly, we're meant to think, to think constantly, consistently, and that's for always. You get the message.

In this strange Gospel story, one group thinks ahead and provides accordingly, the other is a chancy lot, drifting, casual and ill prepared. Now none of us is perfect. We all take risks and we can't be equipped for every eventuality. But Jesus suggests this group isn't serious about their responsibilities and liable to let others down. More than that, winging it can't become a lifestyle habit, expecting others to bale us out, dependant because we didn't plan. Relying on the kindness and tolerance of others has saved each of us at times when we've been caught out, but it's to be the exception rather than a habit.

The Lord's parables cross-reference each other constantly. Remember the story about the person who built a house on rock that could withstand unexpected floods and battering? It had been thought out and precautions taken, given a strength that assured endurance. He contrasts this with the house built on sand that couldn't last. Jesus openly describes bad or no planning as stupid. We don't want to pick up that label for ourselves. It puts us in the company of the unacceptable bridesmaids in today's story. God's ways to life require more regular care. We know the difference. It's a no brainer. Lamps need to shine and stand out. We are too.



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*Further words from Pope Francis on Climate Change*

In recent years, some have chosen to deride these facts about climate change. They bring up allegedly solid scientific data, like the fact that the planet has always had, and will have, periods of cooling and warming. They forget to mention another relevant datum: that what we are presently experiencing is an unusual acceleration of warming, at such a speed that it will take only one generation - not centuries or millennia - in order to verify it. The rise in the sea level and the melting of glaciers can be easily perceived by an individual in his or her lifetime, and probably in a few years many populations will have to move their homes because of these facts.

In order to ridicule those who speak of global warming, it is pointed out that intermittent periods of extreme cold regularly occur. One fails to mention that this and other extraordinary symptoms are nothing but diverse alternative expressions of the same cause: the global imbalance that is provoking the warming of the planet. Droughts and floods, the dried-up lakes, communities swept away by seaquakes and flooding ultimately have the same origin. At the same time, if we speak of a global phenomenon, we cannot confuse this with sporadic events explained in good part by local factors.

**- *Laudate Deum* paras 6 and 7**

*(Laudate Deum is the new document following on from Laudato Si on caring for the Earth, our common home. That document is now eight years old and the Pope sees the urgency to assert that not enough has been done and the clock is ticking .....)*