

12TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – (OT-21)
ST PETER'S ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA
Sunday 31st August 2025

Fr. Stephen Monsiegnur

Readings¹: Jeremiah 2:4-13 / Ps 81:1, 15-16 / Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16 / Luke 14:1, 7-14

Theme: *The Role of Giving in Our Faith Journey*

Jeremiah 2:4-13

⁴ Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. ⁵ Thus says the Lord: What wrong did your ancestors find in me that they went far from me and went after worthless things and became worthless themselves?

⁶ They did not say, "Where is the Lord, who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that no one passes through, where no one lives?"

⁷ I brought you into a plentiful land to eat its fruits and its good things.

But when you entered you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination.

⁸ The priests did not say, "Where is the Lord?" Those who handle the law did not know me; the rulers transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal and went after things that do not profit.

⁹ Therefore, once more I accuse you, says the Lord, and I accuse your children's children.

¹⁰ Cross to the coasts of Cyprus and look; send to Kedar and examine with care; see if there has ever been such a thing.

¹¹ Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods?

But my people have changed their glory for something that does not profit.

¹² Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked; be utterly desolate, says the Lord,

¹³ for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.

Ps 81:1, 15-16

¹ Sing aloud to God our strength;
 shout for joy to the God of Jacob.

¹⁵ Those who hate the Lord would cringe before him,
 and their doom would last forever.

¹⁶ I would feed you with the finest of the wheat,
 and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

Let mutual affection continue. ² Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. ³ Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them, those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. ⁴ Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers. ⁵ Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for he himself has

¹ Scripture passages are found in the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE), sourced from Bible Gateway at www.biblegateway.com

said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." ⁶ So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?"

⁷ Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. ¹⁵ Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. ¹⁶ Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Luke 14:1, 7-14

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath, they were watching him closely.

⁷ When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable.

⁸ "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host, ⁹ and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. ¹¹ For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

¹² He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers and sisters or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴ And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

SERMON

Typically, at this time of year, we at St Peter's reflect on our giving over the past year or so. As we reflect, we are reminded of the profound role that giving plays in our faith journey and our commitment to God's plan, as we determine what each of us will promise as our commitment or tithe for the year ahead. Today's readings offer us valuable insights into the themes of faithfulness of and to God; humility, and service. So, let's explore how these themes guide us in understanding the significance of giving as an expression of our faith.

In Jeremiah² we hear the Lord's lament over the unfaithfulness of the Israelites. The Lord questions what it was that their ancestors found wrong with [Him] that led them to stray and follow worthless things. He reminds them of how He brought them out of Egypt and led them through the wilderness to a plentiful land, which they defiled by turning to other gods. – How often do we just how it is that we have what we do, the freedom, wealth, health that allows us to work, and food? This passage highlights the importance of remaining faithful to God and recognizing His unwavering love and provision.

² Jeremiah 2:4-13

Similarly, in Hebrews,³ we are called to maintain our faith and trust in God. The passage emphasizes showing hospitality, doing good deeds, and offering sacrifices that are pleasing to God. Our faithfulness to God is not just about our words but also about our actions. Giving, in its various forms, is a tangible expression of our faith and trust in God's plan. Do we give what we have left over, or does the call to give come first in our budgeting?

In Luke⁴ Jesus teaches us about humility and the importance of serving others. He encourages us to invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind to our banquets, emphasizing the blessings that come from serving others selflessly. This passage reminds us that true greatness in God's kingdom is found in humble service to others. How often have we been upset or annoyed when our generosity is not apparently seen, and due thanks is not forthcoming?

When we give, we are not only expressing our faith but also embodying the humility and service that Jesus calls us to. Giving is an act of love and compassion, a way to serve those in need and to reflect God's love to the world. It is through our giving that we participate in God's plan to bring hope, healing, and transformation to our communities. Giving is not a competition between community members but a private arrangement between each of us and God, who we can be assured sees not just what we do, but our hearts.

Giving is a powerful expression of our faith and commitment to God's plan. It is not to be undertaken as a chore or burden, but a joyous acknowledgment that everything we have comes from God and that we are stewards of His blessings. When we give, we are participating in God's work of redemption and restoration. Our giving supports the mission of the church by covering running costs, helps those in need through education and all manner of outreach, and importantly advances the kingdom of God.

Moreover, giving is an act of worship. It is a way to honor God and to show our gratitude for His abundant grace and provision toward us. As we give, we are reminded of God's faithfulness and His call to be faithful in return. Our giving is a response to God's love, a way to say, "Lord, I trust You, and I am committed to Your plan."

As we reflect on the themes of faithfulness to God and humility, and service, let us remember the vital role that giving plays in our faith journey. Let us give generously, not out of obligation, but out of love and gratitude for all that God has done for us. May our giving be a testament to our faith and a commitment to God's plan for our lives and the world.

Let us pray:

Gracious God, we thank You for Your faithfulness and love. Help each of us to be faithful in our giving, to serve others with humility, and to trust in Your plan. May our giving reflect our faith and be a real means to bring Your love and hope to those in need. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

³ Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

⁴ Luke 14:1, 7-14