**Reflections 28 September – 4 October – Treasuring Generosity**

**Bible study on 1 Timothy 6:6-19**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Let us come together now in God’s presence,
as those who want to praise God
and in pursuit of righteousness, godliness, faith,
love, endurance and gentleness.
**Amen.**

**Read the passage**

*Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.*

1 Timothy 6:6-19

Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains. But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen. As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

**Explore and respond to the text**

*Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.*

**Bible notes**

1 Timothy opens by denouncing false teaching (1:3ff) and closes by criticising those who ignore the teaching of Jesus by equating godliness with wealth (6:3,5). ‘Godliness’ (eusebeia in Greek) is a word not often used today. Neither is it found elsewhere in Paul’s writings, where he sums up distinctive Christ-like living as ‘righteousness’ or ‘holiness’ (e.g. Romans 6:13, 12:1). The NRSV sometimes translates eusebeia as ‘religion’ (e.g. 3:16). But godliness is more than outward observance. It springs from deep reverence for the living God (4:10) and is the fruit of faithful living that shows itself in honouring others, mutual care and respect (5:1–6:2). Soldiers and athletes are role models of the discipline and perseverance that nourish eusebeia (v.12). Timothy’s ‘good confession’ – his public witness to the faith when he was commissioned for his ministry in Ephesus (1:3) – finds an inspiring role model in the witness of Jesus before Pilate (v.13).

Christ-like godliness points beyond itself to the reality of the invisible God (vv.15-16), as its hope-filled living transforms everyday life in the light of God’s future salvation (4:8). Hoped-for treasure in heaven appears as treasure on earth in the form of greed-transforming generosity (vv.18-19). It is not money but insatiable ‘love of money’ that is ‘a root of all kinds of evil’ (v.10), as it spawns the vices that undermine social as well as individual well-being (6:4-5). By contrast, the good works of generosity flow from an appreciation of the nature of God (v.17), and the contentment this brings in having enough (v.8).

 **Reflection**

*Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.*

Contentment is not something our world strives for. In the western world, we live in a consumerist society, where we always want the next thing and can’t rest until we have it. What areas in your life are there where you are satisfied? The Epistle reading today asks us to look to God for our contentment. God’s generous nature gives us all we need. Our happiness is in all that God has generously provided, rather than the ever-changing gimmicks the world offers.

**Questions for reflection**

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

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| A group of people holding hands in a heart shape  AI-generated content may be incorrect. |  |

**Questions**

* What qualities and characteristics do you treasure?
* How have you been generous this week?
* In what ways is your church a generous community?

**Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of life with you.
Help us to be content with what we have
and not to be tempted by the trappings of this life.
Thank you for the good things you give us each day.
May we treasure them.
**Amen.**