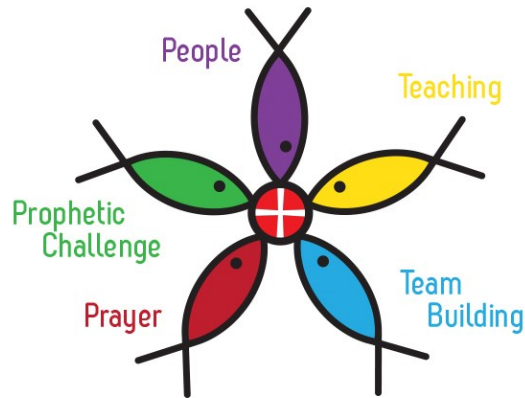




Part of
**Bradford North
Methodist
Circuit**

Come with us, Lord Jesus;
Fill us with your Spirit;
Shape us to your likeness;
Use us to enfold with love our needy world



Parables for Bradford



What is the Spirit trying to tell us?



June 6th 2021

Led by
Deacon
Merry Evans

Week 1

Today's Parable

2 Samuel 12:1-7a

The story of David and Nathan the Prophet

God was not at all pleased with what David had done, and sent Nathan to David.

Nathan said to him, "There were two men in the same city—one rich, the other poor. The rich man had huge flocks of sheep, herds of cattle. The poor man had nothing but one little female lamb, which he had bought and raised. It grew up with him and his children as a member of the family. It ate off his plate and drank from his cup and slept on his bed. It was like a daughter to him.

"One day a traveller dropped in on the rich man. He was too stingy to take an animal from his own herds or flocks to make a meal for his visitor, so he took the poor man's lamb and prepared a meal to set before his guest."

David exploded in anger. "As surely as God lives," he said to Nathan, "the man who did this ought to be lynched! He must repay for the lamb four times over for his crime and his stinginess!"

"You're the man!" said Nathan.

How much can I afford to give of my time?

How much can I afford to give of my wealth?

How much political influence can I bring to bear to bring about justice for the poor?

How can I come to a realistic, humble, view of my importance?

How can I be a more effective advocate for the poor?

Is there any cause that keeps presenting itself to me that I have been ignoring?

Why did Jesus tell us all these stories if he did not want us to change?

Windhill Community Association

<http://windhillcommunity.co.uk/>

Bradford Metropolitan Foodbank

<http://www.bradfordfoodbank.com/donate>

There are many groups of people who refuse to let the magnitude of the task of feeding the poor defeat them.

Please hold them in your prayers

Collect for the day

God of compassion, stir us with pity for those without food or shelter, help us do whatever we can, to give whatever we can afford, to make this society a bit more fair and just.

Amen

August
29th 2021

Week 11

Led by

**Martin
Bashforth**

Today's Parable

Luke 18:1-14

"There was once a judge in some city who never gave God a thought and cared nothing for people. A widow in that city kept after him: 'My rights are being violated. Protect me!' "He never gave her the time of day. But after this went on and on he said to himself, 'I care nothing what God thinks, even less what people think. But because this widow won't quit badgering me, I'd better do something and see that she gets justice otherwise I'm going to end up beaten black-and-blue by her pounding.'" ...

"Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax man. The Pharisee posed and prayed like this: 'Oh, God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, crooks, adulterers, or, heaven forbid, like this tax man. I fast twice a week and tithe on all my income.' "Meanwhile the tax man, slumped in the shadows, his face in his hands, not daring to look up, said, 'God, give mercy. Forgive me, a sinner.'" ...

Nathan had anointed David as King but was not afraid to tell him that he was stealing from the poor.

Do I hold my elected representatives to account, or just accept what they do?

All my food, clothing, and manufactured goods are brought to me from places where people are paid less and work harder than I do.

Do I feel entitled to a higher standard of living just because of where I was born?

Do I give all I can? Really?

Do I always look for Fair Trade goods and rejoice that I am paying a fair price, even if it is more?

What example did Jesus give me about how to behave?

The Bradford Cyrenians <http://www.bradfordcyrenians.org.uk/>
run refuges for men and for women.

Family Action Bradford <https://www.family-action.org.uk/>
help people suffering domestic abuse.

Most of the people in receipt of these services feel powerless at the hands of powerful people.

Please hold these organisations in your prayers

Collect for the day

God of the Poor, friend of the weak, grant me compassion, so that I may be able to look at my bank account without shame, and to know that I am paying a good price for the work of your other precious children. Amen

Build your Castle
on a Firm Foundation?

June 13th 2021

Led by
**Lay Pastor
Peter Jackson**

Week 2

Today's Parable

Matthew 7:24-29

"These words I speak to you are not incidental additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They are foundational words, words to build a life on.

"If you work these words into your life, you are like a smart carpenter who built his house on solid rock. Rain poured down, the river flooded, a tornado hit—but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock.

"But if you just use my words in Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you are like a stupid carpenter who built his house on the sandy beach. When a storm rolled in and the waves came up, it collapsed like a house of cards."

When Jesus concluded his address, the crowd burst into applause.

They had never heard teaching like this.

It was apparent that he was living everything he was saying—quite a contrast to their religion teachers!

As I go through life, I gain and lose abilities, wisdom, and gifts, how can I appreciate what I have and best to use it in the service of my fellow travellers?

How can I help others to understand and develop the talents that I see in them?

How can our church change so that we are ready to accept the contribution of people with very different talents?

Our church has just divested of all its investments in oil and gas, are there any ways that I should change the way I use my talents, time, and money?

How did Jesus decide not to use his gifts when he spent 40 days in the desert?

How did he use his gifts?

Refill Shipley use their talents to reduce plastic packaging and help us to buy liquids and powders in returnable or reusable packaging
<https://www.refillshipley.co.uk/>

Bradford Deaf Community Association help people living with deafness to make the most of their contribution to society
<https://divabradford.org.uk/organisations/10883>

Please hold them in your prayers

Collect for the day

God of Generosity, we thank you for your gifts to us, help us to realise what they are, and how we can use them to make this world a better place.

Amen

August
22nd
2021

Led by **Rev Phil Drake**

Week 10

Today's Parable

Matthew 25: 14-30

Using my gifts

... To one he gave five thousand dollars, to another two thousand, to a third one thousand, depending on their abilities. Then he left.

Right off, the first servant went to work and doubled his master's investment. The second did the same. But the man with the single thousand dug a hole and carefully buried his master's money. "After a long absence, the master of those three servants came back and settled up with them. The one given five thousand dollars showed him how he had doubled his investment. His master commended him: 'Good work! You did your job well. From now on be my partner...

"The servant given one thousand said, 'Master, I know you have high standards and hate careless ways, that you demand the best and make no allowances for error. I was afraid I might disappoint you, so I found a good hiding place and secured your money. Here it is, safe and sound down to the last cent.'

"The master was furious. 'That's a terrible way to live! It's criminal to live cautiously like that! If you knew I was after the best, why did you do less than the least?...

I wonder what principles I always stick to?

Do I always tell the truth, even if it is embarrassing?

Am I always honest in my dealings, determined that those I deal with get a good deal?

Am I bothered where my money is stored, so long as I get a good return?

Does what I say always help others feel better about themselves?

Are my decisions and comments based on love, or designed to make me feel better?

What is the one thing I could do today to live a better life?

What example did Jesus set for me?

Christians Against Poverty <https://capuk.org/>
This Bradford organisation helps people, many of whom have acquired chaotic financial habits, to lay down a firm foundation for their lives. Many become Christians in the process, and they get help to organise their debts and future spending.

Please hold Christians Against Poverty in your prayers.

Collect for the day

God of all builders, help me to find a firm foundation for my life, so that my decisions, my actions and my speech are acceptable in your sight.

Amen

June 20th 2021

Receiving Wisdom

Led by
**Rev Phil
Drake**

Week 3

Today's Parable

Matthew 13: 1-23

"... A farmer planted seed. As he scattered the seed, some of it fell on the road, and birds ate it. Some fell in the gravel; it sprouted quickly but didn't put down roots, so when the sun came up it withered just as quickly. Some fell in the weeds; as it came up, it was strangled by the weeds. Some fell on good earth, and produced a harvest beyond his wildest dreams. ...

"Study this story of the farmer planting seed. When anyone hears news of the kingdom and doesn't take it in, it just remains on the surface, and so the Evil One comes along and plucks it right out of that person's heart. This is the seed the farmer scatters on the road. "The seed cast in the gravel—this is the person who hears and instantly responds with enthusiasm. But there is no soil of character, and so when the emotions wear off and some difficulty arrives, there is nothing to show for it. "The seed cast in the weeds is the person who hears the kingdom news, but weeds of worry and illusions about getting more and wanting everything under the sun strangle what was heard, and nothing comes of it. "The seed cast on good earth is the person who hears and takes in the News, and then produces a harvest beyond his wildest dreams."

How might I live my life so that I am better prepared for what might happen in the future?

I can predict that I will grow old and die, but could I have predicted COVID-19? Or climate change? Could I have been better prepared?

I have often felt sorry for people living with dyslexia or autism, how can I better come to appreciate their strengths and the contribution that they can make to society?

How can I strike the balance between hoarding and saving?

How can I learn from the life of Jesus about how to treat others and to prepare myself for what lies ahead?

National Autistic Society

<https://www.autism.org.uk/>

British Dyslexia Association

<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

These societies help us to become aware of the different sorts of wisdom that different people possess. People with different abilities can provide a valuable different view of the world.

Please hold them in your prayers

Collect for the day

God of wisdom and thoughtfulness, help me to appreciate the full spectrum of the people you have given to me to share this life, help me always to look for the positive in people, rather than expecting everyone to be like me.

Amen

Five Wise and Foolish Virgins



August 15th 2021

Led by
**Pastor Mervyn
Flecknoe**
Week 9

Today's Parable

Matthew 25: 1-13

The Wise and Foolish Virgins

"God's kingdom is like ten young virgins who took oil lamps and went out to greet the bridegroom. Five were silly and five were smart.

The silly virgins took lamps, but no extra oil. The smart virgins took jars of oil to feed their lamps. The bridegroom didn't show up when they expected him, and they all fell asleep.

"In the middle of the night someone yelled out, 'He's here! The bridegroom's here! Go out and greet him!' "The ten virgins got up and got their lamps ready. The silly virgins said to the smart ones, 'Our lamps are going out; lend us some of your oil.'

How can I best avoid making the mistakes that others have made before me?

How can I filter good advice from bad?

How can I avoid misinformation and fake news?

How can I make sure that I retain wisdom?

How can I keep anxiety and worry under control to leave my mind free for learning?

How can I practice good deeds that will lead to good habits and help me to develop a good character?

How did Jesus teach his disciples?

Could our church services follow his example?

The HALE Project: <https://haleproject.org.uk/>

Bradford Youth Service who use Methodist premises for their work with vulnerable young people

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/youth-service/what-the-youth-service-does/>

Both of these projects aim to improve the health and education of young people, to give them capacity to learn

Please hold these organisations in your prayers

Collect for the day

Lord of truth, welcome to my mind, help me remove bias and all the obstacles that I put in the way of learning so that I may receive your wisdom into my life. Amen

June 27th 2021

Led by

Rhona
North

Week 4

Today's Parable

Luke 10:25-37

Just then a religion scholar stood up with a question to test Jesus. "Teacher, what do I need to do to get eternal life?"

He answered, "What's written in God's Law? How do you interpret it?"

He said, "That you love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and muscle and intelligence—and that you love your neighbor as well as you do yourself."

"Good answer!" said Jesus. "Do it and you'll live." Looking for a loophole, he asked, "And just how would you define 'neighbour'?"

Jesus answered by telling a story. "There was once a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho..."

"What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbour to the man attacked by robbers?" "The one who treated him kindly," the religion scholar responded. Jesus said, "Go and do the same."

Why do I think that being good in worldly terms is enough?

Could I do more for my Master if I were to embrace modern technology?

Why do I think that doing what we always used to do will meet the needs of the present age?

How must I change to be a useful evangelist?

How can I let myself learn from younger people how to use new technology for your purposes?

How can I be "Smarter" to show your love to the world?

How did Jesus break away from his family traditions and expectations in order to serve his Father?

Shipley and Baildon Friends of the Earth (climate change)

<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/groups/baildon>

Hope4Justice (teenage trafficking)

<http://www.hope4justice.org/> (Please watch the short film)

These organisations have found smart ways to alert people to great evils of our times, they deserve our support.

Please hold them in your prayers

Collect for the day

God of goodness and even of business practice, help us to be wise to the ways of the world and to use the whole armoury of ways to defeat evil in our times,

Amen

August 8th 2021

Led by
**Deacon Merry
Evans**
Week 8

Today's Parable

Luke 16:1-15

Jesus said to his disciples, "There was once a rich man who ...got reports that his manager had been taking advantage of his position by running up huge personal expenses. So he called him in and said, 'What's this I hear about you? You're fired. And I want a complete audit of your books.' "The manager said to himself, 'What am I going to do?...Ah, I've got a plan... Here's what I'll do, then when I'm turned out into the street, people will take me into their houses.'...

"The master praised the crooked manager! And why? Because he knew how to look after himself. Streetwise people are smarter in this regard than law-abiding citizens. They are on constant alert, looking for angles, surviving by their wits. I want you to be smart in the same way—but for what is right—using every adversity to stimulate you to creative survival, to concentrate your attention on the bare essentials, so you'll live, really live, and not complacently just get by on good behaviour...

"You can't serve both God and the Bank. The Pharisees...rolled their eyes, dismissing him as hopelessly out of touch. So Jesus spoke to them: "You are masters at making yourselves look good in front of others, but God knows what's behind the appearance..."

Whom did Jesus treat as being his neighbour?
Was anyone excluded from his neighbourliness?
What neighbourly help have I given this week?
What neighbourly help have I planned for next week?
What neighbourly help has my church planned for the coming week?
Who are the neighbours whom I find most difficult to like?
Which of my neighbours are in most difficulty?
Who is my neighbour? Is this just my opinion?

WellSprings Together <https://wellspringstogether.org.uk/>

Faith in Action transforming communities together across the Anglican diocese of Leeds

Transforming Lives for Good <https://www.tlg.org.uk/>

With expertise in school exclusions, emotional wellbeing and holiday hunger, TLG is one of the UK's fastest growing children's charities.

Collect for the day

God of my neighbour, you care for him, you care for her, just as you care for me, help me to understand that I am not more important, that my needs are not more important, that I can find happiness in helping others.

Amen

July 11th 2021

Led by

Roy Lorrain-Smith
&
Jackie Marshall

Week 5:

Where True Wealth Lies

Today's Parable

Luke 12:13-34

...Take care! Protect yourself against the least bit of greed. Life is not defined by what you have, even when you have a lot...

The farm of a certain rich man produced a terrific crop. He talked to himself: 'What can I do? My barn isn't big enough for this harvest.' Then he said, 'Here's what I'll do: I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones...

...Just then God showed up and said, 'Fool! Tonight you die. And your barnful of goods—who gets it?' "That's what happens when you fill your barn with Self and not with God.

...You're my dearest friends! The Father wants to give you the very kingdom itself. Be generous. Give to the poor.

Get yourselves a bank that can't go bankrupt, a bank in heaven far from bankrobbers, safe from embezzlers, a bank you can bank on. It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being"

You don't know what you've got 'till it's gone

What can't I afford to lose?

How much care do I take to make sure that those things most precious to me are safe?

How can I do more to love and respect people who are not coping with modern life?

People make mistakes and suffer for them, how can I help any of them recover?

I am a sinner, how grateful should I be for forgiveness?

Did Jesus ever write anyone off?

"Where did Jesus spend Black Saturday?" "Wandering through Hell looking for his friend Judas?"

Bradford Mind: <https://www.mindinbradford.org.uk/>

Alcoholics Anonymous:

<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/>

These are both voluntary organisations that help people back into positive ways of living, for which we must be grateful.

Please hold these organisations in your prayers

Collect for the day

God of the lost, help us to love all your children, especially those who have wandered from wise living in self-destructing ways, so that together we might find sense and safety. Amen

July 25th 2021

**Finding
the
Lost**

**Led by
Rev
Nick
Blundell**

Week 7

Today's Parable

Luke 15

"Suppose one of you had a hundred sheep and lost one. Wouldn't you leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the lost one until you found it? When found, you can be sure you would put it across your shoulders, rejoicing, and when you got home call in your friends and neighbours, saying, 'Celebrate with me! I've found my lost sheep!'"

"Or imagine a woman who has ten coins and loses one..."

Then he said, "There was once a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, 'Father, I want right now what's coming to me.' "So the father divided the property between them. It wasn't long before the younger son packed his bags and left. There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. After he had gone through all his money..."When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced and kissed him..."

My son is here—given up for dead and now alive! Given up for lost and now found!..."

What is my most valuable possession?

Where do I keep it?

What am I most afraid of losing?

What will I regret most when I am dying?

What activity took up most of my time last week?

What took up the time of our Lord Jesus?

What wealth did he possess?

Where did he keep it?

What am I not prepared to give up?

Did Jesus place his own family first?

Do I?

Beacon: Bradford Ecumenical Asylum Concern
<https://beaconbradford.org/>

The Immanuel Project:

Both of these organisations enable volunteers to build up credit in a place where no financial crisis can affect it.

Please hold these organisations in your prayers

Collect for the day

Lord of all wealth, I freely offer all my possessions in your service, please help me to achieve independence from worldly things and to build up treasure in Heaven.
Amen

July 18th
2021

Led by

Claire
Nott

Week 6

Today's Parable

Luke 14:15-24
The Great Man's Feast

Jesus followed up. "Yes. For there was once a man who threw a great dinner party and invited many. When it was time for dinner, he sent out his servant to the invited guests, saying, 'Come on in; the food's on the table.' "Then they all began to beg off, one after another making excuses.

...He was outraged and told the servant, 'Quickly, get out into the city streets and alleys. Collect all who look like they need a square meal, all the misfits and homeless and down-and-out you can lay your hands on, and bring them here.' "

The servant reported back, 'Master, I did what you commanded—and there's still room.' "The master said, 'Then go to the country roads. Whoever you find, drag them in. I want my house full! Let me tell you, not one of those originally invited is going to get so much as a bite at my dinner party.'"

When did I last do something for someone who could never repay me?

When did I last provide a meal for someone who could not invite me back?

How much time do I spend with people who have little or nothing to their name?

How difficult it is to have principles and make good decisions when you are hungry?

How did Jesus treat people who were destitute?

What organisations have been set up by the Church to help destitute people?

The Bradford Soup Run www.thebradfordsoupapun.org.uk

Inn Churches Bradford: <https://innchurches.co.uk/>

Both of these organisations bring food and lodging to the poorest in society, feeding, housing, and providing acceptance and friendly contact.

Please hold these organisations in your prayers

Collect for the day

God of the hungry, forgive me for overfilling my stomach when others starve, and help me to take joy in ministering to the poor and destitute.

Amen