A READING FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. She seeks wool and flax and works with willing hands. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy.

Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands and let her works praise her in the gates.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

The Response for the Psalm is

Blessed are all who fear the LORD.

Blessed are all who fear the LORD,
and walk in his ways!
By the labour of your hands you shall eat.
You will be blessed and prosper.

Blessed are all who fear the LORD.

Your wife like a fruitful vine
in the heart of your house;
your children like shoots of the olive
around your table.

Blessed are all who fear the LORD.

Indeed thus shall be blessed
the husband who fears the LORD.
May the LORD bless you from Sion.

May you see Jerusalem prosper
all the days of your life!

Blessed are all who fear the LORD.

The second reading is from the letter to the Thessalonians

Concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, 'There is peace and security', then sudden destruction will come upon them as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers and sisters, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia.

Abide in me, and I in you, says the Lord.

Whoever abides in me bears much fruit.

Alleluia.

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

At that time: Jesus told his disciples this parable, 'The kingdom of heaven will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

'Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, "Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master." And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, "Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master." He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours." But his master answered him, "You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."'.

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

The talent, most likely to be hidden, that God gives us, is the ability to properly seek reconciliation. We might say sorry with zero conviction or even worse I'm sorry you were upset- rather than I am sorry I upset you. I admire honesty and praise it in others especially when something went wrong and there is some blame that is justified, but they still seek reconciliation. Perhaps because there is an inability to listen, stop and think 'am I listening, with real eye contact, or just thinking about what I want to say now?'. Our feelings can be more powerful than our reasoning and hope. In the Church's tradition they are called passions to reflect their driving force beyond our calmness.

We do have good talents which we show as well. Most of us would consider ourselves trying to be kind and sensitive even at the expense of honesty, unlike an Android, incapable of lying which would reply to a gentle remark of saying 'doesn't she look nice in that' by saying no! True but unkind.

Persivillience is the ability to turn any setback into an opportunity to grow. A combined word of perseverance and resilience bringing about becoming more positive and built on belief and integrity. Although this is Alastair Campbell's word it reflects that trust in God, healing and grace can be brought about in praying for ourselves and for one another.

Our generosity can be seen in the financial responses we make. The appeals seem endless and we must decide so often. I try to say I have three I support, cancer care charities, one called "practical action" to help developing communities and a charity caring for donkeys in the Holy land, often the only means of carrying people or goods and whose health needs can be neglected by their owners.

Jesus's teaching by parables has a deeper meaning to apply in our lives now as well as the direct understanding he gives us. We are a mix of good and imperfect and can be encouraged to think of the talents we have and develop the good ones.