

Sermons at the All Saints Anglican Church of Luxembourg

Preached by Rev Alison Heal on Sunday 28th September 2025

Bible passage: Luke 16:1-13

As Geoff said last week, we're grateful to the Christian environmental charity A Rocha for providing us with material for our sermons during this Season of Creation

Pray

In the third week of the Season of Creation, the lectionary brings us to one of Jesus' most perplexing parables. The dishonest manager is not an obvious model of virtue. He is, in fact, wasteful with what is not his. He is accused of squandering, caught, and summoned to give an account. Knowing he is about to be removed, he uses his final moments of authority to forgive debts - not for moral reasons, but to make sure others will welcome him later.

It's a story full of tension, ambiguity, and reversal. Yet buried within it is a teaching that speaks powerfully to our present age and the calling on all our lives to care for God's world. It is a parable about management - about what we do with what isn't ours, about acting wisely, even under judgment, and about seeing wealth, not as an end in itself, but as a tool for shaping relationships and the future.

The earth is not ours. That much the biblical tradition affirms without hesitation. "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it," says the Psalmist. And humanity, as we understand it from Genesis, is not placed in the garden to own, but to tend. Humans are created to serve and keep, not to dominate and exploit. If the dishonest manager's failing was to waste his master's resources, then we are not far from the same accusation.

The natural world groans under the burden of what humans have extracted, burned, polluted, and discarded. Forests are razed to feed demand. Waters rise, carrying away homes. Heatwaves spread across continents. These are not distant headlines. They are the accounts being counted up. They are the signs that the system we have built is not sustainable - not for creation, and

not for us. The parable, unsettling as it may be, reminds us that all of this is under scrutiny.

But Jesus does not tell this story only to highlight mismanagement. He draws attention to the manager's unexpected wisdom - not in deceit, but in urgency. He's faced with a reckoning, and he acts decisively. He uses what little time and power he has left to alter the future. He recognises that the system as it stands is coming to an end, and so he shifts course.

There is wisdom here for those who seek peace with creation. The climate crisis is not just a scientific concern or political challenge. It is a moment of reckoning for how we relate to the world and to each another. We are not called to panic, but we are called to act. Not with denial or despair, but with clarity and purpose. Like the manager, we have a chance to use what influence remains - not to protect our comfort, but to care for what truly matters.

Jesus says that if we cannot be trusted with what belongs to someone else, who will give us true riches? Creation care is about so much more than your carbon footprint. It is about faithfulness. About recognising that the earth is not our possession but our charge. And that faithfulness requires attention to the systems we participate in - economic, industrial, agricultural, and personal. These are the tools we use shape futures, whether we mean to or not.

The parable ends with a stark truth: no one can serve two masters. We cannot serve both God and wealth. There is no neutrality here. If accumulation becomes our aim, then we will bend everything - including the earth - to that desire. But if communion with God becomes our aim, we will find ourselves drawn into a different kind of economy - one rooted in gratitude, humility, justice, and care.

Throughout this Season of Creation, we are seeing afresh that God is not absent from the ecological crisis. God is the potter, still shaping. God is the shepherd, still seeking what is being lost. And now, God is the master who watches how we handle what is not our own. In each case, we are reminded that our choices matter. That we are not simply spectators to creation, but active participants in its healing - or indeed in its harm.

This third week calls us to accountability, but not condemnation. It calls us to take stock of what has been entrusted to us: land, air, water, food, time, money, influence. Not to hoard them, but to use them in ways that honour the Creator and care for creation. We are being invited into a wiser, humbler, more faithful stewardship.

The future is not fixed. The hands that shaped the stars have not withdrawn and the Spirit still moves over the face of the earth, breathing new life into what we have neglected. We cannot undo all that has been done, but we can live in ways that signal another kingdom. A kingdom built on abundance shared not extraction. Built on restoration not exploitation.

This is what it means to serve God, not wealth. To act wisely, even now. To live as if the earth were not our possession, but our inheritance, and our gift to those who follow.

Amen