Find Leader March 2019: **Fair Enough**

Jesus said ‘*Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourself that do not wear out’* (Luke 12.33), or, in another translation ‘*provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old*’’. In one sense, this is of course linked with Jesus’ reference to ‘*storing up treasure in heaven’ (also v33)* which doesn’t corrupt or get stolen or harmed, and is about what we should really most value and be attached to. But I always take this statement about purses to be about sustainability as well – that the treasures we should most desire are not only ‘in heaven’ but ones which do not constantly need to be re-supplied, consuming more and more natural resources; treasures which we can, like clothes, repair ourselves or buy second-hand or share. It is fascinating to me that the word ‘consumption’ has that double meaning of what we use up as materials and resources, and the old-fashioned word (late 14th century), "wasting of the body by disease’.

Immediately before the reference to ‘purses’ above is Jesus’ command to *‘sell your possessions and give to those in need’*. I think this about sharing, about tackling inequality – that nobody should be ‘left behind’ in our society, and we need to actively seek justice for those who are oppressed. But Jesus is also linking injustice in this verse with consumption, with our earth more and more ‘wearing out’ through consumption.

In this verse of Luke, we have a call to seek contentment, fair-dealing, and a life in balance with the natural world, a call to resist consumerism and to remember that God alone is really our provider and gives us what we need – which should make us both grateful and generous. And we need to remember Jesus’ warning in the following verse, Luke 12:34

“*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also* “.

If our treasure is really in those constantly consumed and re-bought purses, and the goods they can obtain for us, we will not all be able to have the fuller life all humans seek.

John Payne, Churchwarden of Edale Parish Church,

Trustee of Green Christian,

and joint co-ordinator of Joy in Enough programme