

## ADDRESS GIVEN AT SJH TRINITY 2 WEEK 10 YEAR B 10 JUNE 2018

On Thursday this past week some news came which was a bitter disappointment. The Big Lottery Fund has not awarded us any grant for Red Lion House. £100,000 from them would have triggered grants which have been promised by other bodies for specific parts of the overall project.

There may be some people here who don't know what I'm talking about. That frequently happens during my sermons. There's a charity called Horninglow Church Hall Charity which bought the redundant Red Lion pub some years ago. Another charity was established, Red Lion House Charity, to turn the pub into a community centre. Approaching £200,000 has been spent on preliminary work on the building – you can see some detail on the display on a window sill in the north aisle. From an early stage it was known that extra funding would be required, though a lot less than building from scratch would have cost.

So one source of funding is not available at the present. What is £100,000? It is a few days' pay for a premier league footballer. We may well feel that society's values are misplaced – a society to which we and the Lottery decision makers belong. It is 10 times £10,000 – if ten individuals or local businesses could be found to donate this amount (the price of a decent second-hand car) we would be there.

Don't blame God. Holding God responsible for anything that goes wrong ignores the complexities of this world, of cause and effect.

Don't say it's because we didn't pray hard enough. Prayer doesn't change God, and other people may not share our vision and our values. Prayer will, however, sustain us, and we need to come before God in humility and hope. We can expect setbacks doing God's work. What sustains us is inner conviction, strengthened by the Holy Spirit – listen to S. Paul's words in NT rdg.

We do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond measure.

We can also take comfort from the experience of Jesus: people around him were saying he had gone out of his mind, and some members of his family were persuaded this was the case.

Don't blame those who worked to the best of their abilities. They are like the faithful servants in Jesus' parables who work hard, night and day, to provide for others.

Don't say (perhaps in disappointment, perhaps with a feeling of having been proved right), "There, I knew it would never happen!" The project goes on, though not in the way we had planned and hoped for.

To the group of people who have worked hard to put Christian love into practice in this particular way, I say that we should avoid the temptation to justify everything we have done. We don't need to. The trustees of the two charities will be meeting soon to explore where we go from here, and there are many people to whom we can turn for advice, as we have always done.