

"We need another Pentecost" - 19th May 2013

The all age Talk this morning was titled "**Good Father gives good gifts**" and that's what I thought we could think more about this morning.

Thinking about Pentecost as a festival got me thinking of the other **Christian festivals** we celebrate - **Christmas - Easter and now Pentecost.**

The only one the world has **not got hold of** and interfered with is Pentecost.

Christmas is so commercialised and secularised - now wanting to be known as Wintertide.

People are amazed that we want to bring Jesus into it!

Easter eggs go into the shops as soon as the Christmas sales are over and so it goes on.

Children know more about the Easter Bunny than the cross and empty tomb.

But I also remembered that at these festivals we **usually exchange presents** - we give gifts. The Bible tells us that God wants to give good gifts to His children. If He **is** and **does** what is our reaction?

What gift does Christmas remind us of?

John 3:16 tells us that "God loved the world so much that He gave his Son"

Jesus is the gift - the clue is in His name - "He will save His people from their sins" He was born to save.

Last June we found an unopened Christmas present which had fallen off and gone down the back of a trolley on which the presents had been stacked. We didn't know it was there. It had remained unnoticed, unopened and not received.

God has given us the precious gift of salvation in Jesus. We need to receive and open it.

Forgiveness of our sins is God's gift to us through Jesus - it's a free gift by His grace.

All we have to do is acknowledge that we need it and receive it.

It sets us free from sin which makes us feel guilty and cuts us off from God. It sets us free from death which leads to an eternity apart from heaven and gives us a whole new life.

Who wouldn't want such a gift? And yet either people don't know it's there or don't want to receive it.

John Ortberg has written "there is no tragedy like the tragedy of the unopened gift."

Easter Unused gift

I've also found a gift which I'd received and opened but never used.

The Easter gift which Jesus won for us by His death and resurrection is life in all its fullness. St Paul wrote in

Ephesians 1:17

¹⁸having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what **is the hope to** which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of **his power towards us** who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him in heavenly places"

Message

"I ask—ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory—to make you intelligent and discerning in **knowing him personally**, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do, **grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life** he has for his followers, oh, the utter **extravagance of his work in us** who trust him—**endless energy, boundless strength!**

²⁰⁻²³All this energy issues from Christ: God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, **but forever**. He is in charge of it all, has the **final word on everything.**"

Basil Hume has written "The great gift of Easter **is hope** - Christian hope which makes us have that **confidence in** God, in his ultimate triumph, and in his goodness and love, which nothing can shake. "

People often give Hugh (my husband) gift vouchers instead of presents and he has a drawer full of them - I usually spend any that come my way straight away!

Apparently many Gift vouchers also often lie dormant in dark recesses of the recipient's cupboards, never to emerge. "10% of the value isn't used - it ends up being transferred from the giver to the retailer"

Like cheques which are never cashed.

As Christians we have **Hope** in a hopeless world - Not a hopeless end, but an endless hope and **assurance** or confidence that all is well and will be because Jesus is on the throne and has the final word on everything. We sing

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His
blood.

*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels, descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Power - Many Christians lack these. - Pray for self and each other.

Don't let the life which Jesus has won for us be left in a drawer - the unused Easter gift

Pentecost - (Unwanted gift)

Have you ever seen in the small ads items advertised as "unwanted gifts"?

I'm sure we've all received something like that.

Apparently more than 200,000 items are estimated to have been listed on eBay, the auction website, over Christmas Day and Boxing Day. These were unwanted gifts which included an array of colourful Christmas jumpers.

We all know the type.

Sometimes I think that we treat Jesus' gift of Holy Spirit at Pentecost and down through the centuries as the "Unwanted Gift". The title I was given for today was "We need another Pentecost" My question to us all is do we really **want** another Pentecost? Do we want to live the Holy Spirit filled life which Jesus gives to us?

We forget that it is indeed Jesus gift to us.

As human beings we like to be self sufficient - do things our way - don't need any help.

There is an element of pride and self sufficiency in refusing Jesus' present to us.

Jesus and Holy Spirit

Mark 1:8⁸ I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

John 14:15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I **will ask the** Father, and he will give you another **Helper**, to be with you for ever, ¹⁷ even the **Spirit of truth**, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

John 14:26²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Acts 1:8⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Word for today - "We have a good God Who wants to do us good"

Jesus has made it possible for us to receive God Himself. As He has gone up to heaven Holy Spirit has been made available to all who believe.

Jesus explained He, Holy Spirit is for our benefit, to be used, not left in a drawer and not cashed in. God will give us as much of His Spirit as we need or can cope with at any time.

Jesus said (not me or John Wimber or Nicky Gumble) but Jesus said :

"I will ask the Father and He will give you a **HELPER**" I don't know about you but I need all the help I can get.

He is the Spirit of Truth. He dwells with you and will be in you. Wow!

Opens out eyes to truth especially in God's word. He will teach.

You will receive **power to be witnesses**.

How evident this was on that first Pentecost. Peter's powerful speech.

We cannot live for Jesus in our own strength. That's why we must be filled with God's Spirit, go on being filled with His Spirit and growing in the fruit which comes from abiding.

Some people still say that was for New Testament times to get the Church started. I don't think Jesus mentioned that. We do need another Pentecost, but we can have it every day and anywhere. An Outpouring of the Spirit has been happening in Wales recently. We will finish with hearing some of the events happening there now . . .

"One incredible thing that we are experiencing here in Cwmbran since this Outpouring began is the breadth of Christian representation. As a local church, it is great to be joined with brothers and sisters in the Kingdom from many denominational backgrounds including: Baptist, Methodist, Anglican, Catholic, Charismatic, Reformed, Methodist, Free-Methodist and others. This unity, hunger and coming together, is confirmation to us that God is breaking down walls, destroying religious pride and using this as one tool to unite the body of Christ and send her out to the lost and broken, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Every night is different, some nights are completely free, as people experience the presence, joy and power of God. Others are still, peaceful, yet distinctly powerful. Every night, the Gospel is shared, and conversions happen – often before any altar call is made!

. . . . The meetings themselves are just one part of what God is doing. The real evidence of this Outpouring is on the streets, in our schools, and at workplaces as people sense their own responsibility to share the love of God with people. It is also seen amongst lost people who are feeling compelled to get to church!

Salvation is a wonderful thing and tonight we will be celebrating with many people who will go through the waters of baptism after finding faith in Jesus during this precious time. We celebrate with them and their families.

On Saturday, we had the privilege of baptising over 60 people who have been saved during the Welsh Outpouring! What an incredible night it was, watching people take their commitment to Jesus seriously and in obedience to Christ, go through the waters of baptism.

16 people made the decision to get baptised on the night and were baptised in addition to those already on the list! We praise God for this, He is continuing to change whole families.

One young man who is currently at one of our rehabilitation homes was overwhelmed with joy as his mum and two brothers came to see him baptised. This was a huge step for them, but what was even greater, was that they gave their lives to Christ and got baptised as well after seeing the incredible difference that Jesus makes!

Following the baptisms, a further 17 people gave their lives to Christ. The number of Salvations is increasing all the time and the majority of these are first time decisions! We are in awe of what God is doing in our midst. People who would never have even considered going to church are being drawn by the

Holy Spirit, through the powerful witness of Christians telling others about Christ and what is happening! They are then finding Christ for themselves!

Many miracles are continuing to take place. One gentleman who attended the meeting with serious muscular problems in his back was completely healed and went away with no pain!

Another woman testified to us that she turned to her husband and said 'these crutches are more of a hindrance than help!' And hasn't used them since.

A guy who has suffered from mental illness and struggles around large groups has found freedom in Christ and a new level of joy. He reported healing, wholeness and a love pulsating through his being!

We praise God for all he is doing as we continue to pray for the sick."

How can we not want Jesus' gifts of love, joy, peace and fruitfulness. How can we not want His gifts of healing, miracles, wisdom etc which he offers so that we can be the people He wants us to be. God is good and has good gifts for us. Don't let's leave them unopened, unused or unwanted but receive and enter into the life in all its fullness He has won for us.