

Reading Acts 2

Then peter stood up with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd.

²² “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men,^[a] put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵ David said about him:

“I saw the Lord always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.

²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest in hope,

²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
you will not let your holy one see decay.

²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.’^[b]

²⁹ “Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

I Have a question for you...

Which Netflix box-set or great book caused you to put your social life on hold?
and made you realise that your self-control isn't quite as good as you thought it was?

We can all think of one...?

The first time it happened to me was when Harry potter came out

– I just couldn't put the books down...

I was so addicted that if a young person came to see me and went to the loo...

I'd pick it up and read the next few lines.... It was so bad!

But... In recent years it's been Netflix or amazon Prime!

Everything from once upon a time, 24, to Westwing.....

I find myself unable to stop at just one episode!

And before I know it, its I am, even if I have an 8:30am meeting the next day!

When I discover a new series or anything that captivates me for that matter,
like a great band,

a great restaurant

or a Netflix box-set,

I am compelled to do one thing:

tell my friends!

Why, do we do this?

Why do we go out of our way to encourage our friends to get involved?

it's obviously because good news is meant to be shared!

We don't want them to miss out on what we've just experienced...

In our reading today

It's just after Pentecost

The disciples are gathered together

They are filled with the Holy Spirit ...

And Peter is compelled to share the Good News of Jesus with everyone around him...

Peter talks so confidently of what had happened because he knows it to be true!

He was there

He knew Jesus personally,

He saw the miracles with his own eyes,

He knows and trusts the power of Jesus.

This Jesus who died for our sins,

But rose again – just as David said in the old testament scriptures that peter quoted to the crowd around him...

They would've known these scriptures and he declares the Hope they can find because of Gods resurrection power.

David says that in God we can find Joy!

It's Joy that comes from this HOPE we find in God,

This hope that comes from the knowledge that there is an end to suffering,

there is an eternity beyond this life...

there is a way to overcome death...

and we, those who know and love Jesus, have discovered the key!

But that key – that knowledge, that life giving solution that we have found in Jesus

must be shared with those around us!

It would be so selfish to keep this amazing truth to ourselves!

My question to you is -

Is this joy within you? – does it bubble up so much that you can't wait to tell others?

Do you truly understand what gift you have been given?

this gift of eternal life....

and not only that - but a gift of the power of God at work in you, residing in you in our daily lives....

This is not just a gift of an eternity with God, but a gift of God's helper - the Holy Spirit, living in us now...**everyday**

- Empowering us to live this life, to enable us to fulfil the purpose God has planned for you...

a life to the full!

A life full of joy, and peace and HOPE...

Yes we still experience difficulties, and hurt - but we know that Gods presence is with us, helps us through – gives us strength and courage to face whatever storm in life that comes our way ...

...and having that assurance that comes from the resurrections.... always helps!

Peter is preaching and at the end of our reading today he says that Jesus was raised to life and we are all witnesses to it!

So, to those of you who know Jesus personally in your life –

Who have you told? you are a witness to God's Spirit at work in you?

It's your story – and no one can disagree with that

- I want to encourage you to tell others...

But I know for some of us that can be difficult

and I believe there are **3 obstacles** that may be preventing us from doing that –

Firstly – for us to be effective witnesses we need to know about the God who is sending us!

It sounds obvious doesn't it?

But read your bible, pray – get to know who Jesus is –

When Moses sent the 12 spies into the promised land, Caleb and Joshua came back with a different story – **their story was one of HOPE.**

Joshua and Caleb saw their obstacles through lenses that rested on the foundation of God's covenant promise to Israel (Genesis 15:12-16) that God had promised Good things for them!

It's all about perspective – the other 10 came back with a story of probable defeat

– because they viewed everything through human lenses **forgetting** that they had the creator God on their side

- a God of the impossible, a God who had already delivered them and their families from the Egyptians.....

and We today have that same God – but maybe sometimes we forget we have the power of the Holy spirit living in us – enabling us, helping us – **do we truly recognise the God whom we say we love.**

Our god is powerful and all things through HIM are possible

Secondly: we need to remember that there is a spiritual battle...

Paul writes to the Church in Ephesus that they should dress in the spiritual armour every day... then stand firm and pray...

We too must do that – Satan hates it when the Gospel is shared – so, can I encourage you to pray Ephesians 6 over yourself... ask God to protect you...

And then pray for family and friends to know the power of God in their lives

... know what your weaknesses are and stand firm against them,

maybe there's someone you trust who can hold you accountable as you share the gospel.

Remember that in our weaknesses, God is made strong when we turn to him.

And finally: Just remember to be you!

It's so easy for us to think "My gifting isn't evangelism, I'm not that person that can get up on stage at a Christian conference –so, I'll leave it to the minister, or the experts"...

But God doesn't give us that option... we're all called to share the gospel, In fact - we're all commanded to do so....everyone who loves Jesus, who calls him their Saviour and Lord is called to tell others.

But do it as you! Don't try to do it like someone else... use your gifts, your friendships... we can all talk about what we love.. and if that's Jesus... then just tell people... that's all you are called to do.

So,

- Get to know Jesus through his word and prayer,
- Remember it's not always going to be easy – were in a spiritual battle – guard yourself, prepare yourself and stand firm (AND PRAY!)
- And just be you!

And finally - For those of you who don't know Jesus, who haven't experienced his comfort, his peace, his joy, the Holy spirit at work in your life – can I please encourage you to not let another day pass you by.

If we've learnt anything over the past couple of months, - it's that life is too short and too precious to pass up an opportunity for something more... this opportunity to know our purpose in our creator God.

I used to have questions like “But what if it isn’t real? – what if I live life as a believer and its all a load of rubbish.....

and then I asked myself “but what if it is real – and there is a heaven and there is a purpose for my life and it all doesn’t just end when we die..... am I willing to risk it!?

And I’m so glad I did! Because I can tell you now, that I have experienced God leading me in times when I was so scared and didn’t know what to do,

I have experienced God’s overwhelming peace and love in my life when its felt like everything was falling apart.

I can now look back and see God’s hand at work in my life, giving me purpose.... I see god at work every day!

So my advice to you is to RISK it!! What have you got to lose? ...AMEN

It’s so easy –

just ask God to reveal himself to you.

Tell God your sorry for not trusting him before,

sorry for all the mistakes you’ve made in your life and that now you’re ready for God to be present in your life.

Ask Jesus to take control of your life, to lead you.

Tell Him that you want to know his plans for your life – and to be filled with the power of His Holy Spirit.