

A Complete Gift– Sunday December 9<sup>th</sup> 2012.

*Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. <sup>4</sup> For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. (2.Peter 1:3-4)*

Beloved in the Lord,

At this time of the year many people are thinking about gifts. Everyday our letter boxes as well as email boxes are bombarded with Catalogues, that offer us gift ideas. The possibilities are endless.

Today on the Second Sunday of Advent I would like to look deeper at the gift that God has given to us. God's gift is a complete gift and it is an eternal gift. This gift never grows old and it never loses its effectiveness or meaning. This gift is His Holy precious Word – The Bible. By giving us His Word, The Bible, God has given us a complete and awesome gift. It is a gift that we cannot fully comprehend in our life time.

Peter writes: *His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.*

I wish to emphasise the word everything. God has given to us everything that we need for life and service that honours Him. The Apostle Paul spelled out this truth in his letter to the Ephesians. We read: **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,” (1:3)**

Through His Son Jesus Christ, God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Every spiritual blessing, not some but all. His gift is a complete gift. Last Sunday we reflected upon the truth contained in Psalm 1, and we saw that Blessed is the person who puts God, His Word and His Kingdom in the first place in their life.

This person is compared to a tree that is planted by streams of Living Water, whose leaves do not wither, that bears fruit in the right season and everything he does succeeds. We also considered Jesus statement: **“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Mt.6:33)**

Today I am really emphasising this same truth, with the hope and prayer that it would take deep root in our hearts and lives, that it would be clear in our thinking and decision making. The problem is that often we hear the truth, think that is right, but we do not act on what we have heard or learnt. That is often the case regarding putting God first. So often He gets relegated down the priority list. As soon as something comes up, all too often God gets relegated.

It is of utmost importance that we understand that He is to be first in all things. We must acknowledge Him as Lord over all. When we do, then all else is taken care of.

The fact is that He already has given us all we need, we just need to learn how to appropriate His gifts and use them.

In His Word, God has graciously provided for us all that we need for life. In a sense we can say that He provided us with everything in the Ten Commandments. The first three deal with our relationship with Him and the other seven deal with our relationships with each other. I think it would be valuable for us to review the Ten Commandments. We read in Exodus 5:1ff:

***"Then God spoke all these words, saying,***

***<sup>2</sup> "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.***

***<sup>3</sup> "You shall have no other gods before Me.***

***<sup>4</sup> "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup> You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, <sup>6</sup> but showing loving-kindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.***

***<sup>7</sup> "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.***

***<sup>8</sup> "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. <sup>11</sup> For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.***

***<sup>12</sup> "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.***

***<sup>13</sup> "You shall not murder.***

***<sup>14</sup> "You shall not commit adultery.***

***<sup>15</sup> "You shall not steal.***

***<sup>16</sup> "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.***

***<sup>17</sup> "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."***

The Ten Commandments give us very clear direction and guidance as to what God expects of us. As I mentioned the first Three deal with our relationship with Him and the final seven with our interpersonal relationships. If we want an even more condensed version then we can go to the Words of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 22:37-40:

***“And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’<sup>38</sup> This is the great and foremost commandment.<sup>39</sup> The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”***

Can you see how beautifully God’s Word all ties together? We can take the whole Law and the Prophets and condense it all down to two Commandments: ***You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. & ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’***

Can you see the cross? The vertical and the horizontal are both here. This is no coincidence because without the cross, we are not able to keep these commandments. It is only when we have been crucified with Christ, and no longer live for ourselves, can we fulfil these two commandments.

Paul wrote to the Galatians: ***“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” (Galatians 2:20)***

You see Christ is at the very centre of all things, and Christ is love.

If we respond to His love and allow our old self to be executed, then Christ lives through us and our life is love. We love God, we love His Word, We love one another. It can be no other way for GOD IS LOVE.

Let’s have another look at today’s text: ***“Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.<sup>4</sup> For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”***

That we may become partakers of His divine nature... God has given us all things in order that we may become partakers of His divine nature. He has given us all things that we may live a holy life that is pleasing to Him. That our lives be overflowing with love.

God has not given us His commandments and His Word, to unnecessarily restrict us, but to guide us and keep us in a place where we live a Holy and Blessed life.

He loves us so incredibly much. He has provided all we need and withholds that which we do not need. His motivation in all things is always love.

God has given us a perfect and complete gift. Let us receive it from His gracious Hand. Let us not let His gift remain on a shelf gathering dust, but let us take it and use it. The more we use it, the more we will see that it is a complete and perfect gift. There is no question that the Bible cannot answer, there is no need that it cannot fulfil. Paul wrote to the Philippians:

***“And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”  
(4:19)***

How many needs will God supply? All our needs!

You see God’s gift, God’s provision is without fail, it is perfect and complete. His Divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness.

To God our Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.