

24 May, 2010

## God out there, with us, in us, Us in God.

Psa 148 Act 11:1-18 Joh 13:31-35 Rev 21:1-6

Humans have a great deal to look forward to.

We have an amazing future.

As history progresses we have had greater opportunities and insights into our relationship to God, and it promises to get better – if we are willing!

Our four readings trace that progress.

which I hope will help to give us a more balanced view of God.

**Psa 148** is foundational for understanding where we stand with God.

*Let them (people & creation) praise the name of the LORD,  
for he commanded and they were created.*

*Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for his name alone is exalted;  
his glory is above earth and heaven.*

### **THIS IS GOD “OUT THERE”**

Here is the God who is creator, who is all-powerful

(Everything in this psalm comes under his control)

*Fire, hail, mist, snow/mountains/animals/kings  
& peoples/young and old*

He is the one we must bow the knee to.

But there's more in this psalm

*He has raised up a horn for his people,*

*praise for all his faithful,*

*for the people of Israel who are close to him*

**EVEN IN THE OT HERE IS GOD WHO IS NEAR HIS PEOPLE**

This becomes even clearer in the NT

*Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. Joh 13:31*

Jesus is God-with-us.

Now if we want to know what God is like we look to Jesus, because God's glory, his power and character are seen in his Son.

If you want to know how to behave, see how Jesus behaved

If you want to know what choice to make, ask

“What would Jesus do” (WWJD)

Jesus is the blueprint for humanity. Human beings were supposed to be like Jesus in his earthly form.

When we come to Acts 11 we see Peter's vision showing that now God is not only with his people Israel, in Jesus – but that he is with ALL peoples who will turn to him.

This passage takes us further again.

For these Gentiles received the Holy Spirit – were baptised in the Spirit.

Jesus was not only *with* them, but his Spirit was also *within* them.

+BI There was a little girl listening for Jesus in mother's chest...

She said, “I think I can hear him! It sounds like he's making coffee”

The promise of God's indwelling is for us living now, at this very moment.

### **But the promise also has a future aspect**

for there is coming a time when there will be new heavens and a new earth. A new Jerusalem, a new paradise.

and a great wedding day

All these word pictures point to a great celebration!!

If the Creator God who is out there,  
has drawn **near** to us,  
lived **with us** in his Son,  
and **indwelt** us through the Spirit

then he has been preparing us for the day when we will see him face to face and live with him for ever.

What does this mean for us?

It means that this life is a preparation for the next.  
and it has far-reaching implications for the way we relate to other people.

1. As Jesus came into this world to show us God and bring us into relationship with him.  
So parents – and grandparents – and adults generally have the role of living out Jesus to their children and grandchildren and even other people's children.  
There is nothing more important that we can teach children and young people than their primary relationship with God, through Jesus Christ and the indwelling Spirit..  
We can teach children to read, ride a bike, play sports, swim, survive, get a job and so on. But if we do not introduce them to Jesus Christ, then we will have taught them nothing of lasting worth!
2. What is true for children is also true for all of us.  
There is nothing more important in life,  
there is nothing greater to achieve,  
and there is nothing more satisfying  
than a deep and growing relationship with Jesus Christ, who lives in and through us by his Spirit.

Jesus tells us in the gospel passage to love one another.  
It is not a suggestion, but a command.

It is too easy to misdirect our love for other people (young and old) into things of lesser importance

But if we want to see adults young people and children inherit God's Kingdom, and all the promises of heaven, we must lead them to Jesus Christ.. and His Spirit.

There is no more loving thing than this!

Recently I have spoken to a number of younger people (young enough to be my children) over the past few months, who have admitted having absolutely no knowledge of Christianity or Jesus Christ. It's not their fault of course, but it is *our* fault if we do not let them know!... if we are not obedient to the Great Commission to make disciples

That is also a great responsibility  
– who is equal to such a task?

Our Port Macquarie churches only touch a fraction of Port Macquarie's population and we can share the gospel until we are blue in the face, but people have choice and can put up barriers, or simply be too disinterested.

How do we break through?

Well the answer is that *we* don't break through.  
It is the Holy Spirit that enables us to speak boldly.  
It is the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of sin and death and judgement.

So just as the Spirit empowered the apostles in Acts, so we need the indwelling of God's Spirit in our own lives.

+BI "I'm still convinced," says mother Teresa, "that it is He and not I. That's why I was not afraid; I knew that if the work was mine it would die with me. But I knew it was His work, that it will live and bring much good. If the work is looked at just by our own eyes and only from our own way, naturally, we ourselves can do nothing. But in Christ we can do all things. That's why this work has become possible, because we are convinced that it is He, He who is working with us and through us in the poor and for the poor."

( -- M. Muggeridge, Something Beautiful for God: Mother Teresa of Calcutta.)

There is great assurance in all of this.

To know that God dwells within

To know that the ministry is his, and that he only requires our obedience and cooperation.

But let's remember... It *does* require our **obedience**

If we are not prepared to share Jesus, then we block the Spirit working through us.

But when we are ready to speak out, and pray for the Spirit to fill us then when we pray we can approach God with confidence knowing that he will speak through us, and go before us to prepare the hearts of others.

The powerful God out there

At work amongst

At work within us

Working through us

And working in others

It is the essence of revival!

We distribute about 200 Pewsheets each week.

Suppose just 100 hundred of us were to pray that this year God would go before us and work within us to each bring just one person to Christ, at the start of 2011 there would be 200 Christians ready to do the same thing. At the start of 2012 we would be printing at least 400 pewsheets. At the start of 2015 we would have a church of 3200 and by the year 2020 there would be 102,400 Christians here.

Let's look at it even more conservatively..

If only 50 people won 50 others to Christ this year, and only 50 of that hundred won another 50 in 2011,

then at the start of 2012 you would have 150 people in addition to our present figure of 150 who didn't win anyone.

If only half the of the new converts win a person each year then we would have a church of over 500 in 2015 and in excess of 3800 by 2020.

Different denominations tend to emphasise different aspects of God.

**Anglican and Roman** churches with a grand sense of tradition tend to emphasise the grandeur and other-worldliness of God. The holiness and unapproachability of his character.

**Young people** often relate to Jesus who is my friend and pal. Someone I am on familiar terms with and relates to my humanity.

**Charismatic churches** emphasise the Holy Spirit and the power at work in us and through us in signs and wonders and emotional experience.

I trust that in our readings you have seen God, who is all three

God out there

God with us

and God in us

I trust also that you see in that the very real potential for growth under the guidance and empowerment of God in us.

Someone is famously quoted as saying,

“Preach the gospel, and if necessary use words.”

I want to say that sure, your life should be speaking volumes, but if you are not using words, no-one will guess what you are about.

Will you pray this year for...

1 The Holy Spirit to fill you and guide you each day.

2 That the fruit of the Spirit, especially love for people will grow within you.

3 That the Holy Spirit will go before you to convince the people you meet of sin and death and judgement.

4 That God will enable you to bring one person to him this year.

The aim of evangelism is not to satisfy our sense of duty,  
it is not to build up the prestige of our parish  
it is so that people will know the almighty God with them and in them,  
and that they will be in him and know him forever.

*“See, the home of God is among mortals.*

*He will dwell with them;*

*they will be his peoples,*

*and God himself will be with them;*

<sup>4</sup> *he will wipe every tear from their eyes.*

*Death will be no more;*

*mourning and crying and pain will be no more,*

*for the first things have passed away.”*

God bids us know him.

Will you come?

Will you accept the invitation to grow closer?

Will you make him known?