

Five Quick Sermons

Volume I

Reward

(Wide-spaced for notes)

Created on 6/21/2010

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Marie Seltenrych lives in Margate, Queensland Australia near the beach with her beloved husband Henry and two cats, George and Mildred.

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Mrs Eileen Marie Seltenrych
Bachelor of Ministries
[Malyon College, 2004]

“Freely freely you have received; freely give...”

Jesus' words, recorded in Matt 10:8b

Sermons are in double spacing to leave you room for your own words or editing to suit your situation. Use your own favourite translation or if you are happy to do your own 'words' I pray you will enjoy God's blessing abundantly as you move in the Holy Spirit to bring God's word to your brothers and sisters in Christ and those coming closer to God.

Contemporary translation mainly used to avoid any copyright conflicts

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ETERNAL REWARD

Christmas message:

Created by Marie Seltenrych¹

Principal Scriptures:

Matthew Chapter 1 & 2: Luke Chapter 2

Central theme:

God's Eternal reward to those who love Him

Introduction: Use the bustling and activity surrounding the Christmas season as an example of preparation: how folk go to extreme lengths to make everything 'just so'.

What about God? Is preparation important to Him?

Primary Message: Preparation is very important to God: God must have spent eons [in eternal before time thinking] working out the fine and

¹ Hilltop Gardens, (Normanby) 21/11/2007.

painful details of Jesus' journey far away from home [Heaven].²

I have a huge question for God:

Why was Jesus born in a stable in Bethlehem?

Did God forget about Jesus and then it was too late to find a more appropriate place fit for God's only begotten son?³

This question puzzled me for some time, even though I could always appreciate the story: little animals, baby in the hay etc; it sounds quite 'romantic', even fictional! But the reality is truly pragmatic and wonderful. When we read that Joseph and Mary could not find anywhere to stay and baby Jesus was about to 'pop':⁴ as a mother you cannot but feel compassion for Mary

² Jn 17: 4

³ Jn 3:16

⁴ Lk 2:7

[Mariam].⁵ It was a dreadful situation and I cannot imagine any woman wanting to step into Mary's shoes at that moment? She had made herself available for God's mighty plan; nine months later she is about to give birth and the couple cannot find anywhere civilized to deliver the baby; [today we have clinically clean hospitals or homes prepared, Mary had none of these available].

[Story time]: [Keep the tension high]

I remember hearing a story about friends who were in Papua New Guinea in the wilderness; baby was about to arrive and dad drove like an idiot to the hospital; in the end he delivered the child in the seat of the vehicle they were travelling in. How traumatic and even more so for Mary; she

⁵ Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible, (1982), p 647.

was 'driving' a donkey! Was God out of His mind, asleep or what? These were my questions and maybe some of yours too. Can you believe that God always intended his son Jesus to be born in this very stable? Jesus: 'King of Kings; Lord of Lords'⁶; God's ways are past finding out, but if we look closely at the history of Israel and the Scriptures we will discover truth; gems that are priceless and the poignant reasons why Jesus simply *had* to be born here!

Education time: Israel, AD 1 - 4BC

First of all the situation in Israel was 'hot' with Herod and his family ruling God's holy people.⁷

Secondly, there was already a king in Israel – Herod, and that was where the magi or wise men went. They might have thought Herod had a

⁶ Rev 19:16

⁷ Matt 2:13 – 15, 22; Lk 2:1-3

newborn son; and why not, Herod had many sons by many women, [seven and one about whom we have little knowledge;] it would not be impossible for Herod to have another son.⁸

Now we begin to see at least an advantage of giving birth to a king in a stable in the wilderness of Bethlehem? Herod would never suspect that a baby born in a stable was actually a king? Here we see God's Omniscience; as a temporary safety issue, Jesus was protected as a newborn; God knows the hearts of kings and paupers. We do see here a bit of a twist to the story: the Magi came, told Herod they were looking for a king [not Herod]; they found Jesus.⁹ Unfortunately their presence brought King Herod's bad side to the fore: he ordered that all

⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/Herod/_the_Great

⁹ Matt 2:9-12

the babes in Bethlehem be murdered: up to two years of age; showing his jealous heart. In the meantime the Magi had given their expensive presents to Jesus and his mother Mary and the family had left for Egypt as soon as possible, being warned by God in a dream.¹⁰

HISTORICAL FACTS

We need to go right back in history to find out other reasons why Jesus was born in Bethlehem and why it was God's preordained location for the birth of Jesus:

Bethlehem was a special place: the place where King David was born; where that lovely story of Ruth was recorded.¹¹ Jeremiah and his friends stayed on their way to Egypt;¹² Rachel

¹⁰ Ibid v 12

¹¹ Ruth 1:19

¹² Jeremiah 41:17

was buried here.¹³ Check it out online.¹⁴ Use your Biblical dictionary if you have one: I use Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary, given to me by my son some years ago. It's in black and white, so is a bit limiting for those who love colourful scenes, but extremely useful for historical information.¹⁵

There were special villages in Bethlehem: called the habitations of Kimham, also called [Geruth-Kimham] and these came about during his reign, after he invited his good friend Barzillai to come and live with him. Instead Barzillai's son or grandson, Chimham or Kimham came over and were given whatever Barzillai wanted for his

¹³ Gen 35:16 -18

¹⁴ <http://www.pilgrimtours.com/mideast/israel/info>

¹⁵ Merrill C Tenney, Editor, *Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary* Grand Rapids, [1967].

family. The king said to Barzillai, "Come back with me: I will provide for you."¹⁶

Barzillai answered that he was too old; he was eighty and wanted to end his days in his own hometown. He also thought he was too feeble. He did come over a short distance with King David, just for company's sake. As a result of his friendship with King David, the famous 'Villages of Chimham' or Habitations of Kimham were established; a place where travelers could rest their weary bones and their animals on their journey to Egypt or Nazareth: what a reward for Barzillai's family? Imagine having the Saviour of the world born in your village? ¹⁷

¹⁶ 2 Sam 19:31-33

¹⁷ http://www.bible-history.com/links.php?cat=39&sub=450&cat_name=Manners+%26+Customs&subcat_name=Inns

I believe this was a picture of an eternal reward of God to Barzillai's family line; reachable on this earth. Barzillai never lived in Bethlehem, but if he could look down from heaven or through the ages he would have been astonished to know his hospitality to David, about 1,000 years before resulted in such an amazing reward! Remember he was open-hearted and giving to a descendant of Jesus', David, King of Israel.

Are you hospitable? My husband has this gift but sometimes it seems like a hard gift to activate to me because I have different gifts, but I go along with his hospitality ideas as much as possible, gritting my teeth and asking God for tolerance and patience! I know that if we are hospitable to others' we will be rewarded; we do

not work for a reward on earth but in heaven¹⁸
so the reward is a double-surprise when it
manifests because God is generous and
mysterious; we may never know what the huge
reward is until we meet Him in eternal places. If
we sum up the 'why', we realize that this was a
special place and the offspring of Barzillai
continued to be involved in the hospitality
industry and the family is rewarded in a way
that is far above rubies or money.

For me, these are answers to my questions
about why Jesus was born in Bethlehem; you
may have even more information about this
matter, so go on and do share it with someone
who does not know the facts of the historical
side of God's preparation and purposes.

¹⁸ Lk 22:26-28

God's invitation:

When we check out more facts about Jesus, we will also see God's invitation list is precise when it comes to His Son, Jesus. Let's see who came to visit the newborn king in Bethlehem?

Jesus

To find this newborn king, people had to have special invitations, from angels who appeared to the shepherds, to a bright new star that appeared and led the wise men to the scene. Everything was prepared and everything worked out.

Because of their location, Joseph, Mary and Jesus could travel quickly to Egypt, with their expensive gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh, and stay there until it was safe to return: In Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary, it says:

*In Jeremiah's time, [597BC];¹⁹ (Jer 41:17);
the caravan inn of Chimham near Bethlehem
was the usual starting-place for Egypt.²⁰*

If you want to link the death of Jesus and God's preparation with Jesus' promise, use the following verses:

"I am going to prepare a place for you..."²¹
He has promised us a place in his father's house, an eternal place to live, where we can enjoy God's presence for evermore. If this place has been prepared even remotely as well as Jesus' journey on earth, it will be full of surprises and much more fantastic than we can imagine.

Commit:

¹⁹ ESV Study Bible (2007), p 1365

²⁰ Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary (1967), p111

Matt 2:13-22; http://www.bible-history.com/links.php?cat=39&sub=450&cat_name=Manners+%26+Customs&subcat_name=Inns

²¹ Jn 14:2

If you are speaking to folk who have resisted God's grace until today, plead with them now to accept Jesus' offer of an everlasting place in God's Kingdom in Heaven. Allow the Holy Spirit to convict as their hearts are opened and they receive the Lord as their Saviour.²²

Not only is there a place for you and me being prepared in heaven, but Jesus will personally come and take you there when your apprenticeship down here is concluded.²³

Final word: Remember, every service done for Jesus and his loved ones will have an eternal reward.²⁴

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²² Rom 10:9

²³ Jn 14:3

²⁴ Mk 9:41

Notes:

SERMON 2

Reward for Service Now

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Gain insight into Jesus' immediate response to service; its unbeatable reward here and His promise for our future. [This sermon can be used in conjunction with Sermon 1.]

Primary Scripture text: John 14: 2 – 6.

Central theme: the unbeatable reward of serving God.

Introduction: Do we as Christians get rewarded here on earth or do we have to wait until we die?

Let's examine the Scriptures and see what has happened in Biblical history. Take our Bibles and read the Gospel of John, chapter 14:2 - 6

(Primary Message)

²⁵ Hilltop Nursing Home, Brisbane, Sunday Service message, 21/11/2007

Jesus said: “I am going away to prepare a place for you; if there was any other reason I would tell you about it because you are my friends; and afterwards I will come back and take you to be with me, so that you and I will be together forever. You do know where I am going to.”

His disciples looked puzzled. They had no idea what he meant; Thomas spoke up, really speaking for the twelve. One thing they did know, Jesus was leaving them and they were worried.²⁶ Jesus had been their leader for close to three years; they had experienced life as they had never dreamed it could be; miracles on land and sea, people raised from the dead, a tree dying, thousands fed; simply put: they could

²⁶ Jn 14:1

not come to terms with Jesus' impending departure.²⁷

"Hey, we haven't a clue where you are going to, so how can we follow you there if you don't tell us the way. Give us a map maybe?"

Jesus smiled at his vulnerability; how he loved Thomas.

"The way to the Father in heaven: that is me! I am the way, the truth and the life. There is no other route or map or direction; the way is just through me."

These astonishing words were said by Jesus; even so, the closest disciples did not fully realize Jesus was soon to die a very humbling, cruel and painful murdering on a cross;²⁸ we can only surmise what they were thinking from what we

²⁷ Jn 16:6

²⁸ Jn 18:10,11

have on our Scripture shelves. Did his apostles think Jesus was just going into another hiding place? Was he leaving without them? Bear with me and we will uncover wonderful insights into Jesus' rewards for his friends for serving him, even during his final hours in fellowship with them.

[Story time] HARD WORK

Preparation is hard work! Two and a half years ago Henry and I renovated a house we use to rent. We have spent money, cleaned, painted, replaced things, re-carpeted the house, curtains, kitchen, tiles, new taps, mirrors, removed a faulty footpath; hired people to help: I wondered who the important person or persons were that we were preparing the place for? We have become friends with the people who now live in

that house and yesterday (12th June 2010 enjoyed a birthday party for one of our happy tenants who turned 82 years of age – this is our reward!)

[Put your own experiences here, i.e. preparation for sermons, moving, a trip, a wedding, funeral, birth, a holiday, tax time, etc.]

Education time: [Learn by reading the Scriptures quoted]. God is always working;²⁹ Working is good for us if we are able to work; in the very beginning Adam and Eve were given work to do in the garden.³⁰ If we don't work we shouldn't eat, etc.³¹ God finished his work of creation on the Seventh day and rested.³²

²⁹ Jn 5:17

³⁰ Gen 2:15

³¹ 2 Thes 3:2

³² Gen 2:2

Jesus claims that His Father has worked until Jesus came;³³ doing the same work as Jesus is seen doing on earth. God the Holy Spirit works today.³⁴ Through God the Holy Spirit we work for the Kingdom.³⁵ God never stops working and will not do so until that final resting day.³⁶

We just know that when we are trying to make sure that things are ready for someone's appearance or visit, we do make an effort, be it little or much; we sweep the floor, put the dishes away; make the beds, plump up the cushions, vacuum; clean the windows, shop, etc.

[Application: How does this relate to us today?]

³³ Jn 5:17

³⁴ Jn 16:7-10

³⁵ Jn 16:17

³⁶ Ps. 121:4; Matt 28:20; Rom 8:28

Some years ago I heard a story from a tradesman who came to replace some glass in our house and I said we were expecting visitors from overseas. As we chatted he told me that his wife bought a new house when visitors from her home country came to Australia for a holiday! I think she was trying to make an impression and I can understand her actions. At stake was her own and her husband's reputation and what they would repeat to their friends and family back home: "They live in a beautiful house, right near the ocean. Yes, they made a good decision to come to Australia." That would be the hope of the woman in the story; she could not bear it if her house was inferior to their homes in the country they had left to make a new life in another land; it could be seen as a 'disgrace'.

There might be a bit of 'pride' hidden in here but that is not being discussed right now. You could look up Scriptures about that topic if you needed an extra session.³⁷

Let us see what was going on when Jesus was preparing to leave this earth. [John 14:2 – 6; 17:1-6].³⁸

Jesus assured his terrified apostles that he was about to go away to be with his Father. In other words, he was returning home after a long and often painful journey on the earth created for Jesus.⁵ Jesus makes it plain that he was not simply disappearing into the blue yonder but would prepare a place in His Father's great household for his friends.³⁹ Jesus was aware of the apostle's

³⁷ Mk 7:22; 1 Jn 2:16; (there are 54 verses with 'pride')

³⁸ Jn 1:1- 4,14

³⁹ Jn 14:2; ESV Study Bible (2007), p2052; Greek Monē: places to live within larger place: ESV Study Bible: <http://www.esvstudybible.org/>

great concerns; would Jesus leave them high and dry? They had left their work and families to follow him; now they could no longer tag along with him. How would we feel if our parents or leaders we loved suddenly decided to leave us and we didn't know how to contact them? It is a traumatic time for the disciples, but for Jesus it was His destiny and His Father's plan for Jesus and for the entire world.⁴⁰ [Use your own words here to describe a dilemma when someone leaves you.] Jesus' reward is far greater than our service seems to be. What about Peter and John's service to Jesus: did they really get rewarded for their service in preparing the upper room in obedience to Jesus?⁴¹

⁴⁰ Heb 10:5

⁴¹ Lk 22:8

Jesus rewarded them with a promise of doing much more for them than they did for him – preparing a place for eternity and by saying this it was recorded and now all who serve Jesus will gain the same reward! What a profound reward for their seemingly mundane preparation of the Upper Room: a few cushions, a cooked lamb, herbs and wine; little did they realize their work would be recorded for ever in the Holy Scriptures and we are reading about their work today; what a lesson for those who do menial tasks for others.

Peter was axiomatically rewarded by being the very first preacher of the new Church at Pentecost;⁴² John is credited with living longer

⁴² Acts 2:38

than any other Apostle; writing his Gospel, 3 letters and the book of *Revelation*.⁴³

Do you want this kind of reward? He will reward us in a spectacular manner that we have never dreamed of, just like Peter and John.

Conclusion:

You never know where a small task can lead. To return to our initial question: Do we get rewarded here on earth?

Yes: If we examine the outcome of Peter and John's reward, they had the privilege of being primary leaders in the new church announced at Pentecost. Not only that, their work is recorded right in our Bibles, so we are continually seeing Jesus' reward for their service. [Do not confuse

⁴³ Jn 13:23, 20:22 1 Jn 1; 2 Jn 1:5

reward with salvation, which is a free gift from God.]⁴⁴

Do we get rewarded in heaven?

Yes: We read of many different kinds of rewards; we know that Jesus personally promised his disciples that he would prepare a place in His Father's household especially for each of them.

There are many other promises about eternal rewards, so read up on a few to get confidence in this area and increase your faith in God and his unbeatable reward for His servants.⁴⁵

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⁴⁴ Eph 2:8

⁴⁵ Matt 6:18; 10:42; 1 Cor 3:14; Col 3:24; Heb 11:6; 2 Jn 1:8

SERMON 3

“Get Stuck on Jesus”

Created by E Marie Seltenrych⁴⁶

(Reward for sticking to Jesus and how to avoid falling into sin traps by strengthening faith and understanding ‘believe in’ from Biblical perspective.)

Key Scriptures: Luke 12: 8 – 13; 24:25 – 36

This is a shorter sermon that could be used as a Devotional in nursing home or fellowship meeting; around 20 minutes long.

Introduction:

The product ‘Araldite’⁴⁷ is described as ‘strong, slow-setting, long-lasting bond’, composed of two parts joined together to create the ultimate bonding; great for uniting two types of materials together to make one strong unit. In this sermon you will find out why glue is a great

⁴⁶ MBC Bulletin message 14/11/2007

⁴⁷ Trade name

product to use when describing this pair of disciples of Jesus.

Jesus was quick to rebuke his disciples: For instance when he met two disciples on the road to Emmaus following his resurrection, these are his recorded words:

“You are such fools and slow to believe in your hearts everything that the prophets have said and recorded about the Messiah.”⁴⁸

Are you like this? Slow to believe or resisting God? Christian, what do you believe?

A Christian friend once said, ‘lots of people say they believe in Jesus but they are still not Christians! What does *believe* really mean?’

Word meaning: [This is the educational bit]

⁴⁸ Luke 24:25

The Word in the Greek is πιστις, (pistis, pistos...etc) means: believe, to be persuaded, to give credit to, to trust, to have confidence in, to have faith, to follow...⁴⁹ In ancient writings this word `πιστις` denotes `loyalty`. (200AD)⁵⁰

In our verse above, the two disciples of Jesus were a bit lacking in glue components, and therefore were rebuked by Jesus for being a bit `slow setting` in their belief (v 25). Following their encounter with Jesus they knew who He really IS and their faith solidified! Just like `Araldite`, two components are mixed to obtain a firm bonding. We cannot simply `believe` in our heads!⁵¹ We need to `bump into` Jesus and be stirred in our hearts to *really* believe! Then stick

⁴⁹ Used 67 times in New Testament

⁵⁰ 22 Young's Concordance, [1982, p 87]; Berry's Greek/English Lexicon, [1980, 4102, p119.]

⁵¹ Luke 8:12

to Him. Remember Jesus rebuked these two, which might have shocked them into belief.

How do we get glued to Jesus?

Rule number One: pray to God and ask for the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ; you will realize quickly that your sin is separating you from God; confess and mean it!

Rule number two: read the Gospel of John if you have never done so before. This will give you a greater insight into who Jesus is and why you would be wise to get acquainted with him. Jesus says he was with his Father in Heaven before the foundation of the world. He came to find his followers; died and will return and take each one home to a place in Heaven.⁵² Jesus is kind, friendly, compassionate, straight

⁵² Jn 14: 2 - 6

forward, just, honest and righteous in every possible way. Remember it was others who wrote Jesus' words, not Jesus himself; giving credence to the facts that they are authentic and have been proved as such over and over by billions of people since Jesus first set foot on terra firma as a human being. You can be noted as one of those billions who will see their saviour with a smiling face when you leave this earth to receive your eternal destiny and reward for your faith. If your glue is 'letting go' through lack of prayer, confession of sins, bible reading, fellowship and communion with God's saints, then change the course of your glue today: get fresh glue and put your life back on track, as it was meant to be. If you let the words of Jesus set in your heart your glue will also set and you will experience a

fellowship with God that is beyond comprehension and delight; you and I will truly understand the meaning of BELIEVING IN JESUS! Your reward will be noticeable to you and your comrades.

P.S My husband Henry used this sermon idea; he gave a demonstration of the product Araldite and added 'it needed stirring up' just like we do to get involved with Jesus.⁵³ He said 'It worked like a dream', so there's encouragement for you and me!

You are on your way up!

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⁵³ Hilltop Nursing Home, Brisbane, 28th June, 2010

SERMON 4

GET REALLY RICH

Reward of big riches from God

Created by Marie Seltenrych⁵⁴

Key Scripture: 2 Cor 8:2

Another shorter sermon suited to devotional type of ministry; nursing homes, fellowship meetings, etc; should take around 20 minutes to deliver.

Central theme: understanding 'riches'

Introduction:

DEAL OR NO DEAL? WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE? Who is on the RICH LIST? Answer a few questions and we can become millionaires in one night! Is this our ultimate dream? Or is your dream deeper than earthly riches?

⁵⁴ MBC Bulletin message, 30/05/2007

(Primary Message): Listen to the Apostle Paul who is addressing the early Corinthian church:

'Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity'. He was referring to churches in Macedonia [situated at the Northern end of Greece]⁵⁵; these are true riches that are recorded in the heavenly ledgers. Make these your goal, not worldly riches.

Rich: Let's define this word from the Bible's perspective:

In the Greek the word is: πλουσους = plousous = plentiful, wealth, abundance and in Romans 11:12 it means spiritual riches.⁵⁶

We all want to be rich, don't we? Well, certainly I don't know anyone who wants to be a beggar in

⁵⁵ 2 Cor 8:2

⁵⁶ Berry's Greek/English Lexicon, [1980, 4145, p121.]

the street with no home, no bed or possessions and with a need to rely on others'. If we visit the city at night we will find people who are homeless, more and more this is happening. If we see someone in need and we have plenty, do we give to them? We are sometimes locked into our own societies and cannot see the needs of others. However, we do not have to look too far to see that there are people who are poverty stricken for some reason, maybe nothing to do with their own actions at all. If we have plenty it doesn't mean *two pigs and a cow*; no it means *abundantly* more than others around us. We will know if this is true for us. Some people use the Bible incorrectly: they state [wrongly] that money is the root of all evil, but the Bible actually says, the love

of money.⁵⁷ Notice the word 'love' in the verse. In the case of the Corinthian Church, the Apostle Paul was pleading with them to give as much as they could give to help their brothers and sisters in Christ. It seems a reasonable thing to do if we have the possessions, the desire and the ability to give to others.

Now, remember, riches are indicated to mean abundantly more than others, *rolling in money* might be a good way to describe this word. What does Jesus say to us about this kind of riches? Let's look into His Word...

Beware! It is *almost* impossible to enter the Kingdom of God if you are filthy rich.⁵⁸

He warned the rich to remember God before they drop dead.⁵⁹ He says the poor widow gave

⁵⁷ 1 Tim 6:10

⁵⁸ Matt 19:23,24

more than the very rich.⁶⁰ He allowed rich women to supply his needs.⁶¹ He was buried in a rich man's tomb.⁶² Biblical riches must be deciphered correctly to gain God's understanding.

In our key verse, 2 Cor 8:2, we note that the Churches in Macedonia⁶³ discovered abundant riches through serving God with joy and even in 'extreme' poverty and while under tribulation gave generously to help the suffering church in Jerusalem. They simply couldn't do enough! They were high on God's Rich List! Are you on God's Rich List? Do we have true riches to share, such as 'Grace',⁶⁴ Kindness, Generosity,⁶⁵ Wisdom and Knowledge of God,⁶⁶

⁵⁹ Lk 12:16-21

⁶⁰ Mk 12:43, 44

⁶¹ Lk 8:3

⁶² Jn 19:31-42

⁶³ Acts 16:9-15

⁶⁴ 2 Pet 3:18

⁶⁵ Gal 5:22

Love, Unity?⁶⁷ Do we know where the ultimate treasure of God is?⁶⁸ Do we have more than our share of worldly goods and maybe could give a gift or two to someone in need? This will need prayer for direction from God, who will give you your answers clearly.⁶⁹ If we are continually giving of ourselves and our gifts, we are on God's Rich List! Let us continue to strive to go even higher on God's Rich List.⁷⁰ Remember, you cannot out-give God who gives and gives and gives every day... My prayer for you: *God bless you richly.*

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⁶⁶ Ecc 2:26; Eph 1:17

⁶⁷ 1 Cor 13; Eph 4:2,3

⁶⁸ Col 2:3

⁶⁹ 1 Pet 5:6,7

⁷⁰ 2 Cor 8:2; Eph 3:16-21

SERMON 5

MUD PUDDLES

Created by Marie Seltenrych⁷¹

[Christian's reward when we do not fall into
'crowd' sin traps]

Short sermon for use in Devotionals, nursing homes and fellowship meetings; good for sharing in a group as well; why not discuss issues after?

Key Scripture: 1 Pet 4:4: "...do not rush with them into the same flood of wickedness..."

Introduction: "Flood towns complain about bad SES advice...⁷² Explanation: SES is the official volunteer society that works to keep people safe in emergencies such as flood, earthquake, storms etc. in Australia. For information on

⁷¹ MBC Bulletin message, 20/06/2007

⁷² <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/06/11/1948083.htm>

this emergency state volunteer organization see
this site: ⁷³

I saw one man interviewed on TV:

"We packed everything up, put it on the back of
the truck, took it away, and because everybody
was out sticky-beaking at the river, there were
a lot of people in town and we lost a lot of trade,"

"Complaints and abuses were hurled like a
flood at SES officials during the recent flood
disaster in the Hunter Valley..."⁷⁴

A volunteer SES said, "If we didn't move people
out and the floods came through there would be
worse bad mouthing,"⁷⁵

⁷³ <http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au/volunteers/>

⁷⁴ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/06/11/1948083.htm>

⁷⁵ <http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au/volunteers/opportunities.htm...>

Can you imagine this? Someone comes to help you because you are drowning or in danger of losing your life and they get verbally abused for helping you, in their own time and with their own resources. It is a disgrace of the highest kind: SES were called the 'lifeline' in the news, which is what they do, they save people.

Have you ever been abused because you were good, helping folk or giving of yourself? Do not be shocked at the abuse you felt; read the Apostle Peter's explanation. He says:

"Unbelievers (and skeptics) are astonished at our change of life! To show their hatred of Christian values they hurl abuses and say evil things, badmouth us, blaspheme us...

This seems to make them feel better and hopefully make us feel rotten!"(v4)

Beware; they want us back in the mud puddle!
Instead we must bring them the only lifeline that
will save their 'real lives' - Jesus, who is the
ultimate judge of everyone.⁷⁶

Just as Christ suffered physical pain, we must
arm ourselves with the same attitude he had, and
be ready to suffer, too. For if we are willing to
suffer for Christ, we have decided to stop sinning!

Peter's reasons and recommendation:

"Everything in the world is about to be wrapped
up; take nothing for granted. Stay wide-awake
in prayer. Most of all, love each other as if your
life depended on it..."⁷⁷ We are also to "Keep open
house for all with a glad heart".⁷⁸ If we do this we

⁷⁶ Acts 17:31

⁷⁷ 1 Pet 4:5

⁷⁸ 1 Pet 4:9

will be ready for the Lord's return, which will come like a flood, taking many by surprise!⁷⁹

Peter's advice is timely: keep praying about everything that unsettles our Christian faith. I must add here that you will suffer for your righteousness even among Christian folk! This happens all the time. Remember, not everyone shares your values and has your understanding of situations, or even of Scripture, so don't be surprised when you are hurt because you have taken a stand against someone who is out of line with God. If we do suffer at the hands of 'brothers or sisters' or even spiritual fathers, we need to move back; get closer to the Lord by prayer, conversation and praising God as much as possible; stay away from 'gossipy type' people

⁷⁹ 1 Pet 4:7; Matt 24:43

[you will be shown who they are] and gather around you a handful of faithful spirit filled people who will encourage and hold you up in prayer during your time of trial.

This is a time of real trial when you will go through fire and storm, but remember Jesus is with you all the way, so don't give up your faith. You can leave a church or fellowship for many reasons but there is no valid reason for giving up your faith.⁸⁰ Your reward will be a very happy expression on your face when Jesus returns to bring you home. You will not cringe or hide, but run to Him knowing that you have suffered and survived without joining the thugs and mobs of sinful people around you; halleluiah!

⁸⁰ Matt 25:34 - 36

Let us pray: Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for your grace towards us in Jesus Christ. Please give us more grace for the temptations and struggles that we are having right now; help us to trust in you more and more even as this trial heightens and burns; in Jesus precious name, Amen. Let's try to stay out of the mud puddle, even during a 'flood' of abuse! Your reward will be glorious when Jesus turns up unexpectedly!⁸¹

God bless

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