

God's Word Is Precious

God's word is like a pink tie. One might wear a pink tie not only because it looks sharp but also because one appreciates those who gave it as a gift. It is more precious and more loved because it was a gift from those who are special.

God's word is valuable in and of itself, but it is all the more precious because it is a gift from Jesus who died for our sins. God's word is like a pink tie.

John 14:23 If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word.

When we hear the phrase "keep my word," what does that mean to you? For a lot of people, I think they just assume that it means the same as "do." The English word "keep" certainly can be used that way but it can also mean to hold on to. It can mean to keep it safe. This is really what Jesus is talking about here. God's word is a gift from Jesus if we love Jesus, we will treasure this gift.

John 14:24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words;

If a gift comes from someone we love, the gift will be precious to us. If it comes from someone we do not care about, it will not be. Even if we might like the gift, we will not treasure it without that emotional connection. Our attitude towards God's word reveals our attitude towards Jesus. If we appreciate Jesus and what He has done for us we will treasure His word. What will you do with God's gifts?

Our readings this morning give us two examples of people and how they used the gifts God gave to them.

In our Old Testament reading we heard about a group of people who had a rare and special gift from God. They had the gift of one united language. Everyone spoke the same language.

But what did they do with this gift? Instead of treasuring this gift and using it to thank and praise the God who gave it to them, they used it for selfish purposes and to praise themselves rather than God. They took the gift which God had given them but they did not love the giver. They corrupted God's gift, using it for selfish and vain purposes and that gift was partially broken.

On the other hand, we heard in our reading from Acts about the apostles who were also given a gift from God. They were miraculously able to speak in languages they had never learned. They were able to

communicate easily with those from far distant lands. Rather than use this gift for their own selfish glory, like the people at the time of the tower of Babel, they used this gift to proclaim the wonderful works of God.

Acts 2:11 we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.

However, in our sinfulness we always find a way to corrupt God's gifts. God gave them the gift of tongues so that they could tell other people about Jesus, how he died and rose again and how we are saved from sin through Him. But only twenty-five years later Paul wrote to the Corinthians chastising them for their use of tongues because they were not using this gift to tell others about Jesus or to praise God but only to show off how great they themselves were.

1 Corinthians 14:9 So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken?

The Corinthians like the people of Babel did not treasure God's gift, but used it for their own selfish purposes. How will you use the gift of Jesus?

The festival of Pentecost is a festival celebrating the gift of God's word. This was true even in the Old Testament. Pentecost means fifty, and it came fifty days after the Passover. About fifty days after the first Passover is when the children of Israel came to Mount Sinai and the Lord spoke to them out of heaven with the voice like thunder. They received the Word of God on that day. Pentecost was for them a celebration of that gift.

At the time of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost the people once again received the gift of God's Word, this time not with the voice like thunder but through the speaking of the apostles. His word was given in every language.

They celebrated the giving of God's word simply because it was God's word. But we celebrate God's word not only because it is God's Word, but also because it is a gift from Jesus who loved us and died for us.

They celebrated the giving of God's word when God's word was a list of commandments, do this, don't do that. The word of God which we have received is the proclamation of what Jesus did for us.

They celebrated God's word which they received with thunder and with lightning and with fear. We celebrate the giving of God's word which we received without fear but in every language.

Again, what will we do with God's gift? Is it precious to us? Is it something we hold tight? Or is it something we do not love and use only for our own selfishness?

Today we celebrate not only the gift of God's word but also other gifts that God has given to our graduates. The gifts of knowledge and instruction, of language and mathematics, of science and of history

Proverbs 4:13 ¹³ Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go; Keep her, for she *is* your life.

Proverbs 10:14 ¹⁴ Wise *men* store up knowledge,

Proverbs 16:16 ¹⁶ How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.

These are gifts that are good and useful in themselves, but they become truly precious to us because they are give to us by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who died so that we might live. They become something greater and better when we use them to proclaim the wonderful works of God.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights

How will you use these gifts? Will you treasure them and use them to the glory of the Lord who saved you? Or will you use them in selfishness for your own glory?

All good things come from God the Father. "He has given us our eyes and ears our mind and all our senses and still keeps them for us." He has given us His word and His Holy Spirit and still keeps them for us.

When I was in high school a certain friend gave to me a pair of red mittens. I really appreciated those mittens, but I can be a little absent minded and would often forget them, in classrooms or in the lunchroom or in the library. More than once my friend who had bought them for me found the mittens and returned them to me. Sometimes she scolded me, sometimes she threatened to keep them, but she always returned them to me.

God has given us the gifts of His word and the forgiveness of our sins. We might not treasure and guard these gifts as we ought. Yet our Lord and savior Jesus Christ returns them to us time and time again, and they are all the more precious to us because of it.

"If you love me you will treasure my word."

God's word is like a pink tie. It is a valuable in and of itself, but it is all the more valuable because it is a gift from the Lamb who died for our sins. Amen