



Good afternoon,

*Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

I remember the first time I met someone carrying a huge weight of guilt. And she couldn't shift it. She was in her seventies, and she was haunted by something she had done in her teens. It wasn't a small or trivial thing, and so in one sense her weight of responsibility for something wrong was understandable. But where some things diminish over time, and others stay raw but mostly out of sight, for her this sadness had grown on an almost daily basis, until it was close to breaking her, every moment.

Is there no hope or way out? Have you felt that fear of the past haunting you?

This month, we've been revisiting the basics of what Christians believe about Jesus, and we've been learning from the first Christian leader, Peter, and his very first public explanation of why Jesus matters. So far, we've seen :-

two historical facts: Jesus' death, and his resurrection.

two heavenly after-effects: Jesus is both Lord and Messiah (or King).

two marks of becoming believer: repentance, and believing in Jesus, shown in baptism.

And today, we have God's two greatest gifts to those who believe. Because he's the opposite of the internet.

*Forgiveness.* Remember, whatever you've done it really cannot have been worse than what Peter's hearers had done - howling for Jesus' death, and watching him be executed. Not just any old mob murder, wither - God's own Son. That's who they'd killed.

But in God's astonishing wisdom and mercy, that very death became the way they could be forgiven. Their guilt could be transferred to him, and his innocence transferred to them.

And that's God's offer to you, and to anyone you can tell about the plan. A completely fresh start. A clean sheet. A new page. A new life.

Too good to be true? What if you mess it up again?

Well, here's God's second gift: *The gift of the Holy Spirit.* The Holy Spirit will come to live in you, equipping you, changing you, challenging you and comforting you, 24/7, for ever. You'll never be alone again. You'll never

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fight those battles alone again. You'll never face those memories and fears alone again.

And this is not an afterthought or a PS to Easter - it's the whole point. As Peter put it, *Exalted to the right hand of God, Jesus has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear* (Acts 2:33).

two facts: Jesus' death and resurrection.

two results: Jesus is both Lord and Messiah.

two actions: repentance and baptism.

two gifts: forgiveness and the Holy Spirit.

Why not see if you can remember those, for your own comfort and to explain to others?

Have a good week, and I'll see you on Sunday, on-site or online. If you're going to be there in the morning, don't forget to book ahead, because it helps us with seating. There's no need to book for *The Gathering*.

Chris

### **THIS SUNDAY**

The reading at the morning service on Sunday will be Mark 1: 1-8

### **THE GATHERING**

Join us this Sunday at 6:00pm for The Gathering, where we'll be carrying on in our series going through Jonah and enjoying some live acoustic worship. See you there!

### **DEBBIE WRIGHT**



At our APCM on Monday, we were pleased to elect Debbie as our new churchwarden. She will serve alongside Ian Roberts. Here is a short piece about her and her interests:

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'St James has been a huge part of my life! It was the first church I attended when I moved to London after university. I met my husband of 35 years (Graham) here, all 4 of our daughters have been baptised here and attended St James school, and just before lockdown the church was packed for Bethany's marriage to Biff – remember those days!?

We did leave St James for 13 years as part of the GraceChurch plant, which now meets at St Peter Le Poer on Colney Hatch Lane. Since returning 4 years ago, I have helped lead Alpha and Christianity Explored courses. At Christmas, I organised the Advent windows community project and more recently have joined the on-line tech team on Sunday mornings.

Professionally, I have had a variety of jobs, the common theme being communication – radio and TV producer for the BBC, magazine editor for A Rocha UK, and for the past decade head of Creative Services for the Christian charity, Stewardship.

To relax, I love dancing, walking our dog and photography. My pet hate is failing to remember passwords!

I look forward to taking up this new role, to serve the St James church family, staff team and of course our Heavenly Father!

### **TEATIME SENIORS GROUP**

TeaTime is our outreach opportunity for seniors to get out and be with people for an hour of an activity and homemade afternoon tea. We are in need of more drivers for TeaTime, people to pick up and drop the seniors back home after. If you are free on a Wednesday afternoon and would like to serve in this way, please do get in touch with Hannah. DBS and safeguarding training are required.

On Wednesday 5 May Lawrence Estrey will play the piano for Teatime. Meet in the church at 2:30pm, face coverings to be worn and contact details will be taken. If possible, please book your seat in advance by following the link [here](#).

### **HELP FOR THE KENYONS**

Our mission partners in Cambodia, Emma and Michael Kenyon, have raised a request for help in their latest newsletter. It is for Michael's restaurant, Century 9, which employs and helps men who have left the sex-trafficking industry:

'Here are some specific needs we have, and links below for ways to give:

\*Salaries: Looking to raise \$1,329.25/monthly

Our total monthly staff salaries for all of our guys combined are \$2658.50. The minimum wage in Cambodia is \$192/monthly. Our staff salaries range from \$200/monthly to \$560/monthly. We are able to cover half of this through our food delivery and need help with the other half so we can keep all of our guys employed.

We also need a few pieces of kitchen equipment:

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\*Industrial Stand Mixer: \$450

\*Speed Rack: \$200

\*Large Baking Pans: \$12 each / We need 15-20

\*Single Deck Oven: \$500

\*Stainless Steel Table: \$150

Please use the links below to give, and send us an email to let us know what you would like your gift to go towards: [kenyoncovenant@gmail.com](mailto:kenyoncovenant@gmail.com)'

Paypal: <http://www.paypal.me/kenyoncovenant>

Stewardship UK: <https://www.give.net/20269190>

I.O.M. US: <https://iom-online.com/donate/> (under "missionary name or ministry" Michael & Emma Kenyon, under "project" Century 9.)

Direct Bank Transfer Info UK/US: [Kenyoncovenant@gmail.com](mailto:Kenyoncovenant@gmail.com)



St James Muswell Hill