

A Free Gift

Welcome to our reflection for Church without Walls

Here are some ideas of how to use these reflections:

Pray that God will lead your thoughts.

Sit comfortably, take a few deep breaths and relax.

Let your mind wander as you read the reflection. Write down your thoughts in a notebook. If you are busy, try and pick out something to take with you in odd moments during the day.

You may wish to memorise the Bible verse. Write it out and stick it up somewhere.

Bible Verse

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)



Reflection

In recent months, becoming used to getting food via supermarket delivery or the 'Click and Collect' option, I have noticed that the kind of money-off deals we used to be offered to entice us in are no longer offered. I think we are now sufficiently

enticed by the simple necessity of having food. Thinking even further back I was surprised by the memory of the kinds of 'free gifts' we used to be given, years ago, with some purchases. To me they seemed to fall into three categories; first those which were useless, clutter really, second those free gifts that had a use but were not something you would have chosen for yourself and finally, most intriguingly, those few, which were wonderfully useful but which you would never have known you needed if you had not been given it. Years later, some of those would still be in the kitchen drawer and frequently used!

Thinking about free gifts set me thinking about the quote from Ephesians

In the recent lockdown months, I have noticed another kind of free gift. The song of the blackbird, now so clearly heard, the scent of a flower, raindrops on the leaves of the alchemilla, as in the picture, a smile and socially distanced greeting from a friend, or indeed a stranger, as you take your daily walk. These things and others similar are wonderful and treasured.

Are there 'free gifts' of this kind that you have received in recent weeks? You might enjoy remembering, make a list of them and say thank you to God

At first it seemed to me that these free gifts ask nothing of us. In fact of course we play our part. Above all we have to be there, we must be present and aware. Does that seem like nothing? We need to be open to seeing and hearing. I had to stop and listen to the blackbird as it sang perched in a tree unaware of me. Part of me felt in a hurry to get somewhere. In ordinary life we are so used to earning, deserving and working for what we get that simply being present doesn't seem enough. But it's where we develop the art of receiving.

Have there been times recently when you haven't really felt present in what you're doing – perhaps rushing through or thinking about other things?

Have there been times when you've been fully involved in what you're doing?

Does it make a difference to how you feel?

Have you developed the art of receiving?

You might look back at the verse from Ephesians and ask yourself that same question again.

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