



hunger at some point in our lives and we can do any number of things about it!

1. We can choose to ignore it and fill the gap with other things.
2. We can complain that there is something missing and be so focused on the gap that we do nothing to fill it.
3. We can search and find what God has for us to fill our Spiritual gap ~ and that starts with hearing the Good News that Jesus proclaims.

The Good News promises ~

Release to the captives ~ those enslaved by anything ~ those who need freeing from bad habits or ways that are in conflict with Jesus' teaching and

Freedom to the oppressed ~ those who are weighed down with troubles and woes or the anxiety that troubles and woes might come their way. Almost stuck ~ sitting waiting for them!

Those promises come through the anointing of the Holy Spirit ~ our hearts being opened to receive all that God has for us ~ healing where we need mending, feeding where we need nourishment, clothing with garments that protect rather than exposes us to harm.

So what is God's specific promise to you in His Word today?

Listen to Isaiah ~

“You will be a crown of splendour in the Lord's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God.”

You and I are special ~ and in God's hand each of us is unique. ~ As the children of God, together, we form a crown of splendour.

What does that crown of splendour look like at Immanuel? At times it has looked tarnished and a bit battered ~ but the Spirit can give it back the sparkle and splendour. Isaiah gives us that promise too ~ listen ~

“No longer will they call you deserted, or name your land desolate.”

Moving on ~ what does Paul write to the church in Corinth? He tells them, and us, that he does not want us to remain uninformed

~ misled by what we accepted or were influenced by before we knew Jesus and accepted Him as the way to faith. We can only come to faith through the work of the Spirit and once we are faithful we cannot curse Jesus. Cursing is not just taking the Lord's name in vain ~ which we discover we do not like or want to do ~ but is when we really speak out to damage Jesus' image, purpose and ministry. You and I will never be led by the Spirit to do that!

Paul goes on to tell the people that ~

“There are different kinds of gifts,  
but the same Spirit distributes them.

There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

There are different kinds of working,  
but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.”

And then he adds ~

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit  
is given for the common good.”

Paul lists wisdom, knowledge, faith, miraculous powers, prophecy, discernment, tongues and interpretation of tongues as the gifts.

You and I see in each other the gifts and more often the fruits of those gifts but we are not always very good at recognising what God gives us or affirming others that the Spirit is at work in them ~

Take a minute to think what gifts and fruits the Spirit has given you and how you offer them in the family of the church? They may be fruits that show caring or challenge, encouragement or patience ~ all displaying that you are living as Jesus asks you to.

As you begin to realise how the Spirit equips you ~ think about those who He has gifted with the fruit to be an example to you. ~ Who here has shown you something of Jesus?

Do you feel able to go to them and say thank you ~ to let them know that you recognise Jesus working through them by Holy Spirit? You can do it now or when we share the peace. If they are not here this week then do it the next time when you are both here at worship .... and if they are no longer with us then