

In 2015 I decided I wouldn't make any more art. Almost immediately I was asked to do a sermon through art at church. These are my notes.

**Good Bad Ugly by Jennifer Phillips**

**31/5/15**

**St. Margaret's Anglican Church Nerang**



**John 1:1** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God ... All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*

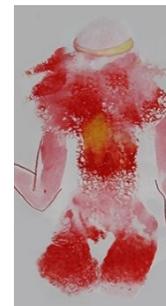
*[While this was being read I painted an upside down heart so that it looked like a light and the sun.]*



The word of God is more than just written or spoken words. John said "In the beginning was the Word." He said Jesus was the Word made flesh. We may not understand this fully but as we go on in our Christian walk our understanding will grow. We can know however that when the Word of God goes forth amazing things happen. In the beginning God spoke and our world began and continues to be.

God got up close and personal when he made us.

The first one of us was called Adam - so called because his face was the colour of the red earth **Adamah - Adam from Adamah** *[I pressed my palm into the red paint and made a print adding the rest of Adam's body.]*



Then God **breathed** into Adam and he came alive.

God created us **like Himself** with the **freedom to choose**. The freedom to choose our own way even to the point of crucifying Jesus, the Word made flesh. And that is what we did.

Yet God has always **loved us** so much.

Isaiah said we are engraved in the palms of his hands, and history revealed this when Jesus did not intervene to limit freedom of choice. He allowed the world to have its way and **crucify him**. *[I showed the red paint on my hands.]*

However the word of God is **not bound**. It is powerful and God turned Jesus death and suffering into a triumph for life and love, revealing the resurrection power of His Spirit to triumph over all the things this world threw at Him.

When Jesus **ascended** did he grumble to His Father about the terrible people on earth? Did He complain that even His best friends betrayed him? Was he angry? Did He take **revenge** on those who hurt him and denied him? No. He did another amazing thing. he poured out His very life so all who receive him could become members of His royal household. So **great is His love** he made it possible for everyone who believes in Him to **share everything** that is His. His whole inheritance, even His own life and empowerment. He made it possible for humans not only to please God but to be joint heirs of His Kingdom. He did this by pouring out His spirit - creating new creatures *[I poured yellow paint onto the red body of Adam and it changed it to orange]*

We are not God - yellow, and not who we were - **red**

We are **new creatures**, - **orange** - born again.

**John 1:12** *But as many as **received him**, to those who believe in his name, he has given the authority to become God's children*

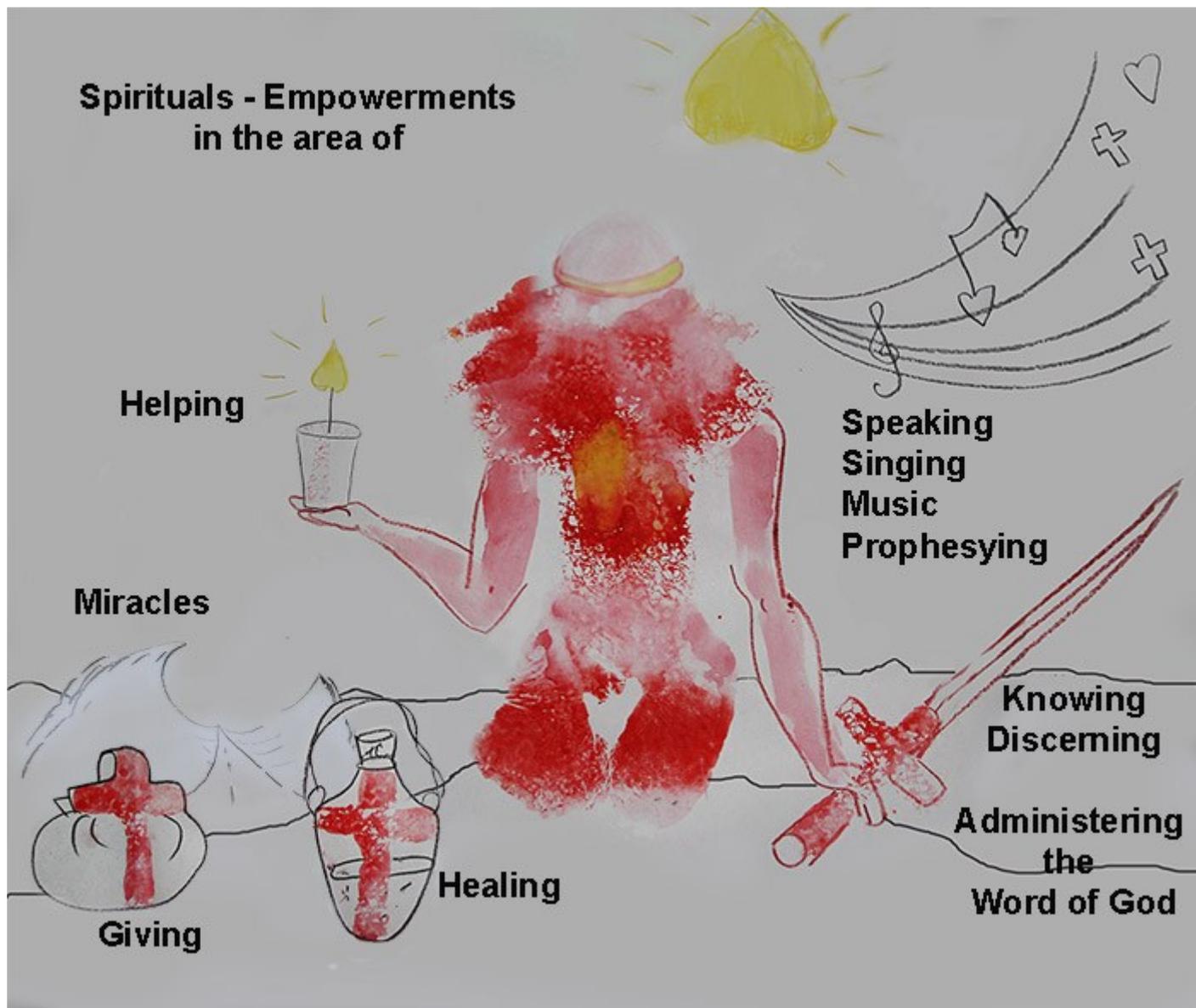
## This is good news

Now we are not only royalty but we can live as members of Gods royal family because this new life comes with spirituals -pneumatikos, charisma - translated "gifts," which may not be the best way of thinking about them. When we think of gifts we tend to think of natural abilities, but when God poured out His Spirit He gave supernatural empowerments.

They are not natural talents, although God can empower our natural talents and use them supernaturally. They are **supernatural**. A foretaste of the world to come, our true home.

God gives us **empowerments** as well as **empowered people** in the church.

**There are all kinds of spirituals - empowerments. Ephesians 4:7** [I sponged on three cross shape and use that as the base of the empowerments while verse is read]



They are also **Signs** that point to the **truth that Jesus is who He said He is**. He is the **son of God** and He is who **John** said He is **The Word made flesh**.

God has **good plans** for our lives that include letting the world see that **Jesus is alive**.

**John 14:12** *"Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater (mega s) things than these, because I am going to the Father."*

As joint heirs, God uses our feet to bruise the head of Satan and destroy the impact of his ugly works. God's desire is for us to **grow up** into the full measure of Christ.

**Ephesians 4:15** *But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head--Christ.*

To grow we need to listen out for and obey the word of God.

**1Tim. 4:13** *Until I come, be devoted (apply the mind to, be occupied with, **be addicted** to, engage in,) to the reading of Scripture, to the exhortation, to the teaching.*

We need to be **addicted** to computer games, right? No. Wine and drugs??? No - filled with the Spirit and passionate about our leader and Lord. **Ephesians 5:19**

### **The bad news - The old man/person in us doesn't always like change**

The new creature we are loves to and is following Christ. The old man wants us to satisfy our own desires and live comfortably pleasing ourselves, going our own way. One consequence of this kind of living is worry. The **worries of this world**, how to pay our mortgage etc. tend to limit our **focus**, hide the spirituals and God's good plans. When **Peter** didn't have his **mind on the things** of God, but on mankind, Jesus saw Satan was behind this and He rebuked Satan.



[I folded the art so it looked like a house and hid the spiritual empowerments.]

### **The ugly**

My garden has a Jasmine plant, with beautiful smelling flowers. But it was left to its own desires for too long. It grew where it pleased and **smothered** the other plants in the garden. It was an ugly mess. I had to prune it drastically. Left to satisfy our own desires we can end up smothering others, and the chief gardener, our Lord may need to prune us back.

Let's diligently and earnestly keep our focus on the things of God. Pruning is painful.

The other bad news is **we have a spiritual enemy who wants to steal what belongs to God.**

Consequently there are **battles** to win that we cannot win if we are not armoured up. **Eph. 6:10**

**The pilgrim highway is in our heart.** Jesus is the road and prayer puts us right there with Him.

**2Sam. 7:23** *What one nation in the earth is like your people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem to himself for a people, and to make him a name, and to do great things for you, and **awesome** things for your land, before your people, whom you redeem to you out of Egypt, from the nations and their gods?*

### **Can you hear the heart of God in this verse?**

He is still the same God who was with the Israelites. He hasn't changed. He still wants to do great and awesome things for you, with you and through you.

We have His Spirit empowering us to grow up into Christ.

Don't be satisfied with merely knowing about the *acts* of God. Pilgrimage with Him. His word is amazing and awesome and so are the things He wants to do in and for us.