**Daily Prayer & Encouragement Monday 21st December**

Romans 12

Paul writes "For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.  We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.  If your gift is prophesying, then prophecy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, then do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."

From September onwards the shops display their range of goods to attract us to buy presents, and in many homes the Christ in Christmas is missing, and gifts become the focus.  I remember a talk some years ago about receiving presents, beautifully and carefully wrapped and asked, "what is your response?"   "Are you so delighted with what you see that you admire it, hold on to it but hold back from opening it?"    In the parable of the talents (as it used to be called) in Matthew 25 the recipients responses differed.  Two who were given bags of gold doubled them to return them to their master who gave them more and said "Well done good and faithful servant, you have been faithful with a few things.  I will put you in charge of many things.  Come and share your master's happiness."  But to the man who had safely stored the gold and failed to use and increase it, he was very angry.

One Christmas our 2-year-old grandson still had unopened presents under the tree and his siblings were desperate to see what was inside.  His father invited him to unwrap those parcels, but this very tender little person said 'No' – he was already overwhelmed by what he had received, and possibly the uncertainty of what he might find was too much.

The gifts listed in Romans were for the Church's benefit, the body of Christ.   The Gift of himself was everything he had to give – his entire life.  The question I would put is "Are we willing to ask the Holy Spirit to help us to open those gifts and use and develop them?"   Or are we fearful, overwhelmed or disinterested?   These gifts are for each one, but for the benefit of everyone else.  Have we thought and prayed about this and are we willing to open such gifts?  Which one in particular has he chosen for you … to share with others?

*Prayer:  Let's praise God with all our hearts and proclaim Him –*

*Way maker*

*Miracle worker*

*Promise keeper*

*Light in the darkness*

*My God that is who you are, that is who you are.*

*Thank you Jesus for your love and your life, thank you for your gifts, please release one in me and use me for the good of others in your name.*

Jenny Thornton