

SPEAKING THE WORDS OF GOD

**Meditation presented by Rev Peter Johnson at Welcome Ultreya 9th November,
2019**

1 Peter 4:11: *If anyone speaks he should do it as one speaking the very words of God*

So, there we are then. When we speak, it is to be according to the will of God. When we serve others, as we must, it has to be with the strength that God provides - - it has to be with the word of God.

A very long time ago a lighthouse keeper went on holiday. And a very keen - - but junior and inexperienced, keeper was put in his place for the time he was away. And during that time there was a very wild storm. And rain - - and branches of trees - - and all sorts of other flying solid objects crashed into the light. What should the young keeper do? The lamp - - the whole purpose of the lighthouse, the lamp was going to get broken. So, he covered it up with a great piece of canvas - - and the lamp was saved. But a ship ran onto the rocks.

So now, here we all are, fresh from Men's and Women's 33, and all ready to go. Here we are together, determined that the journey we have with Jesus will continue. Here we are, individually and as groups, whether they be Parish Groups, Group Reunions, both, or in all sorts of other ways - - here we are, setting out, or continuing on, a journey with the Lord. So now, how do we start - - at what do we aim - - and how are we to we make certain that we don't accomplish all sorts of things - - only to see a ship as it founders on the rocks?

Well now, before we try to answer that question, listen to Saint Paul - - and couldn't you just listen to St. Paul all day and every day. When speaking of various spiritual gifts, this is how Paul summed them up. 'All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives to each one, just as he determines.' So, here is where we start. Yes, we do have gifts - - yes, all of us have gifts - - no, not even one of us is excluded. And this includes each new Cursillista from Men's and Women's 33 continuing on to each old fogey - - centring on or around my age. So, the first important feature is this - - each one of us has been gifted by the Holy Spirit. Now then, that should have got

rid of self-doubt - - and that should have reassured the over modest people. Yes, we're all in it. So now, how are we to protect ourselves from making the mistake that the young and inexperienced lighthouse keeper made? Well, of course, there are all sorts of answers to that question. In fact, there are so many that, inevitably, some will be right and some will be wrong. So, where are we to start. Well now, what about this? Listen to what St. Peter wrote.

'Above all, love each other deeply.' That does sound like a good idea, doesn't it! In everything we do, care for each other. In everything we say, think of the recipients of our words and our deeds. In all that we do, we are to take ourselves out of the centre of the picture. Well yes, that's great - - but isn't that just exactly what the inexperienced lighthouse keeper did? Yes, it was - - but a ship foundered upon the rocks. Woops, there's got to be more to it than that. So, let's look again, and find out where we should go.

'Be clear minded and self-controlled so that you may pray.' That's how Peter started. And, what a pity it was that, up there in the storm threatened lighthouse, the young keeper hadn't got a contact to whom he could turn in his need of wisdom. But we do - - and we have that contact available at all times and in any situation. Once again, listen to Peter. 'If anyone speaks, he should do it with the strength that God supplies.' Here's the clue - - here's the solution - - here's what the young lighthouse keeper needed to accept - - and here's what could have saved the lives of those people on the ship that was doomed.

'If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength that God provides.' Whatever we do **must** be according to God's will, and in the strength that he gives us. Whatever we attempt **must** be founded in the gifts that he's instilled in each one of us. Whatever we teach **must** be according to the word of God. Everything we believe - - everything we say - - and everything we do **must** be God centred. **Nothing** we do should depend on our own human wisdom - - but always on God's. Because, in God's law of love, there can never be a ship full of God's children that can be allowed to founder on the rocks - - and what we have to see and understand is that it's only when the light of Christ is hidden by our own human incursions into the love of God, that this happens.

God will give us the strength to accomplish what he's put before us - - and we should use it. God will always show us the way we need to go to accomplish that end - - and we should listen to him - - and follow him. And God will always protect us, not only

from the evil that surrounds us - - nor just from the fury that sometimes attacks us - - but he also protects us - - from ourselves. But - - this is only possible - - if we ask. It only accomplishes great things - - if we listen. And, it only furthers God's will - - if we take our own ideas and desires out of the equation.

There is nothing worse than the sight of human ships, washed up on the rocks, carrying people who were looking for the light that God sent into the world to save us, that has been hidden by human ignorance - - or selfishness - - or neglect to share with others the gift of knowledge of God that we have received.

So, each one of us must use whatever gifts we have been given to serve others - - administering God's grace in its various forms. What we must **never** do is to go it on our own, lest we cover up the saving light of Christ. That is the unthinkable act of those who don't understand.

So, dear Lord, we thank you for the faith you have in us, choosing and trusting us to care for others - - and to bring them to Christ. We pray that you will guide us to use all your gifts to bring other people to know of the love you have for them. We pray also, Lord, that we will always remember to talk with you in prayer - - following your way of love for all people, that we may be your encouragers in a world which needs protection from the evil and peril around us. Strengthen your people here today, and send us out to shine the light of Christ into a world of darkness.