

Message for Spring Family Service 9 Sept 2018, Cashmere

Silvia Purdie

*Get: blossom stalk, hose pipe, charge cables*

*(cloth for daffodil stalk)*

*Red box: pipes & cables*

What are these? What might you use it for?

I can see another kind of pipe: *get a daffodil.*

These are all pipes, of one kind or another. A pipe is a tube that something flows through. These one could have water flowing through them. This one has sap flowing through it. This one is for electricity to flow through.

But they only work so long as they are not blocked.

Have you ever had a sink block in your house? Or heaven forbid, a toilet!? Stuff gunks it up and everything stops flowing.

That is what happened to the man in our story today. His ears had become blocked and he could no longer hear. Something had gone very wrong and he could hardly speak, everything he tried to hear and everything he tried to say was muffled and muddled he could not communicate with anyone any more. It must have been most frustrating. The people who loved him wanted him to hear them and wanted to hear what he had to say. They'd tried everything they could think of and nothing worked. Then one day they heard that Jesus was coming, so they took their friend so they pushed through the crowds of people around him and explained about their friend, and when the man tried to explain it just came out as a loud moan.

Jesus was trying to listen to what they were saying, but there were so many people and so much noise, so he invited the man to come with him and they went down beside the stream where it was quieter. Jesus touched the man's ears and then he touched his tongue and then he reached up to God and he prayed with a sound like a deep groan "Eph-phatha!" which was the local language for 'Open up'.

And in that moment the man could hear again - he could hear the crowd, and the birds, and the breeze in the trees, and he could hear Jesus.

and he spoke clearly ... what do you think he said to Jesus? If you were him, what would be the first thing you would say? What would you want to say to Jesus?

Ephphatha. Open! Open up.

The blockage in the pipe was burst through. The man's ears and mouth and mind was opened to the power of God.

We're all a bit like that man. None of us can hear properly. We can't hear each other properly and we can't communicate clearly. Stuff always gets in the road and we misunderstand each other. And we get cross with each other and we think the worst of each other, because we don't hear clearly or speak clearly.

And of course we don't hear God very well either.

That's what Paul was praying for in this most wonderful of prayers ... he wrote that he was praying that the Ephesians, and us, would have the power to understand God's love and how big and amazing it is. Because Paul knows that mostly we don't get it, we don't hear it, we don't grasp it, because our hearts are blocked to God's love.

That's why we need Jesus, of course.

Because only Jesus was fully open to God.

In our reading last week we heard Jesus say "I alone have seen the Father". I have come from the Father. I know the Father and the Father knows me.

Only Jesus had a full heart-to-heart, face-to-face relationship with God. Only Jesus truly

understood the vastness of God's love.

When you turn on a tap at home, where does the water come from?

When we lived in Palmerston North our water came from a deep bore, a pipe that the Army had drilled down through the rocks near our home, down to an underground reservoir of water. Apparently it was a vast store of beautiful clean, very old, water, thousands of years old. I think that God is a bit like that - one way to understand what God is, is like that - a vast reservoir of power.

God is like a vast electricity generator, infinite power.

But only Jesus was tapped in to that power. The rest of us long to reach out and tap into the love and hope and joy and peace and healing and energy of God, but all we get is a trickle, if we're lucky.

We so need Jesus to touch our ears and our tongues, and our minds, and our hearts, and our aching joints, and for Jesus to say "Ephphatha - Open up~!"

And that is what Jesus does. He's the guy who turns on the taps, unblocks the pipes. He's the plumbing guy.