

Pentecost Sunday

Welcome to all.

Opening Scripture and prayer

Hymn MP 45 At your feet we fall

Scripture Jeremiah 31:31-37 (page 793)

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Children's talk - Torch with the need for a battery.

Chorus MP 691 This is the day the Lord has made

Notices Chris, W, ill, Arrow valley picnic

Coffee morning suspended pending church discussion.

Interview Rigtje

Prayer and share time

Reading Acts 2:1-21 (page 1093)

Hymn MP 914 Only by grace can we enter

Sermon Pentecost – Have you received the gift?

Hymn We praise Thee, O God! (on the Bulletin sheet)

Closing Prayer

Six 'P's

Pentecost, Promised, People, Presence, Power, Proclaim

Prayer and Exordium

■ Have you skipped to the back of a book to see how it ends? You can with the Bible.

Here's what you read: "**Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them.** Rev 21:3 A bit like back in the garden! That started at Pentecost.

Today is Pentecost Sunday.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Acts 2:1

Today we remember Pentecost. Pentecost sitting on top of one of the Jewish festivals was a time of joy. The priest, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow were invited. As the Passover was a family gathering, Pentecost was a huge social feast. It was at this moment that God's Spirit was poured out.

Yes - *This is the day the Spirit came - we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

The cross of Christ was not the end, but the means, so his Resurrection from the dead opened the door to the gift of God's Spirit.

■ *Moving into a house which is filled with rubbish, made clean first.*

Only with the work of redemption completed could the Spirit come. Jesus who ascended to the right hand of the Father - taking our humanity with him to heaven, - you could say - returned that God may live with man.

Pentecost is the great gift - of God himself! All of this was a foreshadowed in the OT. Let's see what this means for you and I today.

On the bulletin there's a space for you to write down all the headings from the sermon that begin with the letter 'p', there are at least five, the first one is obvious Pentecost, the next is That it was

Promised x2

The widespread giving of the Holy Spirit had been promised centuries before.

In the OT the Spirit was given to specific individuals as God determined: such as to Joseph, Bezalel, the seventy Elders, Moses, Balaam, Joshua, Jephthah, Samson, Saul, David etc.

They recognized it was not general and Moses said: "**I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets – That is speak God's word - and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!**" Num 11:29. Perhaps Moses knew that the time would come when all the Lord's people were to receive the Holy Spirit.

That day was predicted, the Lord spoke through Joel writing hundreds of years before Jesus: "**And afterwards, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.** 2:28/29

I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.

Isaiah 44:3

"I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD."

Ezekiel 39:29 **And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees**

and be careful to keep my laws. Ezekiel 36:27

And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication. Zechariah 12:10

Yes, the Spirit was to come on men and women, young and old. So the next heading is:

People

Many people x2 - There is to be a great harvest of people.

Pentecost was at the time of the festival of 'weeks' which was seven weeks plus 1 day making it 50 days after the Passover - or the 7th Sunday after Easter.

That's today. - The festival is first spoken of in Ex 23:16 as "**the feast of harvest,**" and again in Ex 34:22 **Celebrate the Feast of Weeks with the firstfruits of the wheat harvest,** described in Nu 28:26. as "**the new grain**".

The first of the two agrarian festivals it signified the completion of the barley-harvest Le 23:15,16; De 16:9,10 which began at the time of the waving of the first ripe sheaf of the first-fruits Le 23:11. It had the Joy of gathering the first of the harvest - with the promise of more to come. Later in the year was the harvest-home rejoicing '*all is now in*'.

So now there's to be a great harvest of people. We are in between the first and second. Pentecost, the birthday of the church sets us off with the encouragement of much more to come until Christ returns once all those to be saved are gathered in.

How does God bring a harvest of people? What means does he use?

God uses His word, the Bible. While the Gospels were being committed to paper the spoken word came from the lips of the Apostles.

1. We often focus on Acts 2 that we read earlier, understandably so. But the Spirit had first to come to the Apostles. When Jesus appeared to his disciples on the day of resurrection Jesus commissioned them saying "**Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.**" - and He empowered them and with that he breathed on them and said, "**Receive the Holy Spirit.**" John 20:21-22

2. Then there's the group of 120. Jesus had said to them "**Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised**" ... **in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit** Acts 1:4,5

So as they waited in obedience - they received - they were not disappointed.

2a

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. – No-one was absent to miss the blessing - Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Being the festival weekend **there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.**" yes, from all points of the compass.

Peter stands up to explain what is happening. He then from v22 preaches to the many gathered. 3000 repent and believe - and receive the Holy Spirit. They return joyfully to their countries and churches are formed everywhere.

3. Then there is what is known as the gentile Pentecost in Acts 10 as Cornelius has gathered his non-Jewish friends and neighbours to his house for them to hear the gospel. And as they hear the Lord's word - He brings his Spirit.

So in the home of Cornelius **while Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptised with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."** Acts 10:44-47

God's plan has always been to gather those to be saved from the whole world. Here and at Pentecost they heard the different languages of the world to show to all – especially the Jew – that every nation is included in God's eternal plan. Here at Pentecost is the great reversing of the Tower of Babel when God brought judgment and dispersed the peoples to the nations –

The world and the god of this age has been trying to reverse this ever since. More and more we see a spirit behind globalisation. The same things are happening everywhere. The use of technology is clearly converging people into a conformity of thinking. Every trick of language is used to force a unity: united Nations, toleration, inclusion, diversity - though forging an alliance with the most unlikely of partners as with the new religion, the alternative rainbow umbrella – and to what end? Ultimately to stamp out the church and set up an alternative kingdom on earth.

It's a unifying which is ultimately doomed to failure. In Adam, as we all are, we are at odds with each another and no amount of organising can remove that.

But God reverses this curse by changing the heart. The true unity is 'in Him'

✚ Not an organisation - but a living organism by the Spirit of the living God.

2b

While the world is hostile to God – God in a reversal of judgment brings - through Abrahams’ seed, the promised Jesus – a blessing to the world!

Just as Gamaliel promised that Jesus would die **and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.** John 11:52. As Babel’s sin dis-united, The Spirit of God at Pentecost unites believers, bringing “**the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**” Eph 4:1-16

✚ The time had come - the harvest is ripe, gather it in!! x2

Jesus says of the non-Jewish area of Samaria, **I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.** John 4:35. This is the time of ingathering

Presence

We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.” 1 John 4:13

Pentecost was the day God became present. x2 In the OT There was a visible sign of His presence. The nations around **have heard that you, O LORD, are with these people and that you, O LORD, have been seen face to face, that your cloud stays over them, and that you go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.** Num 14:14

Likewise the tabernacle and later the temple showed He was in their midst, **The LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the Tent...** Num 12:5 **As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses.** Ex 33:9

He displayed His presence on the mountain with the dark cloud, thunder and a consuming fire. Pentecost with the wind from heaven and tongues of fire looks back to the giving of the law upon mount Sinai, at which point the Jewish church was to be dated. Now 1447 years later (according to Dr. Lightfoot) the Holy Spirit gives the new law of Christ, written not on stone but on the tablet of the human heart.

Here at Pentecost **they saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them,** key word ‘separated’ and also **each of them;** - individual flames of fire - no longer one nation together but individual flames as God brings his grace to us as individuals, not to one nation alone, but those from every nation - and so the church the body of Christ on earth - is birthed.

✚ **Has Jesus met with you? Individually?**

Christ’s spirit within a believer connects me to Himself, connects me to God. As he is alive so I am alive, as he is eternal so now I share in eternal life with him. The events of the cross and resurrection are not remote any longer they

are mine, mine, now and always. What happened back then in history, ‘out there’ are now brought to me ‘in here’, that is what we need. No more saying God is there just in the mind, no more remoteness, no more emptiness, no more uncertainty, but the fullness of God, **Christ in me the Hope of glory,** yes what is to come will be a reality – because it is now a reality! *Hallelujah.*

✚ **Have you been listening to the message but nothing is happening? Nothing is changing? You walk out – just the same as you walked in?**

Ezekiel was told to look onto a valley of dry bones. The question is “**can these bones live?**” As the preaching came he saw the dry bones came together, tendons and flesh appear, they arose mighty and impressive. Yes impressive – Preaching should bring change and a loud, persuasive and charismatic preacher can bring change – but they were dead, there was no breath in them.

But when God sent His Spirit – they came to life, they became alive!

Repentance and obedience to Christ will be a sign of the Spirit, for the Spirit!

Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. 1 John 3:24

The life of God in me changes everything, I am alive, I am changed, I am assured, I hate sin and now desire above all to Glorify God in my life, As Peter said to the true believers **the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.** 1 Peter 4:14

If that is not you that I am describing – then fall before the cross of Christ while you can – the cross first – that is where you go. Then things will change.

Power x2

More than 20 times we read of ‘**the Spirit coming with power**’ for example we read of Saul **The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person.** 1 Sam 10:6

Jesus says: “**you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;**” Acts 1:8

Power to change, Yes you will have power to live as God intends you to live.

Peter’s preaching of God’s word leads many to Christ, and their addition to His church Ac 2:37-41. The result is very evident Godliness, Holiness and love shown by those first Christians, Christ showing His presence with them, and power in them, Ac 2:42-47.

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.” 2 Peter 1:3

Power to stand firm, power to say no to temptation, power to be patient, power to be loving - and power to speak up and speak out.

The invisible Spirit does an invisible work within the person. But the change the Spirit brings is visible, it is – and must be - noticeable, indeed undeniable!

The mark of a believer is that we have courage. And if we have it then use it! - exercise it. *Be bold be strong? Why? because the Lord your God is with you*

- Remember this years KNBC motto text '**Be dressed and ready for service and keep your lamps burning**'. Luke 12:35
- How about this for a motto: The Woodland Christian Church, Kansas City, has; "Wake up, sing up, preach up, pray up, pay up, stay up, and never give up, or let up, or back up, or shut up until the cause of Christ in this church and the world is built up!"- *Gospel Herald*. Let us make it ours!

So here the last and very telling 'p' is:

Proclaim

Acts 1:8 **"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."** 'you will be my witnesses, in other words you will have a loosed tongue to speak.

The Apostles once cowering behind closed doors for fear of the Jews, now overflow with courage.

✚ **No longer was there a spirit of fear, or gloom, but a Spirit of power.**

The coming of the Spirit has started God's countdown to the last great day of the Lord. And what are we to do? we are to be his witnesses, we are to speak of Him. That's what the Spirit makes possible – empowerment for mission.

This is not a short burst of energy and excitement, or an injection of spiritual adrenaline to give us a boost when we're feeling low. What comes with the Pentecost gift is the power to witness to Jesus. For all of God's people – men and women, young - and yes old – To urgently point everyone to Jesus - the only Name on whom people must call if they are to be saved. The book of Acts is clear that God calls some, like Paul, to plant churches. But it is equally apparent that the work was carried out by 'ordinary' believers, who spread the news wherever they went.

The same gracious God, the same exalted Christ, the same powerful Spirit, and the same amazing plan means we too play a part in the continual unfolding of this story – witnessing to God's saviour Son - who is Lord of all.

As I have said before, the word 'witness' is the word for 'martyr'

If we saw our Lord clearly - if we saw our calling clearly - there would be no more small mindedness, no more mutterings, or grumblings or idleness.

A good example of someone who saw things clearly is a Glaswegian called John Harper. He travelled on the Titanic with his six year old daughter. Hear what he did:

- On Sunday 14th April 1912 the weather was fine, the sea calm. Harper had attended the church service for the passengers. It was at 11:40 p.m when the iceberg was struck, as the call was issued for passengers to vacate their cabins, Harper wrapped his daughter in a blanket, told her that she would see him again one day, and passed her to one of the crewmen. After watching her safely board one of the lifeboats, he removed his life jacket and gave it to one of the other passengers. One survivor distinctly remembered hearing him shout, "Women, children and the unsaved into the lifeboats!" Harper knew that believers were ready to die but the unsaved were not ready. Harper then ran along the decks pleading with people to turn to Christ, and with the ship sinking, he called upon the Titanic's orchestra to play, "Nearer, my God, to Thee." Gathering people around him on deck, he then knelt down, and "with holy joy in his face" raised his arms in prayer. As the ship began to lurch, he jumped into the icy waters and swam frantically to all he could reach beseeching them to turn to the Lord Jesus and be saved. Finally, as hypothermia set in, John Harper sank beneath the waters and passed into the Lord's presence; he was 39.
- Four years later, a young Scotsman by the name of Aguilla Webb stood up in a meeting in Hamilton, Canada, "I am a survivor of the Titanic. When I was drifting alone on a spar that awful night, the tide brought Mr. John Harper also on a piece of wreck, near me. 'Man,' he said, 'Are you saved?' 'No,' I said, 'I am not.' He replied, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.' The waves bore him away; but, strange to say brought him back a little later, and he said, 'Are you saved now?' 'No,' I said, 'I cannot honestly say that I am.' He said again, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,' and shortly after he went down; and there, alone in the night, and with two miles of water under me, I believed. I am John Harper's last convert.
- God wanted Webb's testimony to be known for he was one of only seven people plucked from the icy water that night to join the survivors in the lifeboats. Hollywood says nothing of John Harper. It is he though who in the face of death and drowning, was concerned about the souls of men.

That is what the Spirit of Jesus does in a man or woman.

Yes Praise God for Pentecost. x2 – Have you had your Pentecost? Have you the gift of His Spirit? Has it happened? If so you will know **God dwells with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.** Rev 21:3. END