

Reflection – Day of Pentecost
31/05/2020
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

Acts 2: 1-21	The Holy Spirit comes upon the believers at Pentecost
Psalms 104: 26-36	God is the Creator of All
1 Corinthians 12: 1-13	There are many gifts of the Spirit, and they all work in harmony as part of one body.
John 20: 19-23	Jesus tells the disciples "Receive the Holy Spirit"

Introduction

Today we celebrate the Day of Pentecost. It is a day we recall the coming of the Holy Spirit to the first followers of Jesus. In the Anglican tradition the Holy Spirit is usually the least talked about person of the Trinity, so today I would like us to look at:-

1. The Biblical History of the work of the Holy Spirit
2. How the Holy Spirit is available to all Christians
3. How the Holy Spirit offers Differing Gifts

And I would like to finish with a question for us all – How is the Holy Spirit at work in You?

History

So let's look at a brief history of the Holy Spirit in the Bible.

Firstly we see how the Holy Spirit has always been there:-

Genesis 1:1-2 There at Creation

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Then in the Old Testament we see how the Holy Spirit came to particular people, at particular times, for particular tasks:-

- Gideon – Leadership (Judges 6:14-16,34) But the Spirit of the LORD clothed Gideon, and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him
- Samson – Strength (Judges 15:14,15) Then the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and the ropes that were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands. ¹⁵And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men.

- Isaiah – Prophecy

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound

In the old testament we also see how the Holy Spirit was promised by God as coming in Joel 2:28,29

“And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.

²⁹ Even on the male and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

Then in The New Testament we see a proliferation of the Holy Spirit.

Especially in chapter one of Luke’s Gospel we see the Holy Spirit come to:-

- John the Baptist 1:14,15
- Mary 1:35
- Elizabeth 1:41
- Zechariah 1:67
- Simeon 2:25-27

After this we see the Holy Spirit descend upon Jesus at his baptism in the form of a dove. And in the reading today in Acts chapter two we hear how the believers received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Available to All

The Holy Spirit is available to everyone now, no ifs, no buts. As you read the book of Acts, you can see the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of the first followers of Jesus.

As the Church became more institutionalized, the Holy Spirit, though always there, was probably less acknowledged. However revival came to many churches in the 19th century, and these churches are what we now know as Pentecostal Churches.

Jesus promised he would send the advocate (a helper, a comforter) when he left and he kept his promise. Some people may be scared by this, some may not want to know about it, but God’s Spirit is within us, and is available for us to help us live out our Christian lives.

People, friends, family may come and go, but the Holy Spirit doesn’t leave.

The Holy Spirit is always here with us.

Differing Gifts

The Holy Spirit is available to everyone, in fact no one can say, "Jesus is Lord", without the Holy Spirit, but what does it look like when we receive the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit of course, can be manifest, in many different ways. It may surprise some people to think that they are gifted by the Holy Spirit, but we all have gifts. In our reading from 1 Corinthians reading today, we hear how the gifts vary, but they are all to build up the Body of Christ. In Chapter 12 verse 7 it says:-

"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

So what it should look like when we are exercising the gifts of the Holy Spirit, is that we are loving one another, and that we are working together.

You may have discerned what your gifts have been in the past. If you'd like help discerning your gifts now, please see me. I have a worksheet to go through, and pray over, to help us in discerning our gifts.

I recall praying with one lady after we had some talks on the Holy Spirit, and she said she felt a warm sensation all over her body. I recall another lady telling me how she had been praying with a group that they might be given the gift of speaking in tongues, but when it happened for her, she was so shocked, she left the meeting, jumped in her car and drove straight home. These supernatural gifts are a wonderful way to enable us to be aware of God's presence, and it is good to seek and receive them, but they are probably not the most important of the gifts for building up the Body of Christ. The ability to speak in tongues is wonderful, but not necessary. In fact in 1 Corinthians 14:18-19 Paul tells us:-

¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you; ¹⁹ nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

There is a vast range of way's we are gifted by the Holy Spirit, but no matter how spectacular, no matter how wonderful, if they are not used to build up the Body of Christ, then they are not being used for the purpose intended.

The gifts we are given are to be used to build up the Body of Christ.

Conclusion

Today we have looked at some aspects of the Holy Spirit.

A brief Biblical history, how the Holy Spirit is available to all, and how the Holy Spirit gives differing gifts. We live in the time after Pentecost, the age of the Holy Spirit.

God has promised to give the Holy Spirit to all Christians.

How is the Holy Spirit at work in you?

How do you ask for the Holy Spirit to work in your life?

Do we expect the Holy Spirit to be at work in our lives?

I pray that we will ask God to fill us with the Holy Spirit, and as we do we will be empowered to do the work God has planned for us to do, so that the body of Christ, here in Tweed Heads, will be built up, to bring Glory to God. Amen.