



## “Gifts’r’Us – A Pause For Pentecost”

### The Aim of the Session

*It is very easy to rush past Pentecost and leap straight to the consequences of it. What was God doing? Why was he doing it?*

- **Welcome**

What phobias do you have? Heights, small spaces, spiders? How do you deal with them?

- **Worship**

Read Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 1:8. What promises have you seen God keep in your life? Share and thank God that he always keeps his promises – and commit yourself to trusting him for them.

- **Word**

Read Acts 2:1-13. Imagine you were there in the crowd ...

- ❖ When you heard the sound like a rushing wind – were you scared or intrigued?
- ❖ When you saw the crowd form, did you want to go towards it – or run in the opposite direction?
- ❖ When you heard people talking in your own language – how did you react?
- ❖ When you began to sense that God was in the middle of this – what were your emotions?

Of course, it is hard to guess what it felt like to be there, as we know what was happening and what followed – and that the work of the Holy Spirit continues today. BUT (and it is a big but!), if God always keeps his promises and we can trust him to work in us, but never beyond our capabilities ... what is Pentecost not happening in the world today as a continuous outpouring of the Spirit? After all, in Ephesians 5:18, Paul says “Go on being filled with the Spirit” ...

Read John 13:4b-15. It is the Last Supper and Jesus is preparing them for the life they are to experience. He has told them (in chapter 14:1-6) that he is going to His Father. They didn’t understand.

- Why did Jesus not tell them about these things until now (verse 4b)?
- Why did they not ask where he was going (v5)? What were their assumptions about the future?
- Why are they sorrowful (v6)? Who for?
- Verse 7 is vitally important! Why can the Spirit not come unless Jesus goes? Do not skip this question!!
- Verses 8 to 11 list what the Spirit will do. Why couldn’t Jesus do these things?
- Why could the disciples not bear what Jesus could have told them (v12)? What does this say about us?
- How does verse 13 bring an understanding of the Trinity into this thinking?

### **So, the BIG question – why did God send the Holy Spirit at Pentecost?**

#### **Why not before – why then?**

Take some time to talk this through – so that you are able to grasp the reasons that Jesus offers?

Let’s be honest – all of us have an element of fear when it comes to those things we don’t understand or can’t control. Often, they are irrational (eg tiny spiders) but sometimes they are about self-preservation (eg heights). What is important is, irrational or not, they are real, and VERY real to us. There are, however, things that can be put in place that can address these fears – eg, strong and full railings surrounding us when we are high up. But even

then, we have to win the battle in our minds and the voices that still tell us to fear. When it comes to the Spirit and the *ruach*, the Hebrew word for breath that is used to describe the Spirit, He blows where He wills and does things in supernatural power and might – scary, right? Someone said to me the other day that when it comes to the work of the Spirit, it is a combination "Bring it on!" and "eek"! I can't put it better!

So far ...

- ❖ We have sensed the energy and excitement of Pentecost.
- ❖ We have been reminded that we live in the age of Pentecost, being urged to continually be filled with the Spirit.
- ❖ We have learnt why God sent the Spirit when He did.
- ❖ We have recognised that fear of the unknown is real.
- ❖ We know that the Spirit is unpredictable.

How, therefore, do we handle the work of the Spirit – individually and in the life of St Peter's?

Read I John 4:13-18. Remember that the "love" described here is *agape*, the sacrificial love that yearns to serve (as described in I Corinthians 13).

- What does verse 13 say is the work of the Spirit in this?
- How can we know the truth of the Gospel – humanly (v14)?
- How can we know the truth of the Gospel – spiritually (v15)?
- What does God want us to experience in life (v16)?
- Why is perfection something to aspire to (v17)?
- More love = less .... what? (v18)

- **Works**

How does this study inform the way we approach Pentecost and the work of the Spirit?

Take some time to talk this through – express your fears and pray for each other to know the perfect love of God.

**Next session ... Week Beginning 5<sup>th</sup> June.**

**"Mission Weekend – Open Doors"**