

07<sup>th</sup> May 2017 10.30 am.

**(PP1) The Jesus we never knew x19.**

**Jesus and the Spirit. ACTS 1: 1 – 5. (PP2) also John 14:15-26.**

**Last 2 weeks we have begun looking at “Jesus and the Spirit” – even holding these 2 names together helps us to see and experience the real Jesus.** This is an appropriate way of furthering our discussions about seeking to discover, know and then pass on the real Jesus. The Father God, God the Son and God the Spirit do not work in isolation but together.

**(PP3) 40 days from resurrection to ascension;** Jesus spent time appearing at intervals and establishing his bodily resurrection – even on occasion eating with his disciples. He talked about the Kingdom of God - no doubt referencing many Kingdom parables, and teachings (e.g. Sermon on the Mount) that he had spoken to them but also relating the Kingdom of God to the Kingdoms of this world. (E.g. Israel v6) He did this as they waited for the coming of the Spirit and the move out in mission.

**It is Luke alone in Acts and his Gospel who groups together closely the: -**

- **Resurrection appearances of Jesus and the**
- **Experiences of the Spirit**

**I find it hard to think of the Spirit in isolation from Jesus – *The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name (Jesus), will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you. John 14: 26.***

Indeed, the Father, the Son and the Spirit are One – as passages like this show.

**The NT teachings of Jesus about the “Kingdom of God” is also rich with teaching about the Spirit. Jesus introduces an expectancy.**

**ACTS 1: v2** says that **this instruction was “by the power of the holy Spirit”** and vv4 & 5 he spoke about the **gift of the Holy Spirit** promised by the Father. *John baptised with water, but in a few days, you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit”.* **(Diver is baptised). Filled with the Spirit (constantly cos I leak) and plunged or baptised into the Spirit – God within and without.**

**HOW do we experience the Holy Spirit?** Individually and in community? Jesus had a strong sense of his Sonship and also the Spirit’s anointing. He promises us that as we follow him we too will have an awareness of our identity as true children of God (*Abba* factor) and also the presence of the Spirit within us and upon us.

**Your purpose and priority?** *The chief end of (a person) is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. (Westminster Shorter Catechism).* And to do this a person needs to be born of the Spirit and going on being filled with the Spirit.

**John's Gospel** accounts of Jesus written in the 80s/90s (after Jesus' birth) shows the vitality of the Spirit and leave us in no doubt that the Spirit is active in the HERE and NOW and not just in the past or in another place. The "Spirit of Jesus" continues the work of Jesus and enables us to continue the work of Jesus. The Spirit of God continues the presence of Jesus active in the here and now. At the baptism of Jesus The Baptist saw the Spirit come down from heaven like a dove and stay on him (*John 1: 32*), and remained on him throughout his earthly ministry and exaltation.

**Both Jesus and the Spirit teach the Disciples of Jesus and the Spirit continues to teach us and to remind us of all that Jesus taught.** (*John 6:59; 7: 14 & 28; 8:20 & of course 14: 26.*)

**John is explicit: the Spirit is the OTHER PARACLETE.** (Jesus is the first paraclete – *1 John 2: 1*)

*The word "paraclete" is one of those rich Greek words that are difficult to translate completely. (Jean Vanier: "Drawn into the Mystery of Jesus through the Gospel of John").*

*A paraclete is someone who defends and comforts, and speaks up for and helps a weak person. So, the word paraclete can be translated as "advocate", as well as "comforter", "consoler" or "helper". Etymologically... it means "the one who answers the call". What a beautiful name!*

*God is the one who answers the cry of the weak and those in need. A mother is a "paraclete" for her child when she answers the cry of her little one....Everytime we look after a person in need and answer their cry, we become paracletes. Jesus was a paraclete for his disciples.*

*The Paraclete is given to those who are lonely and need the presence of a friend, to those who are lost and poor in spirit and who cry out to God.*

Jesus is emphasizing to his Disciples that he is leaving but they are not alone. In his physical absence, they have the presence of the Spirit who is another Paraclete – like him. The name "Spirit" implies movement (wind/ breath) and inner enthusiasm but the name **Paraclete takes away the anguish of loneliness: she brings presence, peace, security and communion.** (p260)

We need both these aspects of God who inspires us and urges us forward and out and also God who consoles us, loves us, carries us and lives within us. The Spirit is the "other Paraclete" and fulfils Jesus' promise to come again and **live in his Disciples** (*John 14: 15 – 26*) "*So each generation is as close to Jesus as the last – and the first-because the Paraclete is the immediate link between Jesus and the Disciples in every generation.*" (p351 Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*)

The Father sends the Son, the Son and the Father sends the Spirit – they are One and wants us to know this oneness (*John 17: 21-23*).

**Jesus states clearly that if we love him we will obey his commands (v15) and he will ask the Father to send another Paraclete.** This Spirit Paraclete will stay with us forever and enable us to do what God wants us to do. What is impossible to do in our own strength the Spirit of Jesus will enable.

The Spirit can enable us to love the unlovely, even pray for our enemies and those who take out their anger on us, to become friends with those who are very different from us, to work with brothers and sisters who are quite different from us. The Spirit can give us the strength to go out in mission or to remain in mission. You could share with us many true stories of what the Spirit has enabled you to do....

We are not alone! We are not orphans – the Spirit within us reminds us we have an Abba! The Spirit Paraclete comes when we cry and comforts us.

Jesus' plan is to send the Paraclete and to live within his community of Disciples to show his love to the world. It is the church, the community of Believers who will continue the mission of God in the world to draw in a vast catch of fish ready for the Great Banquet. The Spirit working through the Believers who is drawing the net of the Kingdom towards that day.

**The coming of the Spirit is contingent upon us struggling to keep and wanting to keep the commandments of Jesus.** The Spirit of God is for those who want to keep the commands of Jesus to love (Paul agrees in Romans – the Spirit is given to those who are obedient). God is always gracious. We must struggle with own egoism and spirit of self-preservation – taking up our cross each day - *the Master bids me come, and die, Bonhoeffer.*

**“Keeping the commands” of Jesus is essentially is to live the beatitudes** – to show compassion, and mercy, to be peacemakers, to pray for enemies, to live in communion with one another, to wash each other's feet, to work for a more just society, to welcome strangers, to be joyful in giving and so on. To keep our bodies inwardly clean as a fit dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. (Both singularly we are that Temple and also as a community of Believers we are that Temple *1 Corinthians 6: 19*). That's why we need the Spirit Paraclete – it's a lifetime's work of remaking, cleansing and renewal. We and the Church are to be obedient to those commands of Jesus and **the work of God continues through Spirit enabled Believers.** We are to be guided by the Spirit rather than have our own agenda. But take comfort as we follow then the Father and the Son keep on sending the Holy Spirit Paraclete to both enable and console and keep us company in our life's call to walk in obedience.