

(PPx1) The Way x23. Sunday 09 June_2019. Pentecost Sunday.

The Way of the Spirit.

READ: (PPx2) Acts 2: 1 - 11 and Joel 2: 28 - 32.

JESUS declared himself to be **the Way** (to the Father *John 14: 6*) and his followers are described as those who ***belonged to the Way.*** (*Acts 9: 2*). Therefore, individually and as a local church we are part of the **one NEW PEOPLE** from many nations ***who are in union with Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2: 15) and who have the Holy Spirit...***

Pentecost is celebrated in the Church not just as a single day in the Church calendar but a whole long season from the Day of Pentecost through until Advent. Pentecost – or the birth and anointing of the Church speaks of the start of a new era – of the *last days (2:17) before the great and notable Day of the Lord (2: 20).*

The new Agers and the Zodiac sign followers talk of the “Age of Aquarius” but for those of us who follow Jesus it is the *last days (2:17) before the great and notable Day of the Lord (2: 20).*

How will we see individuals and the world changed? Only by the work of God in people’s lives. The early church had little money, no religious buildings, little social status or power.

On the Day of Pentecost as the Holy Spirit came in a new way to the Disciples of Jesus **PETER** stood up to explain to the crowds on the streets or in the Temple what had happened and he cited the **Prophet JOEL** to explain what they had witnessed, heard and experienced. (*Acts 2: 16 – 21 quotes from Joel 2: 28 – 32 that we heard read to us.*)

Joel the prophet brought a message to the people of Judah probably 4 or 5 centuries before Christ. We are unsure of where he lived but he probably spoke during the time of the Persian Empire. He called the people to repent *with fasting, weeping and mourning and to tear their hearts and not their garments.* He foretold an invading army of locusts and drought but promised that if they turned back to God and his righteous ways that they would experience *God’s mercy and that he would restore the years that the locusts had eaten.* Joel said that God would give them more than a physical blessing but that *on the coming Day of the LORD (expression used in OT and NT) a promise of God was to send the Spirit of God upon all people.*

Peter declared on the Day of Pentecost that this was the blessing spoken of by Joel – **Outpoured blessing from God (2: 17) was on all flesh (PANTA SARKA):**

- ***Sons and daughters (next generation) will prophesy***
- ***Old people (PRESBUTEROI – elders) will have dreams and***
- ***Young people (NEANISKOI) will have visions***

God's Promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 39) is for your, your children and your children's children – i.e. the blessings of God extend to a thousand generations. Nevertheless, it's important to state clearly that there are NO GRANDCHILDREN in the Kingdom of God. Each person – whether they are “Jew or Greek, Male or Female, Slave or Free” needs to be born again/ from above – as Jesus said to Nicodemus. Later in the passage it's recorded that Peter made this plain to the crowd of Jews and Proselytes who gathered to witness the spectacle. They were filled with “amazement and confusion” by what they witnessed but as Peter spoke to them in Aramaic about Jesus of Nazareth and his resurrection from death, he made it plain that they needed to respond to this news with repentance and action.

The Disciples of Jesus who **waited in the upper room for the outpouring of the Spirit that Jesus promised were together when the Spirit came.** The manifestation they experience was the sound of a mighty wind, the house where they were being filled and then as it were tongues of fire touching each of them and an inner filling of the Spirit.

The consequent overflow was not just ecstatic utterance of praises to God (GLOSALALIA) but an over spill – a pushing out onto the streets of them as people – some think that they automatically were pushed towards the Temple (the House of God). Although some assumed, they were drunk (even though it was only 9am) they attracted a large crowd in Jerusalem for the festival and they heard the followers of Jesus speaking about God's works in 15 different dialects – which Dr Luke lists.

The Spirit of God had of course been active prior to Pentecost – in Creation, OT history and anointing prophets and kings etc, and the life and ministry of Jesus and those who began to follow – this was of a completely different order. Jesus had promised that the Holy Spirit would come to indwell and remain with his followers to glorify God and to make effective witnesses. (John 14: 16, 17).

Here is the promise of Jesus being outworked not just on this inaugural day of the church – this anointing or baptism of the Church – but the age of the Spirit active through the Church up to and beyond the Day of Jesus' return.

Human beings created in the image of God but broken by selfishness and pride are restored, repaired and replenished through the activity of the TRINITY – One God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit's power is available today for all followers of Jesus he says (John 16: 14) to enable us, each day to bring glory to God and be more effective witnesses to God in the World. **There is a need for each believer and follower of Jesus to go on being filled (Ephesians 5:18).** The **work of the Spirit** is not just a one-off experience but an ongoing work and relationship within is. Warren W. Wiersbe says this *second chapter Acts* focusses on **4 activities of the Church**: waiting on the Spirit; worshipping in the Spirit; witnessing in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit.

We then looked at the symbolism of the created Pentecost image below and shared how we interpreted it:



Dove: Holy Spirit coming down at Jesus' baptism – Spirit remaining

Dove – of peace

Flame – God of holy fire

Circle – globe/ world

Blue – water of Holy Spirit

Blue – of the heavens

Cross – of Christ – draws world and people together – pushes us outwards too

The patterned fabric or bead work – different cultures in the church