

Title: *Are You Drunk in The Spirit*

Date: *24th May 2015*

Scriptures: *Acts 2:1-21*

Are You drunk in the spirit of Pentecost? Is the Birthday of the Church today as important to you as say your own milestone birthdays, 21,40, 50, and so on? Do you see today as just another date in the church calendar, only with a bit of wind and fire?

Pentecost should be huge for all of us because it is a time of renewal, a time to recharge our batteries, a time when we should look forward in hope rather than despair?

Pentecost for Luke too, was a really important time. He used his description to bring the messages of the Old Testament together with those of the New to show the significance of Jesus work.

To 1st Century Jews Pentecost was the festival of first fruits when the first sheaf of wheat was offered at the temple. It had an agricultural meaning but underneath it was so much more. It signified 50 days from Passover when sacrifice of the lamb kept the Jews safe and signified the beginning of their escape from Egypt, 50days later they arrived at Mt Sinai and Moses ascended the mountain and returned with the law. The parallel between Jesus and the Exodus was obvious, Jesus the lamb of God, sacrificed for us on the cross, the miracle of the resurrection freeing us all from sin, and 50 days later, after, like Moses he had ascended the Holy Mountain to heaven, he comes down again, not with rigid tablets of stone, but with the life giving, dynamic energy of a new law designed to be written on and in human hearts, a description of an event filled with awesome energy. It was so much more than the words we read in scripture of the rushing wind and burning flames. If you experience a hurricane and the terrifying power in the flesh it can never be the same as looking at a satellite picture or a meteorological chart. The nature of hurricanes, and the reason they are so dangerous is because of the tremendous unharnessed power that is within them generated The warm, moist air over the ocean rises upward from near the surface. Because this air moves up and away from the surface, there is less air left near the surface. Another way to say the same thing is that the warm air rises, causing an area of lower air pressure below.

Air from surrounding areas with higher air pressure pushes in to the low pressure area. Some people, especially in the states track these storms to try and experience the thrill of standing in the peaceful eye of the storm surrounded by the power of the wind.

In a similar way the disciples in the upper room experienced the peace of God as they were surrounded by this supernatural wind. They were in the storm standing full on, allowing the breath of God to sweep through their lives, a real transformation experience, that revitalised hearts, words and deeds. They became a people whose hearts are on fire for the Lord.

The Holy Spirit can enable us to do mighty things. Today like the believers in Jerusalem we are in a closed room. The spirit comes to us today not as a split group of people but as one united in worship, in the body of Christ. Today we should realise that through the gift of the Holy Spirit we can heal ourselves and our relationships with each other, and through Gods love be able to move on to continue to do the work of the kingdom that God put us all on this earth to do.

The Holy Spirit should stir us, move us forward in the work of the kingdom, and that work is never complete until Jesus comes again. It's the lifelong work that we are called to and it can be successful again. It's not about buildings, or denominations, tradition or contemporary, young or old, it is just about people and we are the people of God!

I know that there are people here today who are hurting because of broken relationships, I know that there are people who are not here for the same reasons and that cannot be good for them or for the church. But I rejoice that through the power of the Holy Spirit, divisions can be mended and through the love of Jesus Christ he can bring healing into broken lives. It needs people to be brave, it needs people to be less precious, to be able to forgive and work through the problems that they have. Sometimes the power that we receive through the gift of the spirit can enable us to turn what appear to be impossible situations into positive ones. But this can only happen if we are willing to allow the spirit of Pentecost to transform us into the children that Jesus wants us to be.

Today, on the birthday of the Christian church we need to overcome the negative feelings we have in our lives and allow the freely available power of the spirit to enter in.

Now you are probably saying well, it was never like that for me, and it's true. The spirit can come combined with energy and fire, or it can come slowly and reveal itself to you in its own time. But one way or another it is there and it changes people's lives! Luke shows us how important that event was because it was the launch of the worldwide church we see today, but it showed that the new church had power and would be a force to be reckoned with, and he was right.

Do we have that power as we sit here today, or are we bogged down in the mundaneness of life, more worried about leaky roofs, arguments and finances than spreading the Good News of Jesus.

The spirit caused such a stir in the temple that day that people thought they were drunk because they had lost their inhibitions and were completely animated about one thing, God!

Being drunk in real terms means that we lose our inhibitions and often end up doing things we regret. But if we are drunk in the spirit, and can lose our earthly inhibitions and replace them with heavenly ones there will never be any regret, because it can only be a good thing!

Is that spirit moving in our lives today? The thing is that no matter how we experience it, slain in the spirit or through the still calm voice of God, we all have access to it and it can revitalise us all. Jesus said in Luke 11:13 “how much more then, will the father in heaven give the holy spirit to those who ask him!”

As we move on from the dramatic events of that morning we need to think of the significance of the other gift that God sent, the gift of tongues and again it was in fulfilment of the Old Testament. God told Abraham in Genesis 12:3 “In you, and in your family all the families of the earth will be blessed!”

The story that precedes the story of Abraham tells us that humankind had got too big for its boots and was trying to build its own Tower at Babel to link to heaven. God had stopped all that and confused everyone’s languages to make it difficult for them to communicate with each other, thus scattering the tribes across the world. They thought they could do everything themselves without God and God intervened. But now we see God reversing that curse so that the Good News of Jesus can be heard and made available to all men, through the gift of tongues.

Pentecost effectively reverses the effect of the Tower of Babel allowing God finally to fulfil his promise to Abraham, that day the Good News of Jesus was heard in all the languages of the people present.

A church that is not full of the spirit is in danger of falling in on itself, and it is where there is conflict and discord that this is most likely to happen so we must rise above it, bury our differences and move on.

If the spirit is not present within us we are in danger of becoming lukewarm for God, ineffectual in our own ministry because we are held back by our own problems and unable to be effective for God.

In Romans Paul concentrates the whole of chapter 8 on what it means to be filled with the spirit

8 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you^a free from the law of sin and death.

You see no matter how hard we try to mess things up. In our own lives or in our relationships with others, Jesus sets us free through his spirit. We mustn't despair because of the problem we have that are sent by the devil to try us, because for all the problems we are sent we are also sent the gift of the spirit which will enable us to cope with them. ***26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.***

Sometimes when we are really good friends with people we have to tell them some hard truths, it's because we are friends that we can do this

The challenge I want you to take home today is where we are on our birthday today, are we gathered in this closed room, ready to be filled anew with the revitalizing energy of the spirit. We are another 2000 years down the line since the first Pentecost but that energy is still there for us to grasp. We are Jesus friends in the same way. He is still waiting behind the door waiting for us to ask him in again. In fact I know he is coming in to eat with us as we share in Eucharist. It is still a life changing ordinance, let him in and he will change things!

When the spirit moves in our lives it can turn our lives upside down. Especially when the penny drops and we realise that the love of the Lord Jesus was given to us all unconditionally this is an extract from the words of one who received the spirit and went on to change the world.

In the evening I went unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther and preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter to nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine and saved me from the law of sin and death.

This is the extract from John Wesley's journal for the 24th May 1738. Now whilst the Methodist Church in the UK may be in decline there are 80 million Methodists across the world, interestingly the same number as the worldwide Anglican Communion.

It may be understated "I felt my heart strangely warmed" but look what it went onto achieve.

Don't let the spirit of Pentecost be lost in the normality of routine! The energy and vibrancy of that day is still available to us. Use it to bring his Kingdom, look for the opportunities we have, think outside the box. The future starts today, what's gone is gone, we can't change that; but we need to look forward with hope and grasp the door handle to let Jesus in with all the energy of the Holy Spirit that will come with it.

Acts 2:13 said they thought the believers were drunk, well they were drunk in the spirit, so I think we should join them.

The closed room in Jerusalem launched a worldwide church, The meeting in Aldersgate launched a worldwide movement let the closed room at St Martins here today launch a renewal of the Kingdom of Christ in Stonydelph and Tamworth as a whole.

Amen