

Small Group Notes – 4th June 2017

Theme: All Change

Reading: Acts 2:1-13

Sermon Outline

Jesus was crucified at Passover. Fifty days later was Pentecost, the celebration of the first fruits of the harvest. Jews from all over the known world were gathered in Jerusalem, speaking different languages and dialects. On that day, they didn't need translators – everyone understood in their own language.

The Holy Spirit filled all the believers, not just the 12 original disciples. The followers of Jesus gathered the first fruits by explaining what God had done for them – resulting in 3,000 new believers.

Pentecost also celebrates the fact that Moses came down from Mount Sinai 50 days after the first Passover with the Law, God's instructions on how the Jews were to live their lives. At the ascension, Jesus told his disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit before witnessing to the world about him. When there was a new king, heralds were sent out to declare the rule of the new king – people recognised that anarchy was worse than authorised government. Jesus was telling his followers to go out and proclaim that he had been enthroned.

It is impossible to tame the wind – we don't know where it will blow, but we have used it to power ships, grind corn and now generate electricity. We have to be careful of fire, because it can change the state of something. We feel the heat of a campfire as wood reacts with oxygen to produce carbon dioxide and water. Mankind has harnessed its power to give us light, cook food, refine metals and produce electricity. We can contain fire in a box, restricting air flow to make it burn more slowly, or even deprive it of fuel so it goes out.

The Holy Spirit is described as a wind and tongues of fire. It changes and empowers us, as individuals and the church, to communicate the love of God. We must communicate in a language others can understand. The Holy Spirit prompts and empowers us to put Jesus' teaching into practice, to demonstrate his love. Are we open to the Spirit's prompting, or do we want to put him in a box and control him, limiting how fast the flame burns? Are we open to being pushed off course in unexpected directions by the Spirit's wind, or do we seek shelter and stay becalmed where we are?

The early disciples' step of faith changed the world, changed our lives. Have we enough faith to do the same for someone else?

There are at least 24 spiritual gifts mentioned in the Bible (see PowerPoint). All are interdependent and the church needs them all to pass on the good news, but no individual is given them all. Don't say you have no gift, or wish for the same gifts as someone else – we are all unique.

Can you see gifts already at work in our church? Are there any spiritual gifts our church particularly needs at the moment? We need to encourage each other to recognise and affirm the gifts they have.

Let the fire of the Holy Spirit change us for ever and enable us to change someone else's life for ever. Don't shelter from the wind, or keep the Spirit in a box.

Questions of Application

- 1) Can you see spiritual gifts at work in our church?
- 2) Are there spiritual gifts our church needs at the moment?
- 3) Identify the spiritual gifts others in your group have, and encourage them to develop them.
- 4) Which spiritual gifts can help you to change the life of someone on your front-line?
- 5) Are you prepared to let the Spirit change the course of your life?