



## HG185 **Pentecost Sunday**

Luke 4:16-21 & Acts 2:1-21

### **Home Group Study Notes**

9 June 2019 - Revd Paul A. Carr



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN  
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION  
**BEFORE THE MEETING!**

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group with you, along with any previous notes and other resources which might be helpful for your discussions.*



### **Welcome** (10 mins)

#### *Ice Breaker*

Do you think we naturally become more "*temperate, self-controlled and reverent in the way we live*" as we grow older?



### **Looking Upwards** (10 mins)

#### *Worship*

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



## HG185 *Pentecost Sunday*

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### Home Group Sermon

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#### **The Significance of Pentecost to the Jews**

Pentecost was a significant time for the Jewish people and it was important in two ways: 1) Agricultural, it was middle of the three annual Harvest festivals (Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles); 2) Historical, it was also the celebration of the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai. This is why Jerusalem was filled, vs5, with: *God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven*. Luke names at least fifteen nationalities who were able to hear the praises of God in their own language, vs9-11. This was a sign to show that the disciples had received the Holy Spirit and could be understood.

I say that because Galileans, apparently, spoke with a distinctive accent that made it difficult to speak other languages. I know people make fun of my Sunderland twang and pronunciation, but who can understand a Cockney or as they say nowadays a 'Mockney?' For example, who can make sense of this: *Move your plates of meat up those apples and pears before the trouble and strife comes along* and, as they say in Essex speak, *Innit!*

But there was another reason why God enabled the disciples to speak in different languages. It was a reversal of the judgment of the 'Tower of Babel'. You may remember how, in Genesis 11 men, in their pride, had tried to ascend to heaven to be like god and God's judgment was to scatter the people over the face of the earth and confuse their language. However, God's blessing at Pentecost united people together.

At Babel, there was confusion in the language, but at Pentecost, people understood what was being said. The Tower of Babel was designed for the praise of men, but Pentecost brought praise to God. The Tower of Babel was an act of rebellion, but Pentecost brought submission to God. And so the gift of tongues was given to let the people know that the Gospel of the Good News of the Kingdom of God was for the whole world. That everyone, not just the Jews, could be chosen of God: Greeks and Gentiles – us!

Last week I mentioned that the Ascension of Jesus means he was let loose on the world. Jesus' ascension introduced the age of the Spirit that had been promised by the prophets as well as Jesus himself in John 15/Acts 1. This could only come into place once Jesus had taken his place alongside the Father.

#### **The Holy Spirit makes all things New**

The coming of the Holy Spirit on the church was the beginning of God making all things new (Isaiah 42:9; Jeremiah 31:31) in the lives of His disciples and giving ordinary people an extraordinary purpose.

What took place on the Day of Pentecost wasn't a coincidence. The Holy Spirit fell because the disciples, 2:1, were waiting and praying together in the upper room, ten days after Jesus had ascended to the Father. They believed the promises of Jesus. They were praying with expectancy and anticipation for something to happen.

If we want God to move in new and wonderful ways in our lives, and in our church, we must prepare to receive. I don't believe God pours out His Spirit on people who are not seeking His face. Praying with expectancy and anticipation is so important because it is this which prepares us for the gift of the Holy Spirit and it is this, which allows us to be open to what the Spirit brings.

A photographer was taking photos of a raging Australian bush fire. Eventually the fire became too intense so he radioed for a small plane to pick him up and take him over the fire. He was assured that there would be a plane for him at a nearby airstrip, and so he hurried around to the airfield. Sure enough, there on the runway was a small plane exactly as he had been told. He jumped in and said to the pilot, "Take her away."

When they were in the air he said to the pilot, "I want you to swing left and go low over the fire." A little later he said, "Now I want you to dive down onto the top of the smoke." The pilot turned to him and said, "Why are you asking me to do this?" And the photographer replied, "Because I'm a photographer and I want good photos." To which the pilot exclaimed, "You mean you're not my instructor?" God doesn't leave us to fend for ourselves, he sends the Holy Spirit comes to be our instructor.

### **The Power of the Holy Spirit**

*Vs2: Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

Whilst we can't see the wind, we can see and feel the effect it has. Jesus told the disciples they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them and, just as Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit at his baptism at the start of his earthly ministry, so the Holy Spirit comes upon the disciples to anoint them for their ministry. In 1:8 Jesus told them: ***You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.***

Have you ever heard of 'Storm Chasers' or, to use the technical term, 'crackpots'? They are people who chase tornadoes when most are running away from them! I'm sure you've seen them in documentaries from time to time. David Hoadley of Virginia, USA, is a 'Storm Chaser' and he's been chasing storms, very successfully, since 1956 recording them on film. Apparently, the film 'Twister' was based on his experiences.

The American Christian author Tommy Tenney has written book called 'The God Chasers' where he writes about how we should chase after God if we want him to be made known in our lives, and, whilst I understand what he's saying, I can't help but think that it's actually God who is chasing after us by sending Jesus to be our Saviour and sending the Holy Spirit to empower us to live lives to His praise and glory. .

However we view it, we don't want to be waiting longer than we need to before we put ourselves in a position to receive all that God wants to do in and through us. We all need more of God's power in our lives, I know I do.

But we also need more God's *love* in our lives in order to release His *power*. Colin Urquhart puts it this way:

*Some people wrongly try to separate God's love and power; but they belong together. The Holy Spirit is supernatural and brings both love and power into your life. God has given us power to use in our daily lives, how can we move in faith and love unless we learn to use these supernatural resources for ourselves? Those who try to love and serve God without making use of the power God puts within us are wasting His resources. They don't listen to the Holy Spirit telling them to use the power and authority God has given us. God sends us into the world in Jesus' name to be like him and take his power, love, joy, peace and forgiveness into every situation. However, if we take God's love without the power, we can only do half the job.*

### **The Presence and Purity of the Holy Spirit**

Vs3: *They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.* When God first appeared to Moses, He made himself known through a burning bush (Exodus 3:2). Whilst the bush appeared to burn it was not consumed by the fire. When God led the Israelites in the wilderness, he led them by a pillar of fire at night (Exodus 13). The tongues of fire at Pentecost symbolised the presence of God.

As well as God's presence, fire is often used to illustrate purity. Precious metals are purified by being heated to such a high temperature that the impurities burn away. Tongues of fire symbolise the way in which the Holy Spirit makes us more like Jesus purifying our character. Producing the fruit Paul writes about in Galatians 5:22: *the fruit of the Spirit is: love; joy; peace; patience; kindness; goodness; faithfulness; gentleness; and self-control.*

The Holy Spirit transforms us into the likeness of Jesus. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:18: *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

It's not that we become perfect immediately, but there should be a genuine change in a person. A Christian should produce the fruit of the Spirit that should become our second nature. The fruit are natural consequences of His working in our lives. If we can't see fruit in our lives, or in the lives of other Christians, then God isn't doing His work. And that is down to us: our hardness of heart; our disobediences; our unwillingness to change.

Have any of you ever filled your car up with diesel instead of petrol? I'm not a mechanic but I understand it causes tremendous damage to the engine and is quite a job to put right. The engine has to be drained, flushed out, carburettors changed and so on.

People are a bit like that. God designed us to work with him as the motivating power in our lives. But we want to run on our own fuel in our own way.

### **The Purpose of the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit was also given to bring purpose to the lives of Christians. Jesus knew how much he needed the anointing of Holy Spirit as he sought to be effective in his own ministry. We see this in Luke 4:16-21.

These are the first words Jesus spoke at the beginning of his ministry after his 40 days in the wilderness. Jesus read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, we know it as Isaiah 61, written some 750 years before. Jesus said that Isaiah was writing about him and that his reason behind his anointing was to preach:

Good news to the POOR  
Sight to the BLIND  
Freedom for the PRISONERS  
Release the OPPRESSED  
Proclaim the year of the Lord's FAVOUR

And all those things should be the manifesto for our own mission and ministry.

### **Conclusion**

The Spirit-filled life is not a special deluxe version of Christianity or an added-on luxury extra for a chosen few. It is part and parcel of the total plan of God for his people and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit is an absolute necessity of the Christian faith. It is for every one of us - no exceptions. We see this in vs17&18: Sons and daughters, young and old, men and women, slave and free.

Being filled with the Spirit is not a one-off experience. Peter was filled with the Spirit three times in the space of chapters 2-4 in the Book of Acts (Acts 2:4; 4:8; 31). When Paul says, 'Be filled with the Spirit' (Ephesians 5:18) he uses the present continuous tense, urging us to go on and on being filled with the Spirit.

The great Baptist preacher of the 18C Charles Spurgeon was once asked why he preached on the need for more of the Holy Spirit: Because I leak, he replied. I need more of the Holy Spirit, because I, too, leak! As do we all.

Pentecost Sunday is a good time to remind ourselves of our need to be filled again and again with the Holy Spirit and allow Him to make us useful in God's service to His praise and glory.

## **Emmanuel Church Text for 2019**

*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light,  
we have fellowship with one another and the blood  
of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.*

1 John 1:7



## **Looking Upwards** (40 mins)

### *Bible Study*

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

**1.** Are you fearful of the ‘supernatural’ nature of the Holy Spirit? If you could receive a spiritual gift, which one would you choose and why?

**2.** If the Holy Spirit makes ‘all things new’ is it possible to see the tangible presence of the Holy Spirit in people’s lives? Share with your home group how this might be true in your own experience.

**3.** Read though the quote from Colin Urquhart (highlighted in shaded box) and discuss whether the point he is making about Christians who separate God’s love and power in their Christian lives is a fair assessment of how some in the (wider) Church exercise their faith, or not, as the case maybe.

**4.** In his talk, Paul spoke about how the fire of the Holy Spirit signifies the presence and purity of the Holy Spirit. Is it possible to live an active Christian life without the Holy Spirit? Is it possible for a church to survive without the presence of the Holy Spirit? If this were true, how might both of these look?

**5.** In the section ‘The Purpose of the Holy Spirit’ Paul highlighted Jesus’ spirit given ‘manifesto’ for his ministry from Luke 4:16-21. Share some examples as to how this could be relevant for the Christian church - especially Emmanuel.

**6.** Take time to pray asking God to release his empowering presence and gifting on each other.



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



## Looking Inwards (15 mins) Caring For Each Other

*Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:*

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



## Looking Outwards (15 mins) Concern For Others

*Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:*

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?

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