

Acts 2.1-21 Rom 8.22-27 St Peter de Beauvoir 16.5.2021

John 15.26-27, 16.4b-15

PENTECOST

'Sir we want to see Jesus' Jn 12.21

*May the words of my mouth & the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable
in your sight, O Lord my rock and my redeemer. Ps19.14*

Pentecost... about wearing red, releasing red balloons – coz we notice the tongues of fire and focus rightly I think on the HSp ... but today let's look at the church – a world in need – And how the Holy Spirit make a difference

I'm going to look at the Acts 2 Pentecost reading....

And whilst many of my sermons typically have 3 points

Today I have 2 points + 1 point

Yes I know that makes 3...

but I truly believe it works better as 2 + then 1

My first two points are about

1. The unity of the church &
2. The inclusivity of God's grace

My other point is about

1. how heaven makes those 2 things real on earth

1. The Unity of the Church

V1 'When the day of Pentecost came they were all together in one place'

Even before the gift of the Spirit, JC believers and followers were together and in the same place...

Obedient to his Ascension command

'stay in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes...'

Do not try to live the Xn life without Sp of God within you!

By now ..Acts 1.15 tells us they now numbered 120 people... all together + in one place, waiting on God

It's a beautiful picture of Church unity

120 people in a ten-day prayer meeting

All looking to God for his promised gift of the HSP

Ps 133 says – 'how good it is when brothers and sisters live together in unity' **God loves it when his church is unified** – and the place we're most unified is standing together on God's word – *Acts 1>2 wait for the HSp*

Today at St Paters it's 'stay here together until the new leader comes that God has promised you'

-do not leave church at this time,

-do not fall out over anything

but rather know each other 1st as brothers & sisters in JC –

Praying for those in chch you disagree with or find difficult

This is such an important aspect of Church life – exemplified most in the eucharist where we share in the body of Christ. Where, though we are many, we are one body because we all share in one bread.

Seek Church Unity before personal victory!

It is so important we do this because we want to reflect

2. The inclusivity of God's grace

ACTS 1.2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^[a] as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.

God shows no impartiality, Jesus came for the Jews first and then the gentiles, as he prepared to ascend into heaven he told his disciples that once the Spirit came they would take the good news of his resurrection to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth...

10 days later Jerusalem is filled with worshippers and tourists and every one of them heard the good news of Jesus in their own tongue such was God's gift to his creation. And how did they hear it?

Through the mouths of a unified church...

Filled with the Spirit.

At the end of our reading we heard these words preached by Peter:

everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

St Paul uses the same phrase in Rom 10.13

- Everyone means anyone... who calls on God's name will be saved, from fear, sin, evil and death
- God's grace is inclusive, all of creation is his and Jesus died for everyone.

Sometimes and to some degree fairly, the church is accused of being exclusive, homophobic, racist, sexist and yet the call on the church is to be unified and inclusive...

>just as God is three persons in unity,

>and inclusive to the point that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

How can we mere humans with our hang-ups, emotional scars and inherited fears be unified with folks unlike us, and welcoming to those we find difficult

This is my other point... the Church is called to be unified because of the inclusivity of God's grace

There is only one way the church can really live this calling and reflect God's grace and glory...

And that is when the Spirit of God inhabits those who believe a trust and follow his son Jesus Christ

This is 3. How the Holy Spirit makes a difference

The 12 and the 120 disciples were waiting on God, ten long whole days... with no idea when or how the Holy Spirit would come upon them or what it would mean...

(10 seconds – 1 for each day they waited)

And then on the day of Pentecost, the final day of the feast of weeks, God pours out his Spirit upon them

A sense of a liberal over-flowing, a drenching,

And then it happens:

- The Spirit comes on each and everyone of them
- The Spirit gifts them foreign tongues
- The Spirit proclaims Jesus
- The Spirit brings about salvation and church growth

'The local church is the hope for the world'

The news shows us daily a broken world

India biggest provider of vaccines,

struggling to care for its own

Palestine/Israel in flames their children in hospital

Afghanistan still teetering after 20 years

Youth crime and violence of the streets of our borough

The world doesn't need a church that looks inwards, falls out with itself or ignores the cry of those unlike it

The hope of the world is a church 'on fire' with God's love for the world... a love fuelled by the Holy Spirit, the same power that rose Jesus from the dead and has fuelled and grown the church from 120, to 3000 on that first day to 2billion today.

I invite you to receive again the Holy Spirit...

Come Holy Spirit,

in flame our hearts and
may our unity be a sign to the world of human hope
and God's inclusive grace
use your chch to change the world & hasten your kingdom!

Amen

