

Ripon and Lower Dales Methodist Circuit

Worship at Home

23rd May 2021

Pentecost, joy in the Spirit.

The Birthday of the Church.

As I write this, the sun is shining and the birds are singing. Lockdown restrictions are being eased.

A time for celebrating the wonderful new thing God has done for all of us; a new start for everyone who believes in Jesus our Lord and rescuer.

Let us pray.

When the night was over, morning came.
When the spring was over, summer came.
When Jesus left, the Spirit came.
So sing with joy,
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia,
and hear the language of God's love.

Hymn 135

I owe my Lord a morning song
For God has meant this day.
Through fears of night and hidden light
God moves and wills my way.

I owe my Lord a morning song
For Jesus rose at dawn;
He made death die and would not lie
That others might live on.

I owe my Lord a morning song;
The Spirit gave me voice,
Nor did she force my soul to praise
But honoured me the choice.

I owe my Lord a morning song.
How can I help but sing
When God is all in all, and I
Am one with everything.
John Bell (b 1949)

Prayer of praise

We come before you, God, in awe and wonder and praise:
blessed by your creation;
moved by the gift of Jesus;
motivated by the indwelling of your Holy Spirit.

We give thanks for your power that gives us:

eyes to see your working in us;
ears to hear your call and the cry of those around us;
feelings to be moved by your indwelling Spirit.

We give thanks for your reassuring presence with us
that gives us faith to know it is you who speaks and dwells and moves us.

Amen.

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A prayer of confession

Forgive us, Lord,
when we are afraid of diversity;
when we stifle creativity;
when we impose uniformity;
when we suppress energy and joy.
Forgive us, and bring us, like those first disciples,
from a place of hesitance to a place of hope;
from disappointment to delight;
from caution to celebration.

Amen.

The Spirit of God is present with us now, reminding us of Christ's promise that when we confess our sins to God, we will be forgiven.

Know that we are forgiven.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Acts 2 v1-21, The Holy Spirit Comes

2 On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place.

2 Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting.

3 Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. 4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

5 At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. 6 When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.

7 They were completely amazed. “How can this be?” they exclaimed. “These people are all from Galilee, 8 and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! 9 Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, 10 Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!” 12 They stood there amazed and perplexed. “What can this mean?” they asked each other.

13 But others in the crowd ridiculed them, saying, “They’re just drunk, that’s all!”

Peter Preaches to the Crowd

14 Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, “Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this.

15 These people are not drunk, as some of you are assuming. 2.

Nine o’clock in the morning is much too early for that. 16 No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel: 17 ‘In the last days,’ God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.

18 In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants—men and women alike—and they will prophesy.

19 And I will cause wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below— blood and fire and clouds of smoke.

20 The sun will become dark, and the moon will turn blood red before that great and glorious day of the LORD arrives.

21 But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.’

Talk

The disciples are waiting together, perhaps afraid to go out still. They have been commissioned by Jesus their Risen Lord, before He ascended back to heaven, to go out and preach the Gospel. But first they must wait for the Power from on High.

Did they discuss what it would be like, would they have been a bit nervous? I’m sure they would have been praying together, and reading the Scriptures, our Old Testament.

Then they experience a rushing wind and tongues of fire appearing over each one of them. God through His Spirit has empowered them. They are Spirit filled as individuals, but unified in its power.

Just as we, the Church worship in many ways, but are unified in our faith in Jesus our Lord and Rescuer.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus is described as full of the Spirit, now it is stressed that the Spirit descends on all the disciples, on anyone who believes in Jesus.

The power of the Spirit has purified them, as if with fire and given them the ability to communicate the Good News.

Now, outside that Upper room, in Jerusalem, a festival was going on, celebrating the giving of the Law to Moses and the barley harvest.

So Jerusalem was crowded with people of many nationalities.

And as the people came to see what was happening, they heard the Good News of Jesus bringing salvation, each in their own language.

For the first time in their lives, this mixed crowd was hearing the Word of God in a way that struck straight home, and they could understand.

The power of the Spirit was such that it had given the disciples a message to reach every heart.

If we let it, the Spirit will set our hearts aflame to ignite the lives of others.

Just look at Peter what an example. He once thought he could never be forgiven for denying Jesus, but now forgiven, confident in Jesus' love for him, empowered by the Spirit, Peter comes forward to speak about this new thing God is doing.

That the prophecies of the Prophet Joel were being fulfilled. And they are still being fulfilled now. The 'Last Days' Joel refers to are now. They are the time between Jesus' Ascension and His return in glory.

Now the Spirit is released free throughout the entire world.

This day, Pentecost is called the Birthday of the Church.

We are the family of God. Though the empowering Spirit in our hearts, we can call our great creator God, 'Loving Father'.

Everyone who believes in Jesus and confesses Him as Lord has the Spirit.

Anyone, we are all one family.

God in the Spirit comes to us in many ways. Remember Elijah, the prophet, he expected God to answer him in fire and wind, but God came to him in a still small voice. God may speak to us in dramatic ways or gentle whispers, the important point is, that like those disciples we must wait patiently and always listen.

We have all gone through a testing time.

We need the Spirit's power and presence with us now to be the family of God, Jesus' body in the world;

living the love, joy and peace which the Spirit brings, God's grace and strength to carry us through.

As Paul says:-

'The Kingdom of God is living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.'

Hymn 370

Breathe on me , Breath of God;

Fill me with life anew,

That I may love what thou dost love,

And do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Until my heart is pure,

Until with thee I will one will,
To do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly thine,

Until this earthly part of me
Glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
So shall I never die,

But live with thee the perfect life
Of thine eternity.

Edwin Hatch (1835-1889).

Prayers

We adore you, Lord Christ, and we bless you,
for you did not leave your disciples to manage on their own,
worried and confused,
but sent your Holy Spirit to breathe life and confidence and authority into their hearts.

Come to our world today,
transform it afresh, and fill our hearts with the power of your redeeming love.

Amen.

Intercessions

We begin our intercessions by first praying for our Christian brothers and sisters around the world who daily live for Jesus in dangerous places, under the threat of persecution.

God of wind and dove and fire,
speak freedom, peace and change over lands divided by war and by creed.

Speak refreshment, assurance and warmth over lives afflicted by exhaustion and illness.

Speak integrity, humility and challenge over churches crippled by fear and finances.

Speak calm, gentleness and comfort over lives broken by grief and loss.

Speak power, anointing and healing over each one of us,
that this Pentecost may be a new beginning, and a catalyst for change.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your Name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as in heaven. 4.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

As we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

And deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are Yours,

Now and for ever. **Amen.**

Hymn 476

One more step along the world I go.

One more step along the world I go;

From the old things to the new

Keep me travelling along with you:

And it's from the old I travel to the new;

Keep me travelling along with you.

Round the corner of the world I turn,
More and more about the world I learn;
All the new things that I see
You'll be looking at along with me.

As I travel through the bad and good,
Keep me travelling the way I should;
Where I see no way to go
You'll be telling me the way, I know.

Give me courage when the world is rough,
Keep me loving though the world is tough;
Leap and sing in all I do,
Keep me travelling along with you.

You are older than the world can be,
You are younger than the life in me;
Ever old and ever new,
Keep me travelling along with you.
Sydney Carter. (1915-2004).

Blessing

May the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.
So that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**