

WELCOME 28th May 2023 – Pentecost SUNDAY '23 A

Acts 2:1-21 & John 7:37-39

Welcome! It's great to be together again today! **Bible Study Qs** are there to equip you so God can lead you deeper into His word/work in your life, & so you can share that w/ someone else. We also use them for our **Zoom Bible Study Catch-ups** on Friday @ 1p.m.

As we move into this week... "Singing from **the** same sheet of music" -- "Playing **off** the same page in the playbook" It's not just teams, band or choirs...back in the day farmers wanted all the **plow** animals pulling the same direction & for families to be healthy they need everyone to live toward a **shared** set of values & aspirations. Business & churches articulate their vision/mission to give a shared common focus to their efforts

God **has** called Living Water Fellowship...

*to be a vibrant Christian community
that glorifies God
by inviting all people to become disciples of Jesus
who grow in his grace and
go in his power
to show his love to the world.*

Pentecost, is for the church that single page from which we live...Easter is the tune. Pentecost is our score. Pentecost reminds us we are firmly planted in the risen & ruling Jesus Christ not as isolated individuals but a community...a people ...a gathered body that together lives from the assurance of Christ's resurrection declaring the hope only the living Jesus can give.

We all hear these people speaking in our own languages
about the wonderful things God has done!

Jesus gathers us/his church/his family in his life & through us pours that life out to the world. Jesus gathers us in life & joy that last forever so that through us we can offer the world love that never dies, strength that's never exhausted & life that never ends. Pentecost is how God widens the reach of his grace through his people to the world. Pentecost, is for the church that single page from which we live...While Easter is the tune, Pentecost is our score.

We'll experience & share that today...Let's pray...

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Whirlwind Spirit of God, Roar through our failings & fears, Shake the foundations of our ill-placed securities; Sweep away the cobwebs of our apathy, Blow down the walls that separate us, one from another. Then into all our empty spaces, breathe courage to challenge injustice, call us to the urgency of mission, bring passion to our living, make us bold to speak your word to grow & mobilize your church. Let your gentle breeze and still small voice become in us today a mighty wind and loud proclamation...Through Jesus, our living brother, Saviour and friend we pray...Amen.

Let's hear God's word...

FAITH CHAT:

1. When was the last time you "heard something" from Jesus that made you go, "Wow!"
2. In the Bible, "fire" represents God's presence and power...Where are you currently seeing the fire of God in your life? If "nowhere," why do you think that is?

PENTECOST SUNDAY '23 A – THE NEW NORMAL: LIVING BY THE SPIRIT

When was the last time you “heard something” from Jesus that made you go, “Wow!” My turn...Acts 3 (& I'll get back to Acts 2) not long after Pentecost, Peter/John in Jesus' name heal a lame beggar just outside the Temple. He's so excited he follows P/J into the Temple jumping up & down shouting praises to God. That draws a crowd & a crowd means Peter preaches a sermon & points to Jesus as God's promised Messiah who was crucified & raised & will return one day. ^{B/4} he can get to “Amen” the religious leaders & Temple police show up arrest P/J & throw them in jail until the next morning. Acts 4...

The next morning of course there's a sham trial where P/J get off some of the best shots in the NT...*Let me clearly state to all of you & all the people of Israel this man was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. Guy's been lame for 40 years but the crucified/risen Jesus completely transformed his life...& would do the same for you. There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. What Jesus did & does is only available through faith in him. You killed him. God overthrew death by him & only by him. Forgiveness life salvation peace w/ God joy forever...only Jesus*

Meanwhile the healed guy is still out making a racket praising God telling his story...how P & J called on Jesus & look at him go! The religious bigshots can't dispute that. Doing star jumps today. Yesterday nothing. *So they called the apostles in & commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus...or else! But Peter & John replied, “Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen & heard.”* (4:20) Can't stop...so they're freed

You know what they do next? They run back to the church & have a prayer meeting. Guess what they prayed for...Thanksgiving for getting let out of jail? Protection? Nope “Now, O Lord, hear their threats, & give us, your servants, **great boldness in preaching your word.** Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs & wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” – 4:29-30 Boldness is what got 'em thrown in jail in the first place & they want more of it. Not just boldness Lord please do stuff that's going to make people notice you at work through us. Lord please make it obvious we're yours so when folks look at us we can show them you. Lord please do massive things so you get credit for it. Amen. *After this prayer, the meeting place shook, & they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.*

If Jesus hasn't made me say “Wow!” in a while...I need to pray that prayer. Lord please make it obvious that I belong to you & give me great boldness in pointing folks your way.

Why should the church pray like that? How do Peter & John know to pray like that? Pentecost. ^{B/4} Pentecost Jesus had told them: “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, & to the ends of the earth.” – Acts 1:4, 5, & 8 In essence: When the Holy Spirit takes hold of you, you'll be singing the song of Easter as one mighty chorus. Just as Jesus promised; it came to be...@ Pentecost.

“How can this be?” they exclaimed. “These people are all from Galilee, & yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! Here we are: Indigenous & Chinese, Burmese & Yazidi, Texans & South Africans, people from Temora, Korea, Wagga, Victoria & Alma Park, backpackers, tattoo artists, Collingwood fans & Queenslanders...We all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!”

“Bah! They're just drunk! ... No this is the work of God.” Filled w/ only what the world offers blurs our vision, dulls our senses, clouds our judgment, & poisons our souls. But when the Holy Spirit blows through & fills our lives, it opens our eyes to the majesty & mystery of God & the wonder/beauty of life in Christ. The Spirit gives us clear vision, a focussed purpose, sharp wisdom, souls that are restored & voices united in witness to Jesus Christ. By the end of that first day...

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, & to fellowship, & to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), & to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, & the apostles performed many miraculous signs & wonders. All the believers met together in one place & shared everything they had. They sold their property & possessions & shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, & shared their meals with great joy & generosity — all the while praising God & enjoying the goodwill of all the people. Each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. – Acts 2:42-47 Under the power & direction of the Spirit **they**

- cannot give up the community of faith
- cannot give up digging into the Scriptures &
- cannot give up sharing what God has done for them in Jesus (Acts 4:20)

The Church, filled w/ the life of Jesus & ignited by the Spirit was always intended to be incendiary in nature, stirring things up putting us on the front lines of life w/ good news to share, mercy to give, love to spread, power to impart, joy to multiply & a tenacious persistent urgency that won't let us rest until we have done so! Nowhere in the New Testament does Jesus command us to go out & erect steeples, prop up crumbling institutions or defend the nuances of doctrine & tradition.

What Jesus says is “go & make disciples of all nations.” Jesus says “when you care for the least you are caring for me.” Jesus says “love one another as I have loved you.” Jesus says, “you are the neighbour the person in need requires right now.” Jesus says “where your treasure is that’s where your heart is.” Jesus says, “what does it profit someone to gain the whole world but forfeit their soul?” good news to share, mercy to give, love to spread, power to impart, joy to multiply & a tenacious persistent urgency...That kind of lifestyle - living is inherently disruptive, difficult, & at times dangerous. So Jesus sends the Spirit, to encourage, equip, strengthen, provoke provide & protect so we can live out there & do it day after day after day after day. So we can find the person or place most desperately in need & plant ourselves right there.

The pyrotechnics of Pentecost are repeated everywhere you & I walk in the promise & power of that same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead & brought thousands to life & faith in Jesus in a single day. When the new life Jesus has given us through his resurrection fills us ignited by the Holy Spirit, there exists an exciting, untamed, unpredictable, dangerous, world-changing Church that burns uncontrollably w/ Kingdom power as it pours out & covers the earth.

The early disciples were people whose capacities seemed limited, whose charisma & influence appeared minuscule. Yet they were intoxicated by the Holy Spirit & when those early followers of Jesus encouraged each other & challenged each other & held one another accountable to that same Spirit of Jesus...they saw in their lives & churches the fruit of the Spirit & they knew there was no limit to how often or how much they could bear that fruit. They went passionately & urgently to the world with the simple message that Jesus is Lord...His Love changes lives...& everyone has a gift from God to reveal his rule of grace that they knew in Jesus...who died & was raised again so that all might have unending abundant life now & always.

Pentecost - the breath & fire of God is not simply a thing or an event...not a one off from the past...It is the abiding & transforming presence of God’s life & power w/ us & in us. The breath of God, the fire of the Holy Spirit, now fills our houses, our lives & our journey in this world. God breathes his Spirit to fill & burn in us & we live. God breathes his Spirit to fill & burn in us & our lives are restored & made whole. God breathes his Spirit to fill & burn in us & we are re-made in Christ’s image. The deeds of God’s power are not just words we hear, they are the lives we’re empowered to live. We’re set alight by the Spirit living in us to live lives of love & self-giving, forgiveness & reconciliation, generosity & compassion, healing & wholeness, prayer & holiness...for the sake of the people all around us.

The difficulty we often have with Pentecost is that too often we look for the show stopper...the extraordinary once in a lifetime tongues of fire experience. But maybe the miracle of Pentecost is not the rushing wind, the divided tongues of fire, or wondrous fluency in a foreign language. Maybe the real miracle of Pentecost is that God’s Spirit is even now setting hearts, souls, minds, & bodies alight w/ his powerful gracious love. Maybe the real miracle of Pentecost is that God’s Spirit is even now filling & setting alight common ordinary people in common ordinary ways, transforming our lives.

Jesus gathers us/his church/his family in his life & through us pours that life out to the world. Jesus gathers us in life & joy that last forever so that through us we can offer the world love that never dies, strength that’s never exhausted & life that never ends. Pentecost is how God widens the reach of his grace through his people to the world. The Spirit is poised to take us to the people & the places where there is deep longing & gnawing hunger & burning thirst & yawning emptiness with the promise & presence of Jesus who fills to abundance then turns all who receive him into fountains of that same deep satisfaction...Pentecost, is for the church that single page from which we live...Easter is the tune. Pentecost is our score.

TAKE IT HOME –

What do you need to do this week to live intoxicated with the Spirit?
*Love Joy Peace Patience Kindness Goodness Gentleness Faithfulness & Self-Control
that calls attention to Christ in you...*

Let’s pray with that in mind...

Lord please do stuff that’s going to make people notice you at work through us.
Lord please make it obvious we’re yours so when folks look at us we can show them you. Lord please do massive things so you get credit for it. Amen.