

Service Transcript Pentecost Sunday Service 23rd May 2021

Song: Thy Kingdom Come - We seek Your kingdom

Welcome to our Pentecost Service; the time when we celebrate the pouring out of God's Holy Spirit on His people and as a result, we also celebrate the birthday of the church. This was the day that the kingdom started to be built by the power of the Holy Spirit through the church of Jesus Christ. As we finish this year's Thy Kingdom Come, let's sing this prayer, calling on Him to build His kingdom here today.

Song: Rend Collective – Build Your kingdom here

The Day of Pentecost is here!
God's children have gathered in this place:
***We are transformed into God's family
by God's Spirit joining with ours.***
Come, Spirit of adoption,
and open our hearts to our sisters and brothers:
Come, Holy Spirit!
Come, Spirit of peace,
and calm our trembling hearts:
Come, Holy Spirit!
Come, Breath of God,
and overturn our conventional lives:
Come, Holy Spirit!

(Thom Shuman, Lectionary Liturgies)

Song Andy Piercy - O breath of God (Trad hymn words)

Think of some of the most powerful natural forces on the planet. They're awesome and deadly. Let's have a look at a few. PICTURES TO MUSIC: High seas, forest fires, volcanic activities, tsunami

In the Bible, the miraculous phenomenon of God controlling the forces of nature was always a mark of the power and the awesomeness of God. We see wind and water under control in the crossing of the Red Sea, the fire of God consuming the altar on Mount Carmel, the cataclysm of The Flood. In the New Testament when Jesus stilled the storm on the Sea of Galilee with a word, the disciples saw the significance "who is this that even the wind and the waves obey Him." Only God could achieve this sort of thing. And of course, there were all his "impossible" miracles – water into wine, miraculous healings, raisings from the dead. The presence of God was evidence by works of power in Jesus' life. Jesus reflected in His life the awesomeness of God and we see the power of God's Spirit over death as Jesus was raised from the dead – the ultimate power over nature.

Acts 2:1-4 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 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 as the Spirit enabled them.

As we come to the revealing of the Holy Spirit in Acts, we find the same phenomena right from the off – the sound of a rushing wind, the tongues of fire. The Spirit demonstrated who He was with manifestations of the control of nature – followed of course by the miracle of Pentecost as people heard words spoken in Aramaic as utterances in their own languages.

As the apostles were then later challenged with non-Jews becoming part of the Church through faith, they saw the power manifestation of the Spirit confirming this through the miraculous, such as new converts speaking in tongues.

Our faith is a power faith and we see manifestations of the Spirit today through answered prayer, through the sign gifts – prophecy, tongues healing, and also other miracles – or we hear of them if we are not experiencing them ourselves. But as we have been discovering in the last few weeks, perhaps God has become silent in our lives and we perhaps wonder if we are part of a power faith at all and wonder whether God really can do what He says and if prayer really does work particularly in big things.

There are many reasons we don't experience the presence or the power of the Spirit in our lives. Here are a few for us to reflect on this week.

Loss of intimacy with God

We have a Father God who seeks to have a close relationship with his children, which is why the Holy Spirit indwells in each of those who have trusted and followed Jesus, just like the disciples in our story this morning. Many of the words used to describe the Spirit in the New Testament are intimate words. The Holy Spirit is the breath of God - He brings God right into us. He baptises us – He immerses us in God, He fills us with the presence of God, He is our Comforter, our Helper, He purifies us and transforms our lives, showing us the mysteries of Christ. BUT... mmm.... Really?

This week we became able to hug someone from outside of our household again. This was grasped on enthusiastically by many relieved huggers. It is a mark of human intimacy that many have missed over the last months. But to experience the intimacy of a hug, you've got to be willing to give and receive one.

We have a God who wants to be close to us, but do we want to be close to Him? His hands are reaching out to us, but are ours ready to receive? If we're not then we shouldn't be surprised if He seems distant or silent. Which flows us into the next point:

Not really seeking God's presence

Are we actively seeking the power of the Spirit's presence in our lives? He wants to hug us but what are we doing about hugging Him. The Spirit wants to say much to us about our Father God but are we spending that time with Him? Do we spend time in His presence, reading and meditating on His word, spending time in prayer? Or do we just seek Him when we need Him for something? Are we seeking to live holy lives? Do we seek to do that which honours Him? Are we seeking His will and following His commands? If the worship of God is a sideshow in our lives then I suspect that experiencing His presence and power is not going to feature much either. That really leads us into the next point:

No expectancy

Someone once said “Blessed is he who expects little; for he will never be disappointed.” It’s true isn’t it? It’s what we called in education a self-fulfilling prophecy. When pupils who have little expectations of themselves and when teachers (or parents for that matter) also have low expectations; then they rarely achieve their potential. One of the main reasons Christians and churches fail to achieve their potential is that they have little expectation that God will do anything powerful or remarkable in their fellowship or lives. I was brought up in a church that believed that power manifestations of the Spirit finished at the end of New Testament times because they did not occur in their church. What I’d say to anyone with that theology is – look again. We have a God who is at work in His church and in the lives of men and women by His Spirit right now. As William Carey once said “Expect great things of God; do great things for God.” God is waiting, but are we expectant? Which leads me to my final point.

Not looking, listening or thanking.

The Spirit is working. He is working in your life, in my life if only we would look, if only we would listen to the voice of God. And even when we do realise that prayer has been answered, lives have been changed or whatever, we then fail to thank Him for what the Spirit is doing. Has that happened in your life?

To give us a recent example, we annually support BMS World Mission by giving them a tithe or our offering. What happens with it? Do we ever check to see how God is using that money through BMS? God uses those resources to bless people. We are part of that ministry, but what do we know of what God is doing through BMS let alone thank God? Not much? This video was shown at the Baptist Assembly last week, look and praise God for what He’s doing because we have been part of it!.

BMS VIDEO

God is a work – hallelujah! It is amazing what happens when God’s people come together in the Spirit to make a difference! On that Pentecost day, the disciples were praying, looking for, listening for the promised Holy Spirit in expectancy – they weren’t disappointed either!

Today, God wants us to be refreshed by the Holy Spirit that we may experience Him in a new way. Let’s be expectant. May we see what He has already done and is doing in our lives, in His church. May we recognise that thank Him. Lord, fill us anew with Your Spirit! Here is Pastor Agu from Thy Kingdom Come to lead us in our prayers.

PASTOR AGU – prayers that we may be filled with the Spirit and equipped to do God’s work.

Song - Spirit of the Living God (fill me anew)

Fill us anew, Lord, fill us anew. Let’s take a few minutes as we play that song again quietly to remember all those we know who need prayer now, including our five from Thy Kingdom Come.

QUIET MUSIC

Lord, empower us, empower Your church may Your kingdom come. Let’s pray that as we say the Lord’s Prayer together.

LORD'S PRAYER

Song: Praying for the power – Tommy Walker

In our moments of chaos...

God is with us.

In our moments of calm...

God is with us.

In our moments of life.

God is with us. Alleluia!

We go as a Pentecost people,

touched by fire,

stirred by wind,

to mend the world.

Alleluia!

— Written by Richard Bott and Shannon Tennant as part of their longer **Pentecost Intergenerational Worship Service**.

That's it for today. Have a blessed week, stay safe and goodbye.