

Sunday 20th May 2018 Pentecost
John 15:26 - 16:15 Acts 2:1-21 Romans 8:22-27

Intro:

Here we are... another Pentecost

We have travelled, over the last 95 days from the ashes of Ash Wednesday to the fire of Pentecost

What to say this Pentecost?

Plenty of fire in the address that the Bishop gave yesterday at The Wedding

If you did not hear it or want to hear it again then you can listen to it on BBC News page!

The phrase that kept coming to me as I was preparing for today was the opening 2 lines of the hymn **The Spirit lives to set us free**, walk walk in the light

Then when I checked... it is our final hymn this morning !!

First a look at the gospel

Jesus promises that the Advocate will come (counsellor, comforter) the paraclete = the one called to assist you in a court of justice

And Jesus promised the disciples that it would be to their advantage for Him to leave and the Advocate, the Spirit of Truth, to come in His place

The Spirit of Truth will come and bring clarity and clarity brings freedom

He will bring clarity over sin, righteousness and judgment

Remember that at this point Jesus is speaking to his Jewish disciples and the Jewish nation had for centuries been oppressed and felt unheard whether by many nations...Egypt, Babylon, Syria and now Rome

Jesus promised the Advocate, the Spirit of Truth, would come and prove the world wrong over sin, righteousness and judgment

Scripture tells us that 'all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God' but belief in Jesus as the Son of God who died on the cross and was raised to life provides our means of righteousness so that on the day of judgment, which will certainly come, those of us who proclaim Jesus as Lord and confess our sins will inherit eternal life

If that is you then we can be sure of our place in eternity with Christ. NOT because of what we have done. But because of what Jesus has done for us and our receiving that gift from Him

vs 13 says When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth

This can take time. It takes an uncovering and un-concealing of the lies we may have come to believe about ourselves, others, our world

It requires an openness to learn the truth and engage in the mystery of God's grace because not everything can be understood through rational analysis

But Jesus promises the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth

Earlier in John's gospel Jesus said

If you abide in my word you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free

And the Spirit lives to set us free

Looking then at the reading from Acts for a moment

Pentecost was already a Jewish festival when Jews gathered together for celebration but the Pentecost that we heard about in Acts 2 is a Pentecost with a difference.... one when the sound of a violent wind filled the house where the apostles were sitting quickly followed by tongues of fire appearing over them and then the ability to speak in many different languages.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit had come, the promise that Jesus himself had made just weeks before.

All the disciples were together in one place

The sound of a violent wind filled the entire house

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit

Each one heard the disciples speaking in their own language

And what were they speaking of? They were speaking about God's deeds of mighty power

The Spirit fell on all the believers and the message was proclaimed to all that were there

No social or national division. A message for all

A calling to come together into a community, not to be isolated

True community can bring freedom from isolation and loneliness, something that so many people struggle with

eg. Mum in her flat

The Spirit lives to set us free

Once the crowd had heard this amazing sound with all their languages being spoken at once, by strangers... then what happens?

Peter, standing with the eleven raised his voice and addressed the crowd!

Peter who had hidden in the shadows. Peter who had been so scared that he had denied even knowing his friend Jesus. Peter publicly raised his voice and spoke to the crowd, sharing words from the prophet Joel and reminding them that 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' vs 21

The Spirit of Truth had set Peter free, free from fear or embarrassment or doubt or.... whatever it was that had kept him quiet before. Instead of hiding in the shadows he now stood in front of the crowd and proclaimed the truth of the Lord to all those who were there to hear it.

The Spirit lives to set us free

The Spirit is still alive today, He is still our Advocate and testifying to us and wanting to guide us in to all truth.

What truth do we need to hear from the Spirit of truth today?

What do we need to be set free from today?

Do we have fears or doubts like Peter?

Do we struggle with a lack of identity, not knowing quite who we are or who we should be?

Do we spend our energy striving for acceptance and approval?

Do we doubt our inheritance in Him, doubting that will have a place in eternity with Christ, if we believe in Him?

What truth do you need to hear from the Spirit of Truth?

The Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf....

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...

You will know the truth and the truth will set you free

Take a moment to listen to the guiding of the Spirit and then to ask Him to set us free

Conclude by singing Spirit of the Living God fall afresh on me- melt me, mould me, fill me, use me