

The Parish of Peasedown St John

'Be Daring and Dynamic' 24 Studies in Acts

Acts 2:1-21, 36-39 – Pentecost

Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

1. Talk Passage

Acts 2:1-21, 36-39

- 1 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.
- 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 them speaking in his own language.
- 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?"
- 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?
- 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,
- 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome
- 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"
- 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"
- 13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."
- 14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.
- 15 These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!
- 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:
- 17 "'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.
- 18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.
- 19 I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.
- 20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.
- 21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off-- for all whom the Lord our God will call."

2. Talk Notes

2.1 Introduction – "They have had too much wine!"

- On the Day of Pentecost, which we celebrate today, the Holy Spirit fell upon the waiting disciples.
- There were a number of extraordinary events occurring at the same time, all enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit:
 - there was the sound of a rushing wind,
 - tongues of fire appeared
 - They all began to speak in other languages.
- The Jews who were visiting Jerusalem, from all nations, hearing them speak in their own tongues, were amazed at this startling phenomenon.
- They came to the hasty, false conclusion that the disciples must be drunk, and accused them, saying, "They have had too much wine!"
- Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: *"Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:*

2.2 Filled with the *New Wine*

- What is ironic is that these disciples had indeed been intoxicated with something, and that something was the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit is in a sense like a New Wine that cannot make you drunk. They had not imbibed on the fruit of the vine, nor had they drunk the nectar of the gods, but they had been filled with a New Divine Nectar, the New Wine from heaven, the Holy Spirit. As Joel prophesied: *"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.*

2.3 Pentecost is the birth day of the Christian Church

- On this anniversary of the Day of Pentecost, when the Christian Church was born, let us be deeply grateful that the Spirit of Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, has come to us.
- Without the Holy Spirit:
 - Christian discipleship would be impossible.
 - We would have no understanding of spiritual things without the Spirit of Truth.
 - We would never enjoy Christian fellowship with one another without the unity of the Spirit.
 - We could never be effective Christian witnesses without the Spirit's power.
 - In fact, we would have no life without the life-giving Spirit.
- Just as the body without breath is a corpse, so a church without the Holy Spirit is dead!

2.4 Do we long for the Holy Spirit in our midst?

- What do you suppose would happen to us as individual Christians, or as a church, if we would adopt the same formula to ready ourselves for the Spirit as did those early disciples in the upper room?
- Would those Pentecost signs of power re-occur in us? Is that our desire?
- The disciples met in the upper room, and for ten days they patiently waited and prayed for the promise of the Father.
- Jesus wanted his disciples to be people who would not rush in headlong on their own, independent of God's guidance.
- He wanted them to wait for God.
- What an impossible task that must have seemed to those early believers. Christ was alive and they wanted to act. Jesus said "wait" and they wanted to "move."

2.5 Are we prepared to wait on God, to pray, to be in unity with one another, to be obedient, and to be consecrated to God's will?

- So, having been told to "wait," the disciples went to that upper chamber to do just that and pray. In fact, they devoted themselves to prayer.
- After ten days of prayer despite their differences we are told that when the Spirit came they were of one accord! Imagine that!
- As they prayed and waited they became fully open to God and more loving toward each other.
- Contentious people cannot receive the Spirit's presence.
- If, as individuals, and as a church, we desire the Holy Spirit, it might be well to ask ourselves:
 - "Am I in unity with God?
 - Is everyone forgiven?
 - Has restitution been made?
 - Am I holding a grudge?
 - Am I in love and harmony with God and neighbour?"
- Until we are of one mind and heart, until we love each other as Christ loved us, until all broken relationships are healed, the power of Pentecost cannot come to us!

2.6 Three Thousand people saved!

- So the result of the waiting, the praying, and the obedience of the disciples was the promised Holy Spirit.
- What glorious consequences accompanied the event. Remember, these were less-than-perfect disciples of the Lord.
- They had been cantankerous, frightened, vacillating followers of Jesus, and now they react as men possessed -- as indeed they were -- possessed of the mighty power and presence of the Holy Spirit!
- They went everywhere preaching the Word and witnessing for the Saviour. Peter stood to preach on that Day of Pentecost and under the power of the Holy Spirit such conviction fell upon the hearers that 3,000 souls gave themselves to the Saviour.

3. Questions to consider back at home

3.1 How should we define success in the church? What criteria would the early church have used? Should we use the same criteria today?

3.2 Imagine yourself as a reporter there witnessing the events on the Day of Pentecost. What would your 'headline' be? How would you describe the events?

3.3 How did Peter explain what was going on?

3.4 The Book of Acts contains nonrepeatable events, transitional happenings, and basic spiritual principles. What examples of each of these do you see in Acts 2?

3.5 If we want the Holy Spirit to come in power to St John's Peasedown what do we need to be doing?

3.6 A friend of yours tells you that she visited a large Anglican Church the other day. During the service people 'spoke in tongues' as well as 'words of knowledge' and 'pictures' being shared with the congregation. She asks you whether this is normal and what exactly was going on? How would you respond?

If you would like to discuss these questions further please feel free to call me on 01761 432293