



Pentecost Sunday

31st May, 2020

led by Robert Sales and Jonathan Webb

Opening sentences

Come, Holy Spirit; fill us with your peace.
Come, Holy Spirit; unite us in our worship.
Come, Holy Spirit; raise us by your power.
Come, Holy Spirit; come now.

Hymn: Breathe on me breath of God STF 370

www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ph-t8P2r_I

Breathe on me, breath of God:
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love
and do what thou would 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 your eternity. Edwin Hatch

Thy Kingdom Come

It has been said that if somebody wanted a summary of



the Christian faith on the back of an envelope, the best thing to do would be to write the Lord's Prayer.

It's not an easy prayer, nor a prayer that pretends. It's a prayer that requires our lives to change, that we become different sorts of people. It is a prayer that acknowledges that that will only happen when we learn how to depend freely and lovingly on the God who has made himself *Our Father*.

From Ascension to Pentecost, Christians have been encouraged to take part in deepening their relationship with Jesus Christ, to pray for God's spirit to work in the lives of those they know and to come to realise that every aspect of their life is the stuff of prayer. The initiative is called *Thy Kingdom Come*. There are many resources to find on the website www.thykingdomcome.global.

Ashbourne Churches Together have held daily "Zoom" prayer/fellowship meetings, as well as an online event to start the event, and a closing video, on YouTube.

Let us pray

Lord Jesus, we come to you just as we are, recognising how great and wonderful you are.



We thank you for the power of your Holy Spirit that you breathe on us to fill us with new life. Teach us Lord to sense your closeness through your Holy Spirit and to be wholly yours.

We thank you for the *Thy Kingdom Come* initiative and how it has united our Churches in prayer. May Your kingdom come and Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Thank you Lord for this wonderful day; for our families, our friends, for a roof over our heads, for our food, and for enabling us to have plenty of water to drink.

Lord, there may have been things we have done, or said that have offended someone, and offended you Lord, through a thoughtless word, or action. We are truly sorry and we pray for forgiveness. Help us to remember that you said: "blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy, blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God". Amen.

Today's Gospel reading:

John 20: 19-23
When it was evening on that day, the first day



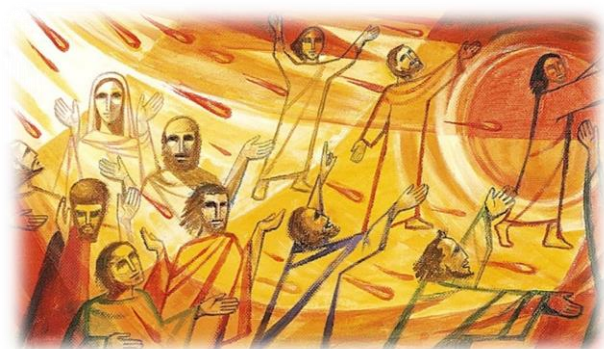
of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to

them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.

Today's New Testament reading:

Acts 2: 1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.



Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.'

A time to reflect

Today is Pentecost, celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit in a special way, the church's birthday. We had planned today to have "church with choices", where after a time together we could choose to join one of a choice of activities on a Pentecost theme, such as a discussion, a craft activity, drama, music, or cooking. Our plans have not been possible, but you still have choices: where to watch, or read this service; whether to get dressed first, or perhaps have dressing gown church; whether to drink tea, or coffee; when to watch, or read this service; or perhaps to even fast forward through parts of it!

Pentecost wasn't the first time the Holy Spirit came to earth, and the Holy Spirit is first mentioned in the second verse in the Bible: "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" Genesis 1: 2. The Hebrew word 'Ruach' is used here for the Holy Spirit which means wind, breath, or spirit.

The Holy Spirit is referred to throughout the Bible and Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be sent by his Father in Jesus' name after Jesus leaves the earth: "All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" John 14:25-26. In this passage, in different translations, the Holy Spirit is referred to as any of a helper; an advocate – a person who puts a case forwards for, or stands up for, someone else; a counsellor; an intercessor; a strengthener; or a standby. In other words a helper, in many different ways.

Let's return to our reading. In John 20, the disciples were together with the doors locked for fear of the Jews. Their world had been turned upside down. The man Jesus that they had given up their previous lives to follow, the man they had pinned their hopes on, was dead, cruelly killed by the Romans, at the request of the Jews and their leaders, and particularly the Jewish religious leaders. The disciples were in fear of their lives. Maybe there are some similarities with our recent situations in lockdown, behind closed doors, with the fear of the corona virus. Jesus joined them, said "Peace be with you" presumably as a greeting, and showed his hands and his sides to identify himself to them, and the disciples were overjoyed. Then 'Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.' John 20: 21-23.

We often think of the Holy Spirit in connection with dramatic events and gifts, speaking in different languages, and fire and wind at Pentecost.



Here the Holy Spirit is referred to in connection firstly with peace, as Jesus again says "Peace be with you", "the peace of God, which passes all understanding". A peace the world cannot give.

And secondly with forgiveness. We probably pray just about every week "Forgive us our sins/trespasses, as we forgive others our who sin/trespass against us". Do we take forgiving people seriously? There's a lot in the Bible about forgiveness and many times we are urged to forgive others. Do we find forgiveness difficult? Jesus gave us the ultimate example of forgiveness as he was dying on the cross, the cruellest death, when he said: "Father forgive them for they know not what they are doing". So the Holy Spirit can help us with forgiving people. Maybe someone has just done something to upset, or hurt us, or perhaps we have held something against a person for years. So too we can pray for the Holy Spirit to give us God's special peace in these troubled times.

Back to Pentecost. This was one of the three annual Jewish pilgrimage festivals, when people endeavoured to return to Jerusalem to worship at the temple, hence "the God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven" who were in Jerusalem and heard the spirit filled disciples speaking in lots of languages. Then after this, who was it who stood up and spoke to the crowd, about the prophesied pouring out of God's Spirit? Peter. Peter, who in Jesus' darkest hour three times, denied that he even knew Jesus. Peter, who in John 21 was fishing when he saw the risen Jesus on the shore. He was so excited to see his Lord alive again, he didn't wait for the boat to get to shore, but jumped into the water and swam/waded to shore to see his Lord. So despite letting Jesus down so badly, and Jesus had even told Peter beforehand that he would do this, Jesus totally forgave Peter and he was reinstated, and went on to do great things for God. Whatever we've done, or not done, however bad we think it is, there is total forgiveness available to us, and we can do great, or small things for God in the power of his Spirit.

How was the Holy Spirit described at Pentecost? As a violent wind and tongues of fire. Earlier in John, at a different pilgrimage festival, Jesus said 'On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified, John 7:37-39. So the Holy Spirit can be likened to wind, flames, water, or rivers of living water. All of these

can be unpredictable, disruptive and hard to control. We may decide what we would like God to do in our lives, or in the church, and how we would like it done. We might prefer God's work to be nice and orderly, not changing much of anything, and not too disturbing to us. However, God's Spirit can be very difficult to control, and may not fit in the box we've chosen for it. God's Spirit may do much more exciting and/or unexpected things than we thought and planned for. This may disrupt our lives and perhaps our churches, so we should be ready and willing to be challenged by the working of the Holy Spirit.

What did some of the people say about the disciples speaking in all these different languages, languages they clearly didn't know? "Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'" It's easy to criticise, or laugh at things we don't understand, or haven't seen before. Perhaps we may criticise, or laugh at people in the church who are doing new things, or are doing things differently to us. They may well be following God's Spirit in a different way, and we should look into it, and perhaps see if we could follow God's Spirit in this, or other new and exciting ways.

So it's Pentecost, the church's birthday, when we remember the Holy Spirit, the helper, coming to God's people in a special way. God's Spirit is with us now, and can help us in many ways, just like it helped the disciples. The Holy Spirit can bring us God's peace in these troubled and difficult times, to reassure that the eternal ever-loving God is with us, whatever happens, whatever we can't do, or whoever we can't see at the present time.

A time of prayer

Lord,
we thank you for this
morning's message
and help us to
remember
that you forgave
your disciple Peter
for turning against you,
and that he then went on
to do great things for You.

We pray for all those suffering
in many different parts of the world.
For those in the centre of conflict,
for those desperately requiring
medical support
where there is very little, or none,
and for those who are lonely and afraid.



Lord we pray for peace and reconciliation.
We pray for those who mourn,
that they will be comforted
and for those who are persecuted
for their faith,
that you will strengthen and bless them.
May Your kingdom come. Your will be done.

We pray for all those
who are responsible for governing our country, and
for those who advise them,
nationally and locally.
May they be wise, strong
and humble in their decision making.

We pray for all those
whose lives are dedicated to serving others; our
NHS staff, care workers, cleaners,
those in the hospitality industry,
and for farmers.
May Your kingdom come. Your will be done.

We prayer for people
who are part of our Church,
wherever they may be
and all people in our local community.

*During the following moments of silence we prayer
for those people who are particularly on our
mind.....*

May Your kingdom come. Your will be done. Your
peace be with us all.

We pray for these things through Jesus Christ our
Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer
Our Father...

Hymn: God's Spirit is in my Heart STF 404
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-ibXHqsUTw>

God's Spirit is in my heart,
He has called me and set me apart.
This is what I have to do,
what I have to do.

*He sent me to give the Good News to the poor,
Tell prisoners that they are prisoners no more,
Tell blind people that they can see,
And set the downtrodden free
And go tell everyone
the news that the Kingdom of God has come,
And go tell everyone
the news that god's Kingdom has come.*

Just as the Father sent me,
So I'm sending you out to be
My witnesses throughout the world,
The whole of the world.

Don't carry a load in your pack;
You don't need to shirts on your back;
God's workers can earn their own keep –
Can earn their own keep:

Don't worry what you have to say,
Don't worry because on that day
God's Spirit will speak in your heart,
Will speak in your heart.

v. 1 and refrain Alan T Dale
v. 2-4 Hubert Richards

Blessing

May the power of the Spirit challenge you.
May the peace of the Spirit comfort you.
May the presence of the Spirit enable you to live in
love and service in the name of Christ.
Amen



*A picture of a cake made by Rachel Jeffrey-Walker
at Brailsford for Pentecost Sunday, 2 years ago*

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