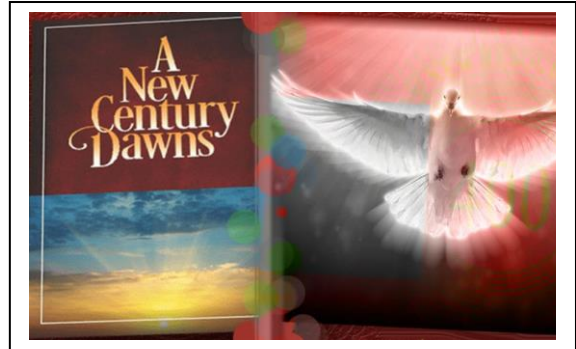


SUNDAY JUNE 5TH

The Day of the Holy Spirit

Scripture: Acts 2:1-12

If you were asked to make a choice about which of the following Christian celebrations could be left out – what would be it be?



Christmas, Good Friday, Easter or Pentecost. Perhaps that would be a tough choice, but without Pentecost, we would not know about the others. Why? Because the indwelling of the Holy Spirit led to the first great event of spreading the Gospel.

Jesus had promised the disciples, before He ascended to glory, that He would come back to give them the greatest gift of all - the gift of His Own Spirit to be their counsellor and give them power.

Held 50 days after Passover, Pentecost was also called the “Festival of First Harvest.” – a festival of thanksgiving for the harvested crops. It had been 10 days since Jesus had ascended and the disciples were waiting in an upper room. Imagine the conversations going on? Some probably wanted to leave, others waiting to see what would happen; some doubting anything at all would happen and some clinging to their faith in Jesus.

What was the purpose of the Holy Spirit coming – what was the aim?

Have you ever tried to toast bread in a toaster or turn on a lamp to see but nothing happened? You may check that the bread is inserted or you may try turning on and off the button on the side of the lamp and thought well that's that – they are no use to me. But, then you notice that the

cords were not plugged into the power socket, nor was the switch turned on!! The source of power was not connected.

That is why Jesus sent the Holy Spirit – the Spirit of power so that the disciples had the right connection to the right power to be able to follow Jesus and carry on His work of changing the world. They needed the power of God to do this.

Imagine you are still in this upper room and suddenly you hear a roaring sound, like a strong wind. It is said they saw what looked like “tongues of fire” as the Holy Spirit was released upon the people in that room.

Why tongues – because they represent speech. Why fire – just as God confirmed the validity of the Old Testament law with fire from heaven on Mt. Sinai, He confirmed the validity of the Holy Spirit’s ministry by sending fire.

What a miraculous attention getter – the disciples began to speak in many different languages – enabling all the nationalities, estimated to be more than a dozen nations or ethnic groups, to hear in their own language, the power of the Gospel.

Can you imagine what it would have been like – for example – Jewish people from Arabia travelling around 1500 km to Jerusalem to gather for the Festival – only speaking Arabic, suddenly hearing the Gospel from a Galilean who was speaking to them in Arabic.

This was the Spirit’s intensive presence, symbolizing the completion of God’s redemptive work through Jesus. This links with the onset of a harvest of souls in response to the proclamation of the Messiah’s cross.

The Festival of First Fruits resulted in 3000 new follower of Jesus – the first fruits of a new way that fulfilled and replaced the old way of the law.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit:

We don't have the power ourselves – we must plug ourselves into God's power through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Some people may feel a bit frightened of the Holy Spirit – but He is a gift from the Father and therefore a “good gift.”

The gift of the Holy Spirit is forever – some gifts become obsolete in a few months or wear out after 5 years but not this gift from God, the Father.

The Holy Spirit lives in us forever, which means we are never alone and we always have God's presence in our lives through the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is an exclusive gift – for believers only. In John 14:17 Jesus said: “the world cannot accept the Holy Spirit because it neither sees Him or knows Him. But the disciples know the Holy Spirit because He lives with you and in you.

We are told the process necessary to receive the Holy Spirit.

First, you must believe that Jesus is the Messiah, then you must repent of your sins, be baptized and then you will receive the Father's gift to His children – the Holy Spirit.

Believers have been given the Holy Spirit as a deposit or down payment on our future inheritance and as God's seal on us, to show that we are His people. If the Holy Spirit lives in you, you have life. If not, you do not belong to Christ.

When life is uncertain, God is still in control. He has not forgotten us. We have not been abandoned. He is with us, for us, working on our behalf even now. Even when we don't know what the future holds, there is a mighty God who holds us and we can put our hope in Him.