

Notices

Good Morning, and welcome to Tyndale on this fourth Sunday of May. If you are a visitor with us, I extend a special warm welcome and hope you feel at home with us.

Our worship is being conducted by our minister Michael Docker. I would like to thank him for leading us, and look for a greater understanding of God's message for us.

Our Zoom coffee shop will take place as usual on Tuesday morning at 11.00am with the sign in details being able to be obtained through the Tyndale web site.

On Wednesday evening at 7.30, again on Zoom, will be a discussion led by Michael. Please join us if you are free.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with Rachel our Community Minister.

Thank you.

Welcome

Welcome once again – here in the church or on-line – to the worship of Tyndale Baptist Church on this Pentecost Sunday; the birthday of the church, the day for celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit.

From now on we turn from interpreting and examining the events of the earthly life of Jesus towards that period in which we are all still involved, in which the ministry of Jesus' life, his death and rising again, become the things not just of interpretation and examination, but of lived experience for each one of us – we who believe have been given His Spirit

'Come, Holy Spirit'

John Bell; Eileen, Rachel, Tina and Nick

Call to Worship – words from Psalm 139

O Lord, you have searched me and you know me

You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord

You hem me in – behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain;

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens you are there;

If I make my beds in the depths, you are there;

If I rise on the wings of the dawn

If I dwell in the farthest reaches of the sea

Even there your hand will guide me,

Your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me

Even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

For you created my inmost being;

You knit me together in the mother's womb,

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made

Your works are wonderful; I know that full well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place,

When I was woven together in the depths of the earth; your eyes saw my body being formed

All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!

How vast is their sum!

Were I to count them they would outnumber the grains of sand.

Search me, O God, and know my heart;

Test me and know my anxious thoughts,

See if there is any offensive way in me

And lead me in the way everlasting

BPW 384 ['Jesus is Lord!'](#)

St Andrew's Church, Cobham

Opening Prayer

Lord God we are glad to confirm the presence of your Holy Spirit and in the Spirit's power and by the name

of Jesus we worship you; who has touched us with your Spirit, that same Spirit that filled Jesus for his ministry, encouraged him to face his death and spoke life into Him again – the One who lives for ever - Lord God, by that same Spirit we worship & by that same Spirit we seek to live – as you come to us today, even as we have things to offer here, of our very selves, so we ask that the power that enables us to worship will also encourage us to face whatever challenges we have to face and will speak new life into us so that as Jesus rose we also might rise – above the base things that hold us back to the good and worthy things by which you would have us live -

Lord God forgive us when we have failed to catch your Spirit at work in us and in the world; help us to catch that Spirit again and lead us on, we pray –

Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

'Spirit of heaven'

CG 32 'Enemy of apathy'

Readings

Acts 2.1-21

CG 82 'Mallaig Sprinkling Song'

Tyndale virtual singing group & Sarah Dodds

Ezekiel 37.1-14

Sermon

Lord, we give you this time; may what is spoken ring with truth, may what is heard & understood be touched by your spirit & may what is decided lead us all on towards your Kingdom..Amen

Today it gets personal. My preaching isn't very often personal. It tends to range widely, taking in big themes, like Israel and Palestine last week;

Quite often it flirts with politics; society, the Church (capital C), the world; big picture stuff..

There is an idea that Christianity is only a matter of private belief & individual devotion

But I've always believed that ours is a faith for the whole of life – and that if it doesn't have anything to say about science or philosophy, or politics or whatever, then it's about as much use as a chocolate teapot

But today it gets personal. Pentecost today, the coming of the Holy Spirit - *Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them* – in the story in Acts.

A tongue (of flame) rested on each of them – personal, individual – the spirit of God given to each and every one.

Today it gets personal..it's not *just* the Church's faith; it's not *just* a matter of big picture ideas and world-changing beliefs..

It's personal – it's about *your* faith; *my* faith. There was an ex-missionary couple (not BMS) in my home church. They (I'll call them Timothy and Catherine) were lovely, but weird! They were a bit 'posh' – Timothy had a neat, trimmed moustache and spoke with a very formal, Oxford English accent, like a 1950's BBC newsreader – they were quite old (it seemed to me then; they were probably in their 60s, which doesn't seem quite so old now!)

They were always telling us stories from their missionary days (for a time they helped to run the YPF) but they also used to tell us about their latest conversations with someone or other

None of us could imagine doing what they did, which was to go up to anyone – especially complete strangers (they did so regularly in the streets around the church) and start a conversation with the aim of getting round to the question, 'now what about your soul?'

I'm sure if I tried anything like that nowadays I'd be told where to get off, or worse; still - 'what about your soul?'

That's today, I think. That's what Pentecost is about – not some upper-class Englishman; certainly not me, even, but *God*

God asking 'now what about your soul?' I'm not so keen on the word 'soul', begins to sound a bit disembodied, I'd rather talk about 'your spirit' – still, it captures the essence of the thing: God asking 'what about your soul?' and answering it with a tongue of flame *just for you* – that's the joy of Pentecost. Never mind speculating about what actually happened, let alone trying to reproduce it, which has occupied so much energy in Christian circles these last forty years.

Never mind the Bishop's mitre, supposed to look like tongues of flame, as if those tongues were just intended for a few, special, ordained, right reverend individuals –

Let's take the story as it stands *for what it tells us about the purposes of God*. Tongues of flame, dividing and settling on the heads of the twelve (men!!?...though some women were there as well, apparently)

And everyone looking on was amazed - all those Parthians and the rest

And they were all saying "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." And probably they were all thinking – look at those eccentric, special types, holier than thou, having a high old time, looking down on us,

And at that point you can see the start of 2000 years of religious exclusivism; the tragedy that leads to special buildings & clothes & eccentric goings on inside & archaic language that no one understands & loads of people out there not bothering with any of it much any more..

Then Peter stands up and speaks...can you hear the ancient vision; the long centuries of hopeful living, the out-working of all those stories of Abraham's promise and Moses' freedom-march and Isaiah's poetry and Ezekiel's fantastic vision of dry bones coming to life and the acute personal insight of the Psalms – can you hear?

these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my servants, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit..'

On all – on each – on everyone - every individual; the Spirit of God asking about your soul and mine and answering it with a tongue of flame.

This is personal – what about your soul? And Yours? And Mine? Oppressed by pleasure wealth and care these last years; caught up in all the prejudices and divisions of the day – did you warm to the words of the Psalm, earlier? Did you notice the missing verses;

O that you would kill the wicked, O God, and that the bloodthirsty would depart from me— those who speak of you maliciously, and lift themselves up against you for evil! Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.

Those words are usually cut out of our 'bowdlerised' hymn books, so that our religion seems all pretty and nice – but we're not nice, always, are we? Sometimes we hate; sometimes we wish our enemies harm – sometimes the world isn't a very nice place and we religious types get caught up in it all – sometimes, for us and our world, the battle is on for our soul.

But at least the Psalm is honest – the Spirit of God comes to us as we are - here in Bristol, in Gaza city and Jerusalem, in India, and the US, and Brazil..

Everywhere – anywhere – anyone, everyone who believes...for healing, understanding, for coming alongside us in our need, for changing us and confronting us with our prejudices and overcoming our selfishness and purifying our life with the tongue of flame that we need; to inspire, to warm, to change, to bring us close to Christ, to save us –

so that *we and the world* might be freed from the love of war and the preference for greed and the slide towards injustice and the tendency to divide and destroy –

See without God's Spirit our faith (really, our soul) is about as much use as a chocolate teapot.

But they do say, 'the personal is political' - *you could say that without God's Spirit the soul of the world is as much use as a chocolate teapot*

So, at Pentecost; 'world - you, me, everyone, what about your soul?'; 'what about your soul?'

Offering prayer

Lord, our souls (our spirits) are restless and empty; we come to you once more craving rest, seeking forgiveness, wanting only to be taken as we are and made into what you would have us be; we come with glad hearts giving ourselves in these and all our gifts and with expectant hearts, looking to the coming of your Spirit in our lives and in the world

The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.

BPW 282 ['Breathe on me breath of God'](#)

Prayers

Lord send your Holy Spirit

Send Him to burn up all the dross in our lives & in the world

A moment of silence

Come Holy Spirit **In Jesus' name**

Send Him to set our hearts on fire & consume all the world's passionate prejudices

A moment of silence

Come Holy Spirit **In Jesus' name**

Send Him to breathe peace into our restless hearts & into the world's war-zones

A moment of silence

Come Holy Spirit **In Jesus' name**

Send Him to blow through our defences & through the world's divisions

A moment of silence

Come Holy Spirit **In Jesus' name**

Send Him to brood over our stuttering starts & the world's new discoveries

A moment of silence

Come Holy Spirit **In Jesus' name**

Send Him to bring new life to the world and to make us like Christ

A moment of silence

Come Holy Spirit **In Jesus' name**

BPW 300 ['There's a spirit in the air'](#)

Benediction

The blessing of God almighty, Father Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always, Amen.

Thanks to everyone who has made today's service possible – Ian recording and processing; Nick & Tina printing and posting; Debbie and Edward reading; Rachel sorting music and playing; *Tyndale's singers singing*; the Stewarding Team preparing, watching over us, and cleaning up after – thanks everyone for taking part.

At Pentecost as our hearts are filled with the life-giving Spirit of God, please may it not be momentary, but our continuous experience as we continue to support & pray for one another, 'til we meet again'..

['Holy Spirit, Living Breath of God'](#)

Getty & Townend, sung by Kristyn Getty