

Barnabas was glad to see how things were developing in Antioch. There is joy in serving Jesus. His message was one of faithfulness – which is another fruit of the Holy Spirit. The Church needed to play its part, meeting together with God’s Word and prayer and the Holy Spirit would produce the fruit of faithfulness in their lives.

5. He enables the Church to grow numerically

“A great number of people were brought to the Lord”

The Lord has given the gift of the Evangelist to the Church, but we all have a part to play in sharing the gospel – through word and deed. The new believers didn’t have all the answers and experience, but they did have the Holy Spirit guiding their thoughts, words and deeds. The people of Antioch were watching to see what difference following Jesus was making. The people of Rochford are too!

Barnabas is described as a **“good man”** and **“full of faith”** but note at the heart of the verse he is **“a man full of the Holy Spirit”**.

Sometimes the world describes a Christian as “a good man” because they see Christians want to help. They also recognise a Christian is “full of faith” because of what we believe – but are we those who could be described as “full of the Holy Spirit”? How evident are God’s gifts and graces in our lives? How dependent on the Holy Spirit are we? How full?

Paul encourages the Ephesian believers to be under the influence of the Holy Spirit, contrasting such a life with those who are under the influence of wine. The latter are loud and vocal and their walk (stagger) gives them away. In contrast, under the influence of the Holy Spirit our speech and walk are to stand out in a different way.

Paul says, **“Be (being) filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5.18b)** for when the Holy Spirit fills your life – His gifts and graces are seen.

As has been quipped, we need constantly to be filled because we leak! May the Lord fill you this week in your words and deeds so that Jesus may be glorified, and His kingdom extended. Amen.

Pastor Andrew

“Spirit of the Living God...fall afresh on me...”

ROCHFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Welcome to
CHURCH AT HOME
“PENTECOST”

Sunday 31st May 2020

Read through this outline and join with everyone else at 11am

HYMN (To sing or read)

*Spirit of holiness,
Wisdom and faithfulness,
Wind of the Lord,
Blowing strongly and free.
Strength of our serving
And joy of our worshipping,
Spirit of God,
Bring your fulness to me!*

You came to interpret and teach us effectively,
All that the Saviour has spoken and done,
To glorify Jesus is all Your activity,
Promise and gift of the Father and Son
Spirit of holiness...

You came with your gifts to supply all our poverty,
Pouring Your love on the church in her need,
You came with Your fruit for our growth to maturity,
Richly refreshing the souls that You feed:
Spirit of holiness...

CHORUS

Spirit of God, show me Jesus
Remove the darkness, let truth shine through.
Spirit of God, show me Jesus,
Reveal the fulness of His love to me!

PRAYER

Our loving Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your Son, thank you for the outpouring of your Spirit. Thank you for your work in my life. Thank you for joining us together by your Spirit – even as we sit here apart. Thank you for assuring me of your presence and power for life’s challenges. Help me to be more mindful of you than anything else right now.

Help those in need of hope and comfort, strengthen those who seek to bring aid and help to those in need at this current time.

I trust you Lord, and therefore will not fear. Amen.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name

Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever, amen.

BIBLE VERSES FOR THE WEEK

“When he (Barnabas) arrived he saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord” (Acts 11.23-24)

(Why not read Acts 11.19-26?)

“Full of the Holy Spirit...”

You have seen me over the years do a children’s talk placing my hand in a lifeless glove to explain what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. You may remember a talk blowing breath into a balloon which gives shape and can lift heavy objects when filled. The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost to fill Jesus’ followers’ lives – to make them alive

spiritually, to give their lives shape and power under pressure and the weight of the world. How we need the fulness of the Holy Spirit today? For God, the Holy Spirit to have control, we must empty ourselves and let him guide and lead us with His graces and gifts.

Today’s reading describes the experience of one man’s life who was **“full of the Holy Spirit”**. His name was Barnabas. He had a very important part to play in the Early Church. His ministry brought Paul (the one-time Church persecutor, Saul) into fellowship with his new family (The Church). Verses 23-24 highlight some of the differences the Holy Spirit makes to the believer:

1. He gives us concern for one another

Barnabas went to Antioch, sent by the Church from Jerusalem to see what was happening. Those persecuted in Jerusalem, at the time of Stephen’s persecution spread the gospel wherever they went. In Antioch, Greeks heard and believed. Barnabas went to support these new Christians.

In a world that is obsessed with itself – the Holy Spirit gives a love and concern for others – whatever the difficulties and obstacles may be. How much do you care for fellow believers?

2. He applies the grace of God to our hearts and lives

Barnabas **“saw the evidence of the grace of God”**. He saw God changing lives. This can only happen when God’s Holy Spirit is at work. Any lasting work is always a work of the Holy Spirit. He reveals Jesus to us, convicts of sin and supplies the grace of forgiveness and the comfort of God’s love and acceptance.

3. He develops gifts among us

Barnabas means *“son of encouragement”*.

He **“encouraged them to remain true to the Lord with all of their hearts”**

There are many gifts of the Holy Spirit. Some are dramatic and others are less so. Barnabas was enabled by the Holy Spirit to say the right thing at the right time in the right way!

4. He grows fruit(s) of grace in our lives