

what the Holy Spirit gives to Christians in their service of the Lord. We are to be agents of change. Jesus' power was seen in his miracles but also in his words. The Holy Spirit was given to help here too. The early church began with all the disciples speaking in foreign tongues communicating the good news about Jesus to the crowd of visitors to Jerusalem for the Pentecost festival from the surrounding nations. It was Peter who addressed the crowd in the power of the Holy Spirit – preaching and seeing thousands repent. Later, the fledgling church met to hear God's Word shared by the Apostles. Such input was vital and came from the Holy Spirit. They were unschooled men. Lives are changed by the miracle of Calvary and through the foolishness of the preaching of the gospel. A healing miracle makes for a great testimony and God uses such things alongside the communicating of His Word by the Holy Spirit.

4. Jesus' conquest

"...to the end of the earth..."

The task for the Church is to preach the gospel to the everyone, making "disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28.19).

Our "Jerusalem" is where we are right now – let your family and friends know about Jesus.

Our "Judea" is our wider community, "Samaria" was originally "enemy territory" and is a reminder of the battle we are in, but also the need to be heralds of the gospel among those opposed to our message.

Ultimately, the goal is to "the ends of the earth"! This is one of the reasons it is good to support mission and missionaries around the world. Individually we can only do so much, but through Church fellowship across the globe we can be part of the wider work. Indeed our giving and prayers (prompted by the Holy Spirit) is vital in fulfilling God's will.

Hopefully, you see and have been reminded of the need of the Holy Spirit in your life and our Church for the mission the Lord makes possible.

How about reading/singing the chorus on page 2 as a prayer asking for God to fill your life again?

For only in this way will we see things change with Jesus conquering hearts and lives; and making your life more like that of our Lord – in your speech, worship, and submission to His will (See Ephesians 5.18-21).

Amen.

ROCHFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Church at Home

Sunday 23rd May 2021

"Pentecost"

A Hymn & Chorus to read or sing

Wind, wind blow on me;

Wind, wind, set me free!

Wind, wind my Father sent,

the blessed Holy Spirit.

1. Jesus told us all about You,
how we could not live without You;
with His blood the power bought
to help us live the life He taught.

Wind, wind...

2. When we're weary You console us,
when we're lonely You enfold us,
when in danger You uphold us,
blessed Holy Spirit.

Wind, wind...

3. When into the Church You came,
it was not in Your own but Jesus' name;
Jesus Christ is still the same –
He sends the Holy Spirit,

Wind, wind...

4. Set us free to love our brothers,
set us free to live for others,
that the world the Son might see,
and Jesus' name exalted be.

Wind, wind...

(Mission Praise 771)

Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me;
Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me;
Fill me anew, fill me anew;
Spirit of the Lord,
fall afresh on me.
(Mission Praise 612)

Prayer

*Heavenly Father, Almighty God,
Thank you for pouring out your Spirit on your Church. Thank you for dwelling
in my heart from the time I believed on your Son as my Saviour. As we
celebrate Pentecost with the Church across the nations of the World, unite
our hearts through the gospel, empower our lives to witness to your amazing
grace and live lives of love. Help us all to worship You with joy and
thanksgiving today. Bless all our brothers and sisters with your presence and
peace – especially those facing health issues or persecution for their faith.
To the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ we ask these things. Amen.*

Bible Verses to read today

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counsellor to be with you
forever – the Spirit of Truth.” (John 14.16)

“Be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and
spiritual songs...always giving thanks to God the Father...Submit to one
another out of reverence for Christ.” (Ephesians 5.18-21)

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will
be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria,
and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1.8)

“Mission Possible!”

I noticed recently that the film franchise, “Mission Impossible”, starring Tom
Cruise, is working on its seventh film, due for release Summer 2022. If you
have never seen one of these films, (Spoiler alert) they involve a spy, Ethan

Hunt, who against all the odds overcomes incredible circumstances to fulfil
his mission (a little bit like James Bond)!

Acts chapter 1 verse 8 (above) explains Pentecost – a day that changed the
lives of more than 3000 people and saw the birth of the Church as the Spirit
gave life to this body of his people to fulfil their mission. Only with the aid of
the Holy Spirit is the “mission possible”.

Looking closely at what Jesus said to His disciples we see:

1. Jesus’ certainty

“You will receive...You will be my witnesses...”

The disciples were a mixed bag. They had come back from running away from
Jesus at Calvary and were amazed at His resurrection and the encounters
they had been having with Him for the last 40 days. He spoke of his return to
the Father so perhaps they were wondering how they would cope without
him again. He had promised the Holy Spirit (see John 14-16) but now time
was short. They prayed...how they prayed!

Such a diagnosis would leave many to doubt the wisdom of such a plan – but
not Jesus. He knew the Father would pour out the Holy Spirit and knew this
would make all the difference in the disciples’ lives. Like the children’s talk of
a hand in a glove, the Holy Spirit would guide them in their activity and give
them the strength to get the job done.

2. Jesus’ command

“...receive...and...be”

The disciples’ were to wait for the Father to give the gift of the Holy Spirit
(v4) Note, it was a gift from God, to and, for them. Like all gifts, they are to be
received not just admired in the wrapping paper. Gifts are to personally
accepted, opened and used. The Holy Spirit makes all the difference but only
as He is received in our hearts and lives, welcomed, and invited to work out
His will in and through our lives.

Only when the disciples received the Holy Spirit would they be witnesses –
this is true for every Christian. We are to work in partnership and co-
operation with God, by His Holy Spirit.

3. Jesus’ is the changer of lives

...power...my witnesses...”

On every page of the gospel accounts you read of how Jesus changed lives.
Setting people free from sin, disease, and Satan’s hold. That same power is