**Pentecost Sunday 31st May.**

Something you can’t see

Something that can touch anyone

Something that will have profound impact on individuals and whole communities.

No, not Covid 19 virus, but **the Holy Spirit.**

Not for illness and death, but **for wholeness and life.**

This Sunday the church celebrates the Holy Spirit being given. Jesus has been taken up into heaven, he told his followers to wait for this gift. And on the day of Pentecost the Spirit is given.

Here’s how Luke describes what happened (you can read it in the Bible if you want in Acts chapter 2)

*When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.* ***2****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.* ***3****Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.* ***4****All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. (1-4)*

The Spirit’s coming is like the rushing of a mighty wind, you can’t see the wind, but you can see what it does.

Here is how Luke describes the effect of what the Holy Spirit did when he came

***44****All who believed were together and had all things in common;* ***45****they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceedsto all, as any had need.* ***46****Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at homeand ate their food with glad and generoushearts,* ***47****praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. (44-47)*

Not like a virus which brings lockdown and death, but the Spirit of God who brings freedom and joy.

Luke tells us about

* The people who were there, from all over the known world, so we can know this includes us.
* The sermon St Peter preached, exalting Jesus, and saying what had happened to him wasn’t an accident but God’s plan, so this wasn’t just for back then but for now and all time.
* The response of the people; they asked, “what shall we do?” How can we receive the Holy Spirit? So we too can know how we can receive the same gift.

Maybe today is a day not to major on what the virus is doing; but on what the Holy Spirit is doing.

Maybe this weekend especially we would love our neighbourhood and country to be like that community of the early church at the end of Acts 2, a people free in sharing their goods, homes and hearts.

Pentecost tells us what God wants to do in the world, starting with me. And Peter, in answer to their question, tells them and us how we receive the Holy Spirit.

*“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* ***39****For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” (38,39)*

We repent of our sins and are baptised or confirmed to show we know what is stopping God’s Spirit working what he wants to do in our lives and our neighbourhood and our country. Repentance is turning around, and baptism (or confirming our baptism) is recognising that for our sins to be forgiven and taken away Jesus died on the cross and was raised. In baptism in water we remember the washing away of our sins by his death, and we say we know his death was for us. When we come to God like this, as they did, we receive the Holy Spirit.

Like the wind or like breath, the2rin the way we hear of in Acts 2.

We are to turn from *everything* that leads to death, every sin, every lie, every untruth; AND from every judgement, every condemnation, every accusation. This weekend, isn’t that the kind of person we want to become, isn’t that the kind of neighbourhood and country we want our neighbours and our children to grow up in?

The day of Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Spirit says it is possible, not because we can achieve or create this, but because we can receive what God has given and continues to give if we will receive.

**What must I do? What must we do?**

People are asking this question now in new ways including online. Churches are finding people they have no contact with signing up to courses exploring what Christianity is all about and about how to receive the Holy Spirit.

We want to pray for our political leaders, we do give thanks for our NHS, we will pray against the spread of this virus.

Today we say, death and disease are not the last words, invisible and powerful it may be; but God’s gift, also invisible but so powerful is also given.

Maybe today echoing Peter’s words to the crowd you would like to pray **“Lord I repent, Lord I will be baptised (or confirm my baptism) in the name of Jesus Christ, Lord I receive the forgiveness of my sins, Lord I receive the gift of your Holy Spirit”**

+Keith