

After raising millions of pounds for the NHS doing a hundred laps of his garden, Captain Tom Moore, celebrated a very special Birthday when he turned a hundred on the April 30th, and it was an amazing achievement and milestone that got global attention.

Well this morning we're also celebrating a birthday that's had global recognition as Christians around the world remember the birth of the church at Pentecost over 2000 years ago.

Acts chapter 2 says:

“When the day of Pentecost arrived, the disciples were all together in one place waiting.”

“And there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind and it filled the house where they were sitting.”

And so following the Ascension as the disciples gather together in that upper room, suddenly and without warning the Holy Spirit dramatically fills them with new life and power; as Jesus’s promise to send a helper is fulfilled.

So in chapter 1 he says:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight.

Now a week later as the disciples are empowered by the Holy Spirit to go out and share the good news of Jesus Christ; the church is born.

And it's an incredible event.

Verse 3 says:

And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Flames here aren't literal flames, because it says they're divided tongues *like* fire.

But they look enough like flames, for the word fire to be used as the best description for what's happening.

And that's really important because in the Old Testament fire is often associated with God's presence.

So for example God spoke to Moses from a burning bush.

He then led the people of Israel through the wilderness by a pillar of fire at night.

And when Moses received the 10 commandments flames were visible.

And then later on in the temple that was central to Jewish worship a fire continually burned as a symbol God's presence.

Well as the disciples are gathered in that upper room and filled with the Holy Spirit, they become *living temples* called to share

the good news of God's love for us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In fact the Apostle Paul says 1 Corinthians 6

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God.

If you're a Christian believer this morning, the same Holy Spirit lives in you, and like those first disciples he helps us to live the Christian life, and share the message about Jesus.

You see in the original language the word to describe the Holy Spirit is dynamos, which is

where we get the words dynamite, dynamo and dynamic from.

So listen to this quote:

“Without the Holy Spirit, Christian discipleship would be inconceivable, even impossible. There can be no life without the life giver, no understanding without the Spirit of truth, no fellowship without the unity of the Spirit, no Christlikeness of character apart from his fruit, and no effective witness without his power. As a body without breath is a corpse, so the Church without the Spirit is dead.”

Secondly Pentecost was originally an agricultural festival and people from all over the known world would gather in Jerusalem to take part in the celebrations.

Now the word Pentecost simply means fifty.

So in the Old Testament on the day after Passover, Jews would count down 49 days, and then on the 50th day celebrate the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost; and give thanks to God for the beginning of the grain harvest.

But it was also linked to passover when God rescued his people from slavery in Egypt.

And it's this festival in Acts 2 that Jews are celebrating.

But this Pentecost is different.

You see 50 days earlier Jesus Christ our passover lamb was crucified to rescue people from the slavery of sin; and so this Pentecost is the last one.

And at the end of Peter's sermon, in verse 41, we read that instead of celebrating the grain harvest there's a harvest of souls as 3,000 new people are added to the church in a single day.

Although the circumstances surrounding Pentecost in this passage are unique to the disciples, there are still a couple of things that apply to us this morning.

So for example we can pray that God would grow his church, and that the Holy Spirit would empower us to share the same good news about Jesus.

You see although Pentecost is unique and won't happen again we can pray for revival.

And as Bishop Tony used to say:

The last words Jesus said to his followers weren't go out and form a committee.

They were go out and make disciples.

Well, then thirdly in verse 4 as well as tongues of fire, we're told that another unique event that takes place.

It says:

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Then in verse 5 it says:

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and perplexed saying to one another, What does this mean? But others mocking said: They are filled with new wine.

Now every nation mentioned here only includes countries that were known at the time; but it's still an impressive list in verse 9, that includes people from Africa, Asia, and Europe.

And this is such a strange and unusual event

that some of the crowd accuse the disciples of being drunk.

But the point of everyone hearing the gospel in their own language is to show us that Jesus is for everyone.

And that's confirmed as the Apostle Peter stands up to quote a prophecy in the book of Joel, where God promised to pour out his Spirit on both Jew and Gentile alike.

It says:

“In the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all Flesh, and

it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

In other words, people from every nation, culture, social, or economic background, who put their trust in Jesus Christ; will be welcomed into God’s kingdom to receive forgiveness of sin, and adoption into his family.

Because Jesus died and rose again for the sins of the whole world.

Pentecost also gives us a foretaste of heaven that’s described in book of Revelation with these words:

After this I looked and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne crying out with a loud voice, salvation belongs to our God.

You see God's promise to pour out his Spirit on everyone who puts their trust in Christ, isn't based on race, religion, ethnicity, sex, or economic background; everyone's welcome into God family.

So listen to these words.

Ultimately, Pentecost demonstrates that God keeps his promises. He'd promised to send

his Spirit, and Pentecost was the moment in salvation history when he did just that.

For today's readers, Pentecost means that every believer has access to the Promised Spirit of God and has been gifted by that same Spirit, who arrived at Pentecost to carry on the mission of the Church: proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The coming of the Spirit means we have all we need to boldly herald the gospel, and have no excuse for not doing so.

Because as someone's said:

The coming of the Spirit dispels fear and leads God's people out into proclamation!

And so this Pentecost let's pray for a fresh outpouring of Holy Spirit in our own lives, and on the life the Church and nation.

And lets ask God to do something new; so that we can be better equipped to share the good news of Jesus in Bingham, our diocese, and beyond.

Pray.

Heavenly Father on this Pentecost Sunday, we ask that you would open our hearts to receive the power of your Spirit.

Lord we pray that he would revive us,
awaken us, and breath new life into us; and
fan into flame the light and heat of the
Gospel; so that'd we see lives transformed in
our Church, in Bingham, our diocese, and
our nation, as we Love God, Share Christ,
and Serve one Another.

We ask this in Jesus name. Amen

