

May 23 The promise of the Spirit (1) Acts 2. 14-24 Life Group questions

Last week we read one Old Testament prophecy of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in Ezekiel chapter 36. 25-28. *'I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean... I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.'* Today, on the Day of Pentecost, when that promise is fulfilled, Peter begins his address to the crowd with another Old Testament prophecy.

1 Begin today by welcoming the Holy Spirit to your meeting, and spend some time opening up to what he wants to reveal and to do in you.

You might want to watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zg3kG2K45Y> 'Holy Spirit come' or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zEiiZi2DKk> 'Holy Spirit you are welcome here'

2 Now read the passage. Peter begins, 'Fellow Jews'. Why does he immediately go on to quote from the prophet Joel?

Is it a surprise to you that the coming of the Holy Spirit was not only a fulfilment of Jesus' promise (Acts 1. 4-5), but also of prophecies from five centuries earlier? Why is this so important on the day the Christian church is born? See verse 5. Note the further references to OT scriptures in verses 25-35, and Peter's concluding words, 'Therefore **let all Israel** be assured of this; God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ'. Remember how Jesus in Luke 24 unfolded the OT scriptures concerning himself. The first followers of Jesus and the first Christians after Pentecost were Jews.

Discuss what it means to you, in England in 2021, to feel part of God's eternal story. Paul, who agonised over Jewish rejection of the gospel (Romans 10.1), called the Gentiles he was writing to 'the Israel of God'. (Galatians 6.16) Pause also to recognise the location of the events on the Day of Pentecost, in the holy city of Jerusalem, and pray over the current situation in the Holy Land.

3 What is the role of the Holy Spirit in enabling people to come to faith? See verses 21 and 36-41, and John 16.8. What does it mean, in Christian parlance, to 'be convicted'?

4 Look at and discuss the description of the Holy Spirit's work, in verses 17-18. Have you experienced anything like this? There are several passages which describe the varied gifts of the Holy Spirit:

1 Corinthians 12. 1-31, Romans 12. 4-8, Ephesians 4. 7-13. You might like to make a list. What gifts of the Spirit do we see being used in our church community? How can we encourage each other to discover and use the gifts the Holy Spirit has given to each of us? Note Peter's words in verses 38-9. 'The promise is... for all whom the Lord our God will call.' Pray for one another.

'Spirit move' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbdSQ8MLnYs>