

Whipman Pentecost Sunday 2025

Acts 2:1-21

When the Day of Pentecost came, Jesus's disciples were in Jerusalem all together in one place. Now the Whipman Day of Pentecost has come we too are all together in one place.

What were they doing in Jerusalem altogether that day? It was not by chance. They were waiting, waiting because the risen Jesus had told them to wait until they *have been clothed with power from on high*. And they were joyful in anticipation.

What are we waiting for here this morning? For what are we in eager anticipation? Is it the Dog Show this afternoon, the Quiz in the Gordon Arms, the Races on Wednesday? Or maybe it is the Comedy Show or the Summer Ball back here in the Marquee?

But perhaps, at the moment, all you are waiting for is the end of this service so you can go and have Sunday lunch!

Whatever it is, the Whipman Festival is such a wonderful community occasion, with so much to look forward to. And it's been great so far, hasn't it?

But perhaps on this Pentecost morning you are waiting for an encounter with God, a touch of Holy Spirit. Not wind and fire of course, but a tangible sign of Holy Spirit presence, a reassurance that God really does notice you, cares about you and loves you. Or maybe a little more dynamism.

When I lived in Ripon I used to be one of the daily chaplains in the Cathedral, there to speak or pray with anyone who wished to approach. One of the side-chapels in the cathedral is dedicated to Holy Spirit. At its entrance is a marvellous metal screen by Leslie Durbin portraying flames of fire and zig-zag metal strips depicting lightning bolts of electric power coming down.

I used to love to explain to visitors what the screen means, recount the outpouring of Holy Spirit as we heard, and tell them that, in the next chapter of Acts, two of Jesus's disciples, Peter and John, now endued with Holy Spirit

electric power, are able to heal a man of 40 who had never previously been able to walk.

Holy Spirit power at work.

But that is in the next chapter of Acts....

Holy Spirit power is in the gifts he brings.

There are many listed in the bible. Healing, of course, but also wisdom, generosity, administration, service, encouragement, prophecy among others.

Of course, believing Christians don't have a monopoly on these gifts. Our God is a generous God, active in our communities for all. In this community we see the influence of God's Holy Spirit, even if we don't recognise it as such.

Support for refugees, the generous giving to Ukraine, the service provided by the Knot, the voluntary organisations and others, the tireless work of the Whipman Committee and volunteers that has gone into making this Whipman time such a success and a blessing. All and more are evidence of God's Spirit among us.

Let's look a little more closely at the passage that Andy and Kirsten read. Here are the disciples, all together in one house, almost certainly praying. Then suddenly there is a noisy and dramatic outpouring of Holy Spirit. And a noisy response by the disciples as they break out in spontaneous praise *declaring the wonders of God* in foreign languages, given power to do so by Holy Spirit. It turns out that these languages are those of the many foreign nationals visiting Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost.

It seems that the disciples spill out into the street and become such a spectacle that a large crowd gathers. Some even think that they are drunk and Peter has to correct this false notion. Although why he thinks that it being 9 o'clock in the morning is an adequate excuse defeats me. Perhaps they had Scottish Licencing Laws.

So, if you see one of the West Linton churchgoers in an apparent drunken state, it may not be that they have spent too long in the Gordon Arms, but rather that they have been in a prayer meeting! Pray that it may be so.

This very obvious transformation of the disciples demands an explanation. Peter undertakes to give it. Remember that the crowd are all Jewish so for

Peter to enlighten them by quoting from the prophet Joel in the Hebrew scriptures – our Old Testament – is entirely appropriate.

‘In the last days, God says,

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

your young men will see visions,

your old men will dream dreams.

¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women,

I will pour out my Spirit in those days,

and they will prophesy.

²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Prophesying in the New Testament doesn’t usually mean what we think of as prophecy, foretelling the future, but rather speaking out God’s words to others. So, when Peter says “*everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved*” he is prophesying, speaking God’s words, empowered by Holy Spirit.

And later in his speech, a further 17 verses later – and I’m sure Andy and Kirsten are pleased that we didn’t ask them to read that far! – Peter says that it is those people who call on the name of the Lord to be saved who *will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*.

God’s intention is to share, to pour out, Holy Spirit on everyone, young and old, men and women, no exceptions. And not just by infusing a community like ours with service and generosity, but by inspiring and empowering each individual who opts in for it by calling on his name.

Now, I have to admit that Holy Spirit power isn’t something that we associate with West Linton Christians, including me, sadly.

In fact, it is something that we rarely talk about in our churches. But all Christian believers have Holy Spirit.

So I want to suggest this morning that if you have a need for a touch of Holy Spirit, maybe a need for healing or a word of prophecy, a personal word from God for you, that you approach one, or better still two, of the people you know to be churchgoers and ask them to pray for you, not just later, at home, privately, but now, today, here.

And if that horrifies you, Christian churchgoer, then I want to say to you three things.

First, you won't know what power you have with Holy Spirit until you try to use it. So, give it a go.

Second, decades of Christian experience, and my own, says that while healing can happen, it doesn't always or even often. But that doesn't mean it never does so we should still try.

And third, if this really is a step too far, then perhaps we - indeed all of us - need to take a leaf out of the disciples' book and wait on the Lord in prayer.

Wait harder. Wait on the Lord for more Holy Spirit and wait with more expectation.

Because, as the prophet Isaiah wrote (40:31)

*Those who wait on the Lord
Shall renew their strength; (their power)
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint.*

Amen