

God's Spirit moves

20th of May – Pentecost (*for use with the Catechism questions 6, God & 19-23, God the Holy Spirit*)

Reading one: Acts 2:1-4

The book of Acts describes the church, how it grows and develops. The book is specifically titled 'the acts of the Apostles' it could have been 'the acts of the Holy Spirit.' It is both. Without the Holy Spirit it would not have been written at all. The Holy Spirit is an important part of God's unity as Father, Son and Spirit. Who the Holy Spirit is and what the Spirit does is vitally important to the church. Without the Spirit the church cannot be what it is called to be. We Christians have a technical term called *sanctification* which describes the work of God's in us. This is what the Holy Spirit does in us.

Awareness and participation directly with this action of God as Spirit is what I would say is referred to as baptism in the Holy Spirit. There is a tangible nearness and demonstration in terms of both the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit in believers lives – that lines up with scripture and develops the capacity to speak of the revelation of Jesus through our lives.

What does the Church teach about the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is God at work in the world and in the Church now, the giver of life and truth. *What does the church teach about the Holy Spirit?* The Holy Spirit reveals God's truth through human experience, in the Bible, and in the witness of the Church. Revealing truth through **experience**, **scripture** and the **church community**.

This is not just a Pentecostal thing or about loud happy clapping and hands raised experiences. It is an encounter and willing submission to the work of the Holy Spirit which brings forth profound action in our hearts, minds and our lives. Raised hands may or may not occur as part of this. Due to God's nature and that of humanity, the work of the Holy Spirit can manifest in many different ways. Scripture attests to this. The book of Acts is a great place to start reading about God's Spirit. Also, you might like to check out: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/four-ways-god-leads-his-people>

Consider Jonathan's personal example of a bed time experience, encountering God's Spirit. In the encounter it felt scary initially, but not once he knew it was God, the fear changed to amazement. This and many other experiences with God's Spirit have grown my faith and helped to prepare me for events yet to come in my life. Like sharing a bit about the massive topic of the work God does in his people by the power and person of his Spirit.

How do you respond to what Jonathan shared?

Was it familiar, somewhat familiar or a completely foreign to you?

Jonathan also mentions how a youth group leader experienced God speak to him through a Pink Floyd song. This changed the course of his life. **What is your reaction to this?**

Words of knowledge, physical healings, emotional outpourings that lead to emotional healing, reconciliation, along with wisdom and wise decisions may be the power of God at work in you. The bible makes mention of the gifts the Spirit gives God's people. **Are you familiar with some of these?** I suggest Romans 12: 3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12: 1-30 as good places to start exploring this topic more.

Reading two: 2 Corinthians 3:13-18.

¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken

away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. - ¹⁷ **Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom -**

Freedom

Have you encountered the presence and power of the living God in a way that leaves you knowing that you meet not with yourself, but rather that the living God was present and near?

Moses had to veil himself from the people after being near to God. The radiance was too much for the people. It may sound a bit over the top however drawing close to a holy God is profound. How great that Jesus comes from and returns to the Father... and as a result God's Spirit is poured out in larger measure. The veil is removed by Jesus. This opens a great opportunity for all those who put their trust in Jesus.

Would you like God's Spirit to encounter you today? Would you like the Spirit to enfold you?

Meeting with a powerful person can be profoundly scary and unsettling. When we know who God is, we can risk trusting him to enfold us in his Spirit's presence. To surround us, enter into us, and yet not completely destroy or overtake us. God fills us with his own Spirit because it is his will that we may share the light, love and presence he gives to us with others (the world). The church has a high calling, knowing God changes everything.

Ultimately the fruit of encounter with God's Spirit is a profound peace. A freedom that is unprecedented. All who confess Christ as Lord are invited to receive this Spirit. It is power! Not our power though, it is God's. He places it in us so that his work can be done in and through us. This is quite intimate and strange on one level, yet if we receive this Spirit, it releases a freedom and life that is beyond what humanity can do apart from an intimate relationship with a holy God.

How do you feel about the Holy Spirit?

If you had to pick a favourite of the three: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; which one would it be?

Why is this do you think?

Share an experience or encounter you (or someone you know,) has had with the Holy Spirit.

What makes this experience stand out to you?

At the end of the sermon on Sunday we spent some time waiting on the Holy Spirit, just as the disciples did in Jerusalem. **What does it feel like for you to wait on the Holy Spirit and see what he might do in you?**

The fruit of the Holy Spirit includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

What fruit has God been developing in you recently?