

# SERMON NOTES Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024

## sunnysidechurch

Theme: Pentecost

Passages: Acts 2: 1-21 page 1093 John 14: 15-21

**1. Have you ever been in a situation where you know someone, but can't remember their name and you've had to describe them to someone else?**

The Holy Spirit is difficult to define! As soon as we attempt to explain Him, our human language becomes less helpful than we had hoped. To describe the Holy Spirit as an entity or a force is too impersonal. To refer to Him as person suggests he is human. To define him as a member of the Trinity, begs the question 'what kind of member?' To address him as an 'individual' sounds as if there are three gods. Even referring to the Spirit with a masculine pronoun is not necessarily the best. The Greek word 'pneuma', often translated as 'Spirit' in the NT is neuter, while the Hebrew noun 'ruah' is feminine. Yet in Scripture we are given images and metaphors which help us to explore the Holy Spirit's character and work. Four common metaphors for the Holy Spirit found in the Bible are oil, a dove, wind and fire.

*Read Genesis 1:1-2*

**2. What does the verb 'hovering' show us about the Holy Spirit?**

Although the Spirit is not directly referred to as a 'dove' here, we do see this bird-like quality as He hovers over the surface of the deep. The word for 'hovering' can also be translated as watching – the Holy Spirit is watching attentively over this formless and empty earth.

**3. How do we see the Sovereignty of God's Spirit in Creation and also His partnership with the people He creates?**

As the writer describes the 'darkness and the deep' we get the picture that no one has walked this way before. The Spirit is presented as the divine architect of the future. Whatever our understanding of the exact details of the process of creation, we can clearly see the Spirit's creativity and his energising of that process. We also see His partnership with the people He creates. The commission to human beings to be stewards of the earth and the way they are invited to name the animals. The Spirit had given us capacity to be creative and the responsibility to bring change!

*Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13*

**4. How does oil help us to understand the way that the Holy Spirit works to anoint particular people for particular tasks in the Old Testament?**

As oil infuses into a person's skin, this anointing signifies an infusion of the Spirit's strength and wisdom. Kings and priests were anointed with oil and appointed to their positions by prophets.

*Read John 14:15-18*

**5. How does the word 'Councillor' (parakletos' in Greek) help us to understand our relationship with the Holy Spirit?**

The word 'parakletos' in Greek means to be called alongside in the closest and most intimate way possible. He is the one who counsels, comforts and encourages. He is the one who unites us with Christ and helps to know the Father's love for us. In John 14:17 Jesus makes the subtle, but crucially important statement that the Holy Spirit is already **with** them, but soon he would be **in** them. This is a new era beginning at Pentecost that will be defined by the preposition **in**. God in us!

**6. When have you experienced the closeness of the Holy Spirit – counselling, comforting or encouraging you?**

*Read Acts 1:1-5 and 2:1-4*

**7. In order to prepare for this wonderful gift the disciples are given one instruction 'wait'. How do you find waiting and trusting God's timing?**

At the start of chapter 2, we read 'When the day of Pentecost had come' – this is not just a date! Luke is telling his readers that the Spirit came when the time had been fulfilled, at the right moment, at the specified time. The believers had not prayed the Spirit down. In his Sovereignty, he had come at the exact moment He had planned.

**8. When the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost He is described with the metaphors of wind and fire. What do these metaphors show you about Him?**

As we may hear the sound of the wind, so we can hear the voice of the Spirit. The wind also produces energy, without it we just have still air. We see the Spirit as the dynamic presence of God, moving and bringing new life and transformation. Just as we cannot control the wind or determine where or when the wind may blow, so the Spirit is sovereign of His agenda.

The metaphor of fire is associated with the holiness of God. Just as metals are refined by fire, so we are refined and made holy by the Holy Spirit.

**9. The Holy Spirit came first of all to bless the disciples with His presence and confirm their relationship with Jesus. Then He gifted and commissioned them to bless others with the Good News. How do you balance enjoying the Holy Spirit personally and allowing Him to empower you to bless others and share the gospel?**