

Bible Study: Pentecost

Preparation

In our Bible Study this week we will be reading the following lectionary readings set for Pentecost Sunday (31st May):

- **1 Corinthians 12:3b-13**
- **Acts 2:1-21**
- **John 7:37-39**

Try to allow God's Holy Spirit to do the work this week. Allow the Spirit to speak into the readings. Allow God's Spirit to breathe fire into your heart!

When exploring these readings you may wish to consider following the pattern below:

Pray a simple prayer first. (Eg *"Holy Spirit come to us, Kindle in us the fire of your love"* or the *Our Father*).

Read a reading

PAUSE and reflect on that reading

- Did anything touch you?
- Did you gain any insights?
- Were there any challenges?
- What did you understand?

If anything particular has struck you, you may want to return to it and reflect more on that part of the reading. You might also want to write something down.

After your reflection, you can move on to another reading but you don't have to do them all.

When you have finished, pray the final prayer:

Final Prayer:

Holy Spirit, you inspired the early Church. Inspire us this week, as we prepare for the Day of Pentecost. Transform, bless and comfort us. Breathe your love and fire into us. **Amen.**

If you wish to see some of my reflections, see over.

Reflections:

In the **1 Corinthians** reading, it is made clear that there is one Spirit but many manifestations of it. It struck me, reading it, that we are all included in God's purposes but that doesn't mean, at all, that we are all supposed to be the same sort of person experiencing God in the same way!

Sometimes I have felt, in my Christian journey, that I was supposed to be like everyone else. But I know I am not the same as anyone else. When the Spirit speaks in my heart, sometimes it seems to be in a kind of prophetic way. This is nevertheless the same Spirit that speaks in other people's hearts through very different experiences. Some of Jesus' followers find their focus in the call of the Spirit to transform the institutions of the world, for others it is the call of the Creator to love the planet and for others it is that personal relationship with Christ which brings friendship into their lives, and the lives of those they meet. I am challenged – how is God's Spirit calling me this Pentecost?

In the **Acts** reading, I was struck by how accessible of God's word was made to all those who were listening on the day of Pentecost. It didn't matter which language they were familiar with. The people heard God's word through the voices of those gathered in that place.

I am struck by God's desire to meet us where we are. That we don't have to all behave or hear things in the same way. It is sufficient to hear the word of God in our language – in our way.

That is not the same as saying that God's word is what we want it to be. Not at all, what God says to us in our language, what we understand, may be challenging, even difficult, but God wishes to say it to us.

I am challenged to be more willing to listen to others who are understanding God's word and come from different places and cultures, people who speak different languages, with have different accents from mine.

The **John** reading reminds me of a simple Taizé chant: *"let all who are thirsty come, let all who wish receive the water of life freely, amen, come Lord Jesus."*

I am struck, even as I write this, that this reading is about God being for, *in favour of*, every person.

This connects with me, as a Methodist, with the Hymn, Let earth and heaven agree, which has the line "for all, for all my saviour died" and I am reminded of Wesley's insistence that Christ's love and grace is for everyone. I see it in the Hymn, What shall I do with these words about God's love, "so wide it never passed by one, or it had passed by me."

I am challenged to both drink and share the water which springs from the Gospel. I am comforted that God's Holy Spirit is for us all, enabling us to be one in the Spirit.