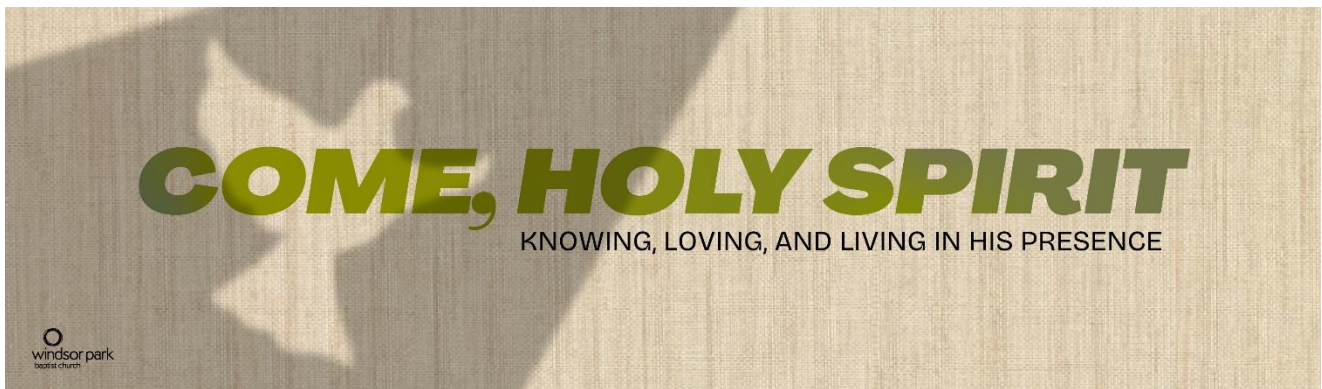


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Week 3: The Spirit of Mission

Introduction: The Series so far

Welcome back to our Come, Holy Spirit series. In our first week Grant showed emphatically that the Holy Spirit is not something that joins the game at Pentecost, but someone (note someone, the Spirit is a person not a force) – someone, who has been active and present since the very beginning. However, Grant also pointed out that Pentecost was a transitional moment in the story of the Spirit, where the Spirit's work went from: selective to universal; external to internal; temporary to permanent; and from national to global.

Today we're looking at the day of Pentecost and exploring the way the Spirit empowers for mission. We're going to see that participation in The Mission of God requires cycles of waiting, of receiving, and of going. Jesus spells this out with his final words to the disciples at the start of Acts: ***"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*** (Acts 1:4-5,8)

These words will frame our time together, as we look at how they play out in the birth of the church, and think about how they might apply to us today. Let's start with waiting.

Waiting

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Hands up if you like waiting? If you get excited about waiting? Waiting in line, waiting in traffic, waiting for that slow, rambling, preacher to finally get to the point! But although waiting can feel jarring, as the saying goes, good things come to those who wait. This is applicable to many areas of life: slow cooked meals nourish more than fast food; waiting for the emotion to cool down before replying to an unwelcome email, results in a better response; and not rushing into a rebound relationship after a breakup is normally good advice.

One example of waiting that is particularly relevant to today's message is a gap year. According to the OECD 28% of kiwis take a gap year before starting a university program. I asked our young adults group chat and our figure was 23%. Personally, I didn't take a gap year but I've become a fan. A gap year provides a young adult, time they might never get again, to intentionally find out about themselves and how God has made them, to expose themselves to different environments and situations, and just to press pause on the rush into the rat race. This can create space to step into whatever is next, with more intentionality, and perhaps even a sense of God's leading.

With this in mind, let's remember that Jesus *first* instruction to the disciples as he ascended to the father, was *not* go to all nations, but to *wait here*. And they were obedient. Let's look at how they acted between the departure of Jesus and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost:

Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. (1:12-14)

The key summary is verse 14: ***they all joined together constantly in prayer.*** Waiting together on the promised gift of the Spirit just as Jesus told them to. We find them doing the same thing in chapter 2 verse 1: ***When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. (2:1)***

We see here two important tensions, two both-ands, when it comes to hearing from God and participating in His mission:

1. Individual & Community:

Truly we are better together, I love that this saying roles of the tongue of many Windsor Parkers, and I sense we believe it. But even still, for me at least, when it comes to hearing God's voice, I default to "what is God saying to *me*". I imagine I'm not alone in this. There will be a temptation to listen as individuals as we progress through the Holy Spirit series, rather than as a community of believers, so we would do well to remember these believers waited together in prayer.

At the same time, a community *is* made up of *individuals*. God speaks to us all in different ways and has given us different gifts, so the individual truly matters and brings a unique contribution to the community.

2. Expectation & Patience:

We also see the first disciples modeling both expectation AND patience. They trusted Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit and although they didn't know what to expect... they expected something! But their expectation didn't lead to impatience. They were called to wait and they demonstrated patience, staying in Jerusalem, the most dangerous place for Jesus' followers at the time, doing nothing but praying and waiting for the gift Jesus' promised.

If they hadn't waited for the Holy Spirit, and had just jumped in to what *they thought* the mission of God should look like, they would have got it horribly wrong. For a start, they wouldn't have reached out to people from all nations as the Spirit enabled them to do at Pentecost.

Like a young adult taking a gap year to better figure out what they want to do next, we need to make pausing a habit, and waiting long enough, to receive fresh insight, conviction, encouragement, guidance, empowering, from the Holy Spirit – so we can better step into what he has for us next.

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This waiting can be at the macro or micro level. Maybe it's a real 12-month gap year. But maybe it's a gap minute, before that meeting, where you invite the Holy Spirit's presence into your awareness in the everyday. Either way the purpose of waiting is to receive. And sometimes after years of waiting things explode overnight.

Receiving

This was certainly the case for All Whites footballer Tim Payne who last week shot unexpectedly from a few thousand followers to millions overnight, thanks to a viral video from a south American influencer. The whole episode has just been insane and has brought home just how crazy the power of social media is these days. Now am I saying the Holy Spirit is going to cause you to go viral? Well maybe not, but what has happened to Tim is an explosive empowerment. His reach and influence has been dramatically extended.

In a far deeper way Pentecost, and the in-filling of the Spirit, empowered the disciples, the gospel exploded out, and the missional reach of the church was extended far beyond what they could have achieved on their own. Let's read Luke's account of the Pentecost moment from Acts 2 verse 1.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (2:1-4)

This is the moment where waiting becomes receiving. The Spirit invades their prayer meeting in the form of two Old Testament Spirit images, wind and fire, all are filled with the Spirit, and begin to speak in other tongues.

A key question that arises when it comes to receiving the Holy Spirit is... is it a once-off event or an on-going process. I would say two things to this:

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- Firstly, it is clear that **the day of Pentecost in is a one-off event** in what theologians call **redemptive history**. Just as Jesus died and rose once and for all, the Spirit was poured out in a new way at Pentecost once and for all. We don't need another Pentecost.
- But secondly, in the lives of individual believers, it is clear from scripture that **the process of being filled by the Spirit is ongoing**. To highlight the most obvious evidence of this, two chapters after the day of Pentecost a similar group of believers gathered in prayer and we read in Acts 4:31:

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. Many of the same people were there. Filled again with the Spirit. This encourages me to continue to seek more of the Spirit. And this makes sense when we think about the Spirit in the context of mission. We receive the Spirit not to hoard, but to give, and to go. Which brings us to our final section:

Going

Remember Jesus final words to the disciples before his ascension that frame this message.

“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, ... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:4-5,8)

The disciples have waited, they have received, and now it's time to go. This is set powerfully in motion by the gift of speaking in other tongues. Let's look at the impact:

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs - we hear them declaring the wonders of

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God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" (Acts 2:5-12)

What an incredible scene. Way before Duolingo, subtitles, or AI translation tools, the first sermon after Pentecost was preached live into every known language at the time. What this clearly demonstrates is God's heart for the nations.

This would take some processing for the early church as their own prejudices were challenged, but Pentecost shows that the reception of the Spirit is not just for us, but for mission through us, even to those we feel least equipped to reach.

What are you staring at?

To conclude, I want to flip back to the disciples immediately after Jesus ascended. They are clearly trying to comprehend what has just happened. I imagine them watching Jesus rising into the sky, like fans at a NASA launch, until the last trace of him has disappeared into the sky.

In the combination of awe and loss, stunned silence was the only fitting response. I mean who wants to break that silence?

Turns out it was two white robed men, presumed to be angelic messengers, who ask what I consider to be one of the harshest questions in scripture: ***"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? (Acts 1:11)***

As abrupt as it seems, the angelic messengers, remind the disciples that they have a mission to continue, and the mission of God calls for courage and obedience, not staring into the clouds longing for life to be as it was.

Get going.

This could sound a bit contradictory because the first instruction of Jesus to them was to wait. What was so wrong with staring up into the sky? But I want to suggest there is stage

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even before waiting, it goes by lots of names: apathy, despair, distraction, passivity. Where we have found ourselves staring into the sky, out the window, or at our screens, perhaps we need to hear these angels again: what are you staring out?

Hurry up and start waiting. Posture yourselves again to receive, to be filled afresh with the Holy Spirit, and to be propelled across the office, the street, or the world on mission. Carrying the fire that was never intended for you alone.

Let's pray.

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Reflecting on Sunday 31st May 2026: Last Sunday we looked at the Spirit as our comforter, counsellor, and advocate – which one of these has most resonated with you this week?

The following questions help you think more about this message. We hope they might be a conduit for conversation and reflection, encouraging us to wrestle with how this message might practically work itself out in our lives.

- **Waiting.** Can you describe a time when you've intentionally waited on God? What does that process look like for you? Does it come naturally?
- **Receiving.** What does it mean to you to be filled with the Holy Spirit? How has the presence of the Spirit in your life evolved over the course of your discipleship?

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- **Going.** Where do you sense the Spirit taking you beyond your comfort zone or beyond what you can achieve in your own strength?
- How would it change your approach and answers to the questions above if you thought about them from a **community perspective**? Perhaps as a flat, a family unit, a life group, or a church etc.

If you'd like to chat with someone about your spiritual journey or anything else going on in your life, please contact us at care@windsorpark.org.nz; **we're better together** and **no perfect people are allowed**.

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Below are some further resources that may take the message further and deeper and enable you to explore other viewpoints on the same theme. We also encourage you to engage with the preacher if there are further questions you have or if you'd like clarification on anything. Email info@windsorpark.org.nz and we'll direct your query to the appropriate person.

1. It is impossible to overstate the significance of **Pentecost** for church life and mission. This short video from the Bible Project unpacks what happened and why it's important:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQhKWmFJKnA>
2. **Naturally Supernatural Course.** "Are you worn out trying to serve Jesus and live on mission out of your own strength and strategies?" Beginning July 6th Heather and Aidan will be hosting a course designed to equip you to pursue a Spirit empowered lifestyle. Find out more info here to see this might be a space for you.
<https://www.naturallysupernaturalcourse.com/>
3. **The Jewish Roots of the Feast of Pentecost.** To explore the Old Testament background to Pentecost from a Messianic Jew perspective have a read of this article from Jews for Jesus.
<https://jewsforjesus.org/learn/the-jewish-roots-of-the-feast-of-pentecost>