



Pentecost – May 2024

If I were to ask you to draw a picture of Pentecost in the form of a symbol – what would you draw? The dictionary says a symbol is a *'something used for or regarded as representing something else; a material object representing something, often something immaterial; emblem, token, or sign,'* (dictionary.com).

Would you draw a **birthday cake**?

Pentecost is often suggested to be the birth of the church.

Perhaps you would draw **wind** (this might be hard)? The noise the apostles heard (Acts 2:2).

Fire? When flames appeared and rested upon the heads of each of the apostles (Acts 2:3). Perhaps you wear red? In liturgical churches the stole and vestments are red in colour to match the flames.

Or a **dove**? The dove is a symbol of the Spirit of God – (Matthew 3:16 – the baptism of Jesus, although there is no dove mentioned in the Pentecost passage.

Colour, natural elements (wind, fire), celebrating the birth of new ways (the church) and also celebrating language (conversing and understanding people from different backgrounds) – these all takes place here in this story.

Pentecost is the answer to the **Tower of Babel** in Genesis 11:1-9. Pentecost makes right, what went wrong at Babel – where the people wanted to build a tower so high, they could reach God – in Genesis, God **'came down'** and confused their language – in Acts – God **'came down'** and brought a new understanding and purpose in light of Christ's sacrifice.

When the Holy Spirit comes in power something unifying happens. Praising God and declaring the wonders of God is not just for one language or one people – but for all – faith in Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit breaks through all barriers and is the great unifier.

There was no need of a tower, the people were where they were – **'together in one place'**.

When we are **'together in one place'** – how much emphasis do we put on God as Holy Spirit?

Some churches are very God the Father centred. Perhaps Jesus is spoken of when a gospel story is being preached or words from a hymn mention Him – but there are many churches where the Holy Spirit is notably absent – simply not invited into worship!

God the Father – yes (Theology/Paterology).

Jesus His Son (Christology) – yes sometimes –

But... the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology) – rarely.... !

Just how Trinitarian are we? Or do we have a preference... or favourites in the God-Head? Who do you pray to? I am really challenging myself this Pentecost to thoroughly embrace the Holy Spirit in my prayer life and in my preaching and leading of worship. I fear that I focus on Christ, often at the exclusion of the Holy Spirit.

When did you last invite the Holy Spirit into your life? Into your worship? Into your car? Into your family circumstances?

The Holy Spirit – that came in power to start the church is needed more than ever to heal and revive the church of Christ.

So may Pentecost be every day, not just one a year, and may our lives, our church services, our homes and *our 'together places'* be a place of welcome for the Spirit from Heaven to come into our midst to 'save us from this corrupt generation (Acts 2:40).

Without the Power of the Spirit, we will be ineffective, and our strive for holiness and salvation, out of reach.

