



Pentecost

w/c 24 May 2026

"We do not need to wait for the Holy Spirit to come; he came on the day of Pentecost. He has never left the church." (John Stott)

Read Acts 2:1–13

As we read these words, it's important to remember that we encounter the Holy Spirit throughout the Bible. In particular, in the last few weeks we've looked at the idea of our being 'God-breathed' through both creation and commission. We also reflected on the very opening of Genesis where the Spirit is said to be "*hovering over the waters.*"

The words for spirit in both Hebrew (*ruach*) and Greek (*pneuma*) can also carry the meanings of 'breath' and 'wind'. Sometimes this significance is lost in translation.

How does our being 'God-breathed' make us and change us?

Reflecting on the words of Pope John Paul II, below we could I think say that at the first Pentecost, God breathes so hard on the disciples that they are forced from the safety of the upper room and into the street (with its curious crowds). **In what ways do we sometimes seek to cling on to the safety of our own upper room?**

It is tempting that to think that every encounter with the Spirit should be as loud, emphatic and obvious as that Pentecost morning. But often it may in the quietness that we most feel this closeness, an understanding of the divine. Look at 1 Kings 19:11–13; here we see that though two of the same symbols are present as at Pentecost – wind and fire – yet they are not where God is. **Why was it important that for Elijah, God was present in the whisper, not the wind? How is that important too for us today?**

As John Stott notes, the Spirit doesn't leave. I recently saw a suggestion that we should "*Spend 50 minutes a day with God*". A good thing, I'm sure. It does though seem to carry the parallel meaning that most of our day is somehow 'without' God. **What can we do to practise the understanding of God being with us, as always and for all time?**

In an earlier study, we also thought about Jesus' commissioning of his first disciples (and, through them, of all of us ever since) as described in John 20. Earlier in his gospel, John records how, Jesus promised (ch14v16) that the Father would send another to be with his disciples. Not someone different, but, as one commentator put it, "*One like myself, who will take my place, do my work*". We can I think say that the Spirit's indwelling is also how Jesus' subsequent promise (ch14v23) that he and the Father will come and make their home with those who love him will actually be fulfilled. We're back with ideas of the Trinity that we looked at last Autumn.

Exciting though Pentecost is, God does not only work through Christians and the church. **How can we discern those times and places around us where he is already active. What might stop us joining in?**

"The Church of Christ is always, so to speak, in a situation of Pentecost: she is always gathered in the Upper Room in prayer, and at the same time, driven by the powerful wind of the Spirit, she is always on the streets preaching." (Pope John Paul II)