

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups. April 10th 2005

God's Gifts - the Gift of His Presence

The gift of the Holy Spirit - a power to witness

Acts 1.1-11



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

Rowan Williams on the death of John Paul II commented that his last days were an extraordinary witness to the world of the message of Easter and the power of the Christian faith. 2000 years ago 120 men and women had been through a maelstrom that had seen the one they knew to be the Son of God tortured and crucified. They deserted him, denied him and even doubted him after he had risen. The future looked bleak but God was beginning a new chapter. The Church that was to change the world was about to be born.

Acts 1.1-11 gives a glimpse of a 'twilight' zone of around 6 weeks when the risen Jesus prepared his disciples for Pentecost. He showed himself many times, gave convincing proofs, taught them more about the Kingdom of God (v3 and 6) but then left them (v9). However he left them with a promise (v4 -9). This promise had 3 particular 'words' to the disciples: wait for the gift, receive the power, be my witnesses.

1 Wait for the gift(v4) The disciples had to wait for the Holy Spirit to come but come he did at Pentecost. Sometimes we can act as if Pentecost has still to happen! We can live in a spiritual torpor waiting for God to act! However the promised gift of the power of the Holy Spirit has been given to the Church, we should wait no longer!

2 Receive the power (v8) The power of the Holy Spirit is not natural and is not found in the ways of man rather it is supernatural, God given. A Spirit filled life will speak volumes to a spiritually impoverished culture and will lead others to ask 'who are these people?'

3 Be my Witnesses (v8) Being filled with God's Spirit is the key to witness. The Church, you and I, need to stand out like sore thumbs. Salt must be salty, light must shine and Christians need to be filled to overflowing with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit if we are to be the Church of Christ and fulfil his commission to be his witnesses 'to the ends of the earth.'



Witness: Questions to discuss

1. How did the death of John Paul II impact you?
2. Do you feel as if Pentecost has yet to come to you, your small group, our Church?
3. What have been your most recent experiences of the person and power of the Holy Spirit?
4. Does your life as a Christian stand out like a sore thumb?
5. What situations would you describe as being the 'ends of the earth' for you?