

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups. May 27th 2007

Going deeper in Prayer – Jesus' breath

(Pentecost, Paradigms and Power)

John 20: 19-23; Acts 2: 1-13



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon:

Paradigm shifts : in 1968 someone had asked which country would dominate watch making in the 1990s, most would have said Switzerland. Switzerland had dominated the world of watch making for the previous sixty years. They led the way in new ways to manufacture better and more durable watch parts. They developed the best waterproofing techniques. In 1968 the Swiss made 65% of all watches sold in the world, and 90% of the profits. However by 1980, in Switzerland, watchmakers had been laid off by the thousands and the Swiss controlled a only 10% of the watch market. Why? The Swiss ignored an important new development, Quartz Movement. Ironically a Swiss invented Quartz movement, but it was rejected because it had no mainspring or knob. It was too much of a paradigm shift for them to embrace. It was too new and too strange.

Pentecost : Acts 2:1-13 tells of a **powerful paradigm shift in the people of God**, of miraculous events that accompanied the empowering of the Apostles by the Holy Spirit **new experiences like " tongues of fire"**, the sound of a **'violent' wind** and **speaking in a language that everyone from different regions could understand**. The entire book of Acts speaks of the early Church, growing by the paradigm-shifting miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit. It is possible the apostles, since the Ascension, had remained comfortable in their familiar rooted Jewish worship. Then, in the midst of their comfort, comes a mighty Wind (violent wind") the Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit shakes them up in ways they never could have imagined. And the Holy Spirit does this immediately; there is no waiting, and no waffling and 3000 are saved as a result of the message that is fully released.

Power : before Pentecost they had been with the Holy Spirit,

They had even **received Jesus' breath**, the Holy Spirit after the Resurrection in **John 20**. Then they were able to worship and pray and read the scriptures, they were able to meet together, their fears had gone.

Jesus also told them to wait in Jerusalem **to be clothed with power from on high Luke 24**. In **Acts 2 they are clothed with Power of the Holy Spirit**. Not power like power assistance in your car.. some thing added in to help you do better what you are already doing. No power like that of the wind. And of fire. Remember The wind of October 1987? We could not control it. His Holy Spirit's ways can be something we are fearful of. They demand a paradigm shift of who is in control. I think had many of us been back in the time of Acts, the minute a flame rested on us, we would have blown it out! And I think many of us are more likely to relate to those watching the early Christians; we would have attributed their speech to drunkenness, or perhaps today, to psychological fantasy. I think many of us secretly fear the Holy Spirit, the mighty Wind. We would prefer the Spirit to be a gentle breeze that doesn't challenge us to move outside the prevailing paradigms of our current church culture. So the lesson of the Swiss: a past that was so secure, so dominant, so revered, was destroyed in a little over ten years because of an unwillingness to open up to renewal. How true is this within the church in the UK? It's not essentially about you or me making changes in what we do. It is about receiving His power John the Baptist said of the Father's **'He gives the spirit without limit' John 3: 34** . **Acts 2** Peter testifies that the Prophet Joel had said that God in the last days **would 'pour out His Spirit'** on ALL people. Sons and daughters, young men, old men. This is a move of God in which we today live and He continues to move in power through the most ordinary of people because it is His Holy Spirit power. The Welsh revival (1904) began with a small child, The east African revival began in a girls boarding school in Kenya. These are the ones the Spirit was poured out upon at certain times in history. The current renewal of the church of England began in the early 60's partly through a young service man from the Potteries in Stoke on Trent, forget about power assisted steering, think of a boat, and all you have are your sails, you have no control except to release them for the wind to fill and sweep you along in His power and is direction in his calling for you.



Witness: Questions to discuss

1. What are your fears in relation to the power of the Holy Spirit? Clarify the meaning of the images of 'breath', 'wind'; 'fire'.
2. What were the disciples doing as they waited on God? Do you have time to wait on God in any way? Why is this important?
3. For what purpose are we 'clothed' with 'power from on high'? How does this unite us across generations, cultures, social groups and classes? How easy is it to accept ministry in God's power from someone of another generation, race, gender, class?
4. Identify point/areas where we are slow to make this paradigm shift God's power released in us.
5. God works with the grain of our lives and where we are fearful he takes time to free us. What fears has he released you from and what fears do you have the courage to ask him to deal with today?
6. Take time in your group or in threes to pray for one another and offer any fears you have of His work and control of your life. Ask the Holy Spirit to come and wait on Him. Expect to hear Him speak in words, verses, pictures from others and from yourself to the group and listen carefully to what is shared. It may well encourage you and help you to move to the next step.

For more background read chapters on the Holy Spirit from 'Questions of Life', by Nicky Gumbel.