

### WELCOME AND NOTICES

Christian Aid Week 9-15 May  
Quiz Night 11 May  
Ascension Day service 13 May  
Maintenance morning 15 May

### CALL TO WORSHIP

God raised [Christ] from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but forever. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the centre of all this, Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence. (Ephesians 1:20-23 MSG).

### OPENING SONG: ONE DAY WHEN HEAVEN (GLORIOUS DAY)

<https://youtu.be/Ac39bIEh8-A>

One day when heaven was filled with his praises  
One day when sin was as black as could be  
Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin  
Dwelt among men, my example is he  
Word became flesh and the light shined  
among us, His glory revealed

Living, he loved me  
Dying, he saved me  
Buried, he carried my sins far away  
Rising, he justified freely forever  
One day he's coming  
Oh glorious day, oh glorious day.

One day they led him up Calvary's  
mountain  
One day they nailed him to die on a tree  
Suffering anguish, despised and rejected  
Bearing our sins, my Redeemer is he  
Hands that healed nations, stretched out  
on a tree, and took the nails for me

Living, he loved me...

One day the grave could conceal him no  
longer  
One day the stone rolled away from the  
door  
Then he arose, o'er death he had  
conquered  
Now is ascended, my Lord evermore.  
Death could not hold him,  
The grave could not keep him from rising  
again

Living, he loved me...

One day the trumpet will sound for his  
coming  
One day the skies with his glories will  
shine  
Wonderful day, my Beloved One, bringing  
My Saviour, Jesus, is mine

Living, he loved me...

### OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, in view of your great  
mercy, we lay our lives down as a morning  
sacrifice. Choosing to die to self, we ask  
you to pour your mighty power through  
us, that Jesus may be revealed and your  
kingdom come in power, changing us and  
redeeming the world. **Amen.**

### CONFESSION

**Have mercy on me, O God, in your constant love; in the fullness of your mercy blot out my offences. Wash away all my guilt, and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Give me the joy of your help again and strengthen me with a willing spirit. Amen.**

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Therefore to all who truly repent this is his gracious word: 'Your sins are forgiven.'

**Amen. Thanks be to God.**

### READING: Acts 1:1-11

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. 4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'

6 Then they gathered round him and asked him, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' 7 He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But 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.'

9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

11 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.'

This is the Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

### REFLECTION: PENTECOST PROMISES (1) You will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.

These next two Sundays we are looking at two of Jesus' promises as we ready ourselves for the feast of Pentecost; the promise of the Holy Spirit and the promise of being guided into all truth.

This book called the Acts of the Apostles has sometimes been referred to as the Acts of the Holy Spirit, as it is full of the work of the Spirit from beginning to end. The flame of the Spirit transforms those who come into contact with him. We can trace the work of the Holy Spirit throughout Scripture, from the Spirit hovering over the waters at creation (Genesis 1:2) to the Spirit endowing men and women with his power and wisdom, people such as Joseph, Deborah and Elijah in the Old Testament, to John the Baptist and Jesus himself and the apostles in the New Testament. We see in the book of

Acts the work of the Holy Spirit through the birth, infancy and growth of the Church.

Have you ever struggled to find a gift for someone, whether it be a birthday present, a Christmas present, or an anniversary present? I know I have. The older we get the more difficult it seems to get just the right gift, especially if the person seems to have everything and doesn't want anything. If the person enjoys reading, how do you know which book to buy, one that they will enjoy and don't already have? There have been several occasions where my twin brother and I have bought each other the same gift. Once I bought him a cassette tape of a favourite singer and he bought me the album of the same singer. How do you give a gift that will be special, personal and one that the person will really appreciate?

The Bible tells us that God is the perfect giver of gifts. In Luke's gospel we read, "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13). Our passage today speaks of the most wonderful gift God can give his people, the gift of his Holy Spirit. Jesus referred to this gift as 'the gift my Father promised' (v4). Just ten days after speaking these words, at the Jewish Pentecost festival, we see the promise fulfilled. God himself comes to dwell in his people by his Spirit.

What an amazing gift, that God would come and live within you and I, and it's a gift that we all desperately need. That's

why Jesus told his followers: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised' (v4). Although they had been with Jesus throughout his ministry, seen his crucifixion and now saw the risen Lord over these forty days, they were still to wait for the promised gift. We are not very good at waiting, are we. We want things today, not tomorrow. Think of a young child waiting for a birthday. 'How many sleeps left, daddy?' But young children aren't the only ones who struggle to wait. Have you ever bought something online and struggled to wait for it to arrive? I think that's why Amazon have done so well with their Amazon Prime – next day delivery. They have understood our times, that we don't like waiting. The disciples are told to wait, to not go anywhere or do anything, but to wait, because 'in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.' They are to wait because they will need the Holy Spirit in more ways than they could have imagined. And we do too.

We need the Spirit to live for Jesus. Now Jesus uses the picture of baptism to tell us what the coming of the Holy Spirit will be like. 'For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit' (v5). Jesus uses the baptism of John to help the disciples understand what the coming of the Holy Spirit will be like – like a baptism. Do you remember that John said, 'I baptise you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire' (Luke 3:16). John's baptism was about the washing away of sins, of repentance from sin. It was an external baptism but Jesus'

baptism in the Holy Spirit would be internal and life-changing in ways John's baptism could never be. This promise was spoken about by the prophet Ezekiel when the Lord said through him, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you" (Ezekiel 36:26-27). God promises to change us from within, to change our attitudes and actions, to work in us his will and his ways, something we cannot do by our own strength. We need the Spirit to live for Jesus.

If you say to someone to live a life like Jesus did, we simply cannot do it without God's help, just as I cannot run like Usain Bolt or write a play like William Shakespeare. But if the power of Usain Bolt or the imagination of William Shakespeare could come and live in me, then I could run or write like them. If the Spirit of Jesus can come and live in me then I could live a life like that. We can try with all our might to be like Jesus, but unless his Spirit lives within us, we just cannot do it. We could even say that without the Holy Spirit we may not even desire to live in Jesus' way. We need the gift the Father promised in order to live for Jesus. We need the Spirit to live for Jesus.

We need the Spirit to witness about Jesus. There is a strange question the disciples ask Jesus. "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (v6). In other words, is Jesus going to finish what he started? Is Israel going to be what it once was? But their vision is too small. Jesus has a much bigger vision in mind

than Israel. He has a global vision, a cosmic vision which will reach to the ends of the earth (v8) and change all of heaven and earth. The disciple's vision is too immediate. "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus' kingdom will be over all creation and for eternity, and in a few moments he will be ascending to his heavenly throne. His kingdom will only come in all its fulness on the day when he returns and every eye shall see him and every knee bow to him as Lord.

Yet, Jesus will complete his mission through his disciples. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea and in all Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (v8). The mission of Jesus, as we see throughout the book of Acts, is fulfilled through his people, and that includes you and I today. But we need the promised Holy Spirit to be effective witnesses about Jesus. In Acts 4 we read that the disciples were ordinary, unschooled men (Acts 4:13) but with the Holy Spirit they would become powerful witnesses for Jesus. They would all risk death to tell the gospel. You can't do that without the Holy Spirit giving you the courage to face this ultimate challenge. Let me let you into a secret. You have the Spirit of God living within you if you have confessed Jesus as your Lord and Saviour. Now it's a question of allowing the Spirit to lead you, guide you, shape you, work in and through you to bring honour to the name of Jesus. Paul writes, "Be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). Don't be half full. When someone was baptised the water covered them. When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost the believers were

filled with the Holy Spirit. Be full of God's Spirit. As Paul says to the Thessalonians, "Do not put out the Spirit's fire" (5:19). So, if your fire has grown a little dim or even gone out, ask the Lord to re-light his fire in you.

Some years ago a friend of mine, Rebecca, was at my church in East London. She was sold out for Jesus, and the Lord took her and her Dutch husband Hugo to Kazakhstan. They had to learn Russian but became effective witnesses in a distant country. But it doesn't matter where you witness in the world as long as you are witnessing to the good news of Jesus Christ where he has placed you. Someone had to witness in Jerusalem, and another had to witness in Judea and still another in Samaria, and still others to the ends of the earth. What matters is that we are filled with the Holy Spirit. We need the Spirit to witness about Jesus.

We have a Pentecost promise in this passage of Scripture, that the Holy Spirit will come on us, 'You will be baptised with the Holy Spirit' (v5), and when we are baptised with the Spirit, we will be able to live for Jesus and witness about Jesus.

Let's pray.  
Loving Lord Jesus, we ask you to fill us afresh with your Holy Spirit so that we may live and witness for you, to the glory of your holy name. **Amen.**

#### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

These are responsive prayers:

Thy Kingdom Come  
**Come Holy Spirit**

Ascended Lord, we pray for the persecuted church scattered throughout the world, and ask for courage, endurance and hope. We especially pray for those who dare to witness to the good news of your salvation despite threats and even death.

Thy Kingdom Come,  
**Come Holy Spirit**

Ascended Lord, in this time between Ascension and Pentecost, we pray for our friends who've not yet responded to your love and mercy. We pray that your Spirit may be at work in them to open their eyes to your love and mercy.

Thy Kingdom Come,  
**Come Holy Spirit**

Ascended Lord, we pray you would equip us and inspire us to share the Good News with our friends, families, our communities and wherever we find ourselves, through word and action and with great joy.

Thy Kingdom Come  
**Come Holy Spirit**

Ascended Lord, following the election we pray for our newly elected politicians and representatives. We ask that in humility they may receive wisdom and walk in truth.

Thy Kingdom Come  
**Come Holy Spirit**

Being made one in the power of the Spirit, let us pray with confidence as we say together the Lord's Prayer.

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven  
Hallowed be your name  
Your kingdom come  
Your will be done on earth as in heaven  
Give us today our daily bread  
Forgive us our sins  
As we forgive those who sin against us  
Lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from evil  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory  
are yours, now and for ever. Amen.**

### THERE MUST BE MORE THAN THIS

[https://youtu.be/6XOBBUu\\_23M](https://youtu.be/6XOBBUu_23M)

There must be more than this:  
O Breath of God, come breathe within.  
There must be more than this:  
Spirit of God, we wait for You.  
Fill us anew, we pray;  
Fill us anew, we pray.

Consuming fire, fan into flame  
A passion for Your name.  
Spirit of God, fall in this place.  
Lord, have Your way,  
Lord, have Your way with us.

Come like a rushing wind,  
Clothe us with power from on high.  
Now set the captives free;  
Leave us abandoned to Your praise.  
Lord, let Your glory fall;  
Lord, let Your glory fall.

### HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord is here  
**His Spirit is with us.**  
Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right and good, our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give You thanks, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ the King of glory.

Born of a woman, He came to the rescue of our human race. Dying for us, He trampled death and conquered sin. By the glory of His resurrection He opened the way to life eternal and by His ascension, gave us the sure hope that where He is we may also be. Therefore the universe resounds with joy and with choirs of angels we sing for ever to your praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Lord, send your Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break may be for us the Body of Christ, and the cup we share may be for us the Blood of Christ. May we and all who share this food offer ourselves to live for you, and be welcomed at your eternal feast where all creation worships you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Every time we eat this bread and drink this cup, **We proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread, and after he had given thanks he broke and gave it to them saying, 'This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me'

After supper he took the cup and gave it to them saying, 'This is the cup of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me.'

### RECEIVING OF COMMUNION

The Body of Christ keep you in eternal life.  
The Blood of Christ keep you in eternal life.

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

As we wait in silence,  
**make us ready for Your coming Spirit.**  
As we listen to Your word,  
**make us ready for Your coming Spirit.**  
As we worship You in majesty,  
**make us ready for Your coming Spirit.**  
As we long for Your renewing,  
**make us ready for Your coming Spirit.**  
As we long for Your equipping,  
**make us ready for Your coming Spirit.**  
As we long for Your empowering,  
**make us ready for Your coming Spirit.**

### CROWN HIM WITH MANY CROWNS

[https://youtu.be/YuMh\\_ept-Js](https://youtu.be/YuMh_ept-Js)

Crown him with many crowns  
The Lamb upon His throne;  
Hark, how the heavenly anthem drowns  
all music but its own!  
Awake, my soul, and sing  
Of Him who died for thee,  
And hail Him as thy matchless King  
Through all eternity.

Crown Him the Lord of life,  
who triumphed o'er the grave  
And rose victorious in the strife,  
for those he came to save  
His glories now we sing,  
who died and rose on high,  
Who died eternal life to bring,  
and lives that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of love,  
behold his hands and side,  
those wounds, yet visible above,  
in beauty glorified;  
no angel in the sky  
can fully bear that sight,  
but downward bends his burning eye  
at mysteries so bright.

Crown him the Lord of years,  
The potentate of time,  
Creator of the rolling spheres,  
Ineffably sublime.  
All hail, Redeemer, hail!  
For Thou hast died for me;  
Thy praise shall never, never fail  
Throughout eternity.

### THE BLESSING

God the Father, who has given to His Son  
the name above every name, strengthen  
you to proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord.

God the Son, who as our great high priest  
passed into the heavens, plead for you at  
the right hand of the Father.

God the Holy Spirit, who pours out His  
abundant gifts upon the Church, make  
you faithful servants of Christ our King.

And the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you  
always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**