**Service – 17th May 2020: Holy Spirit**

Welcome + Opening prayer (Father, this morning help us to take a deep breath, pause and reflect on you. Help us to gain a better understanding of the Holy Spirit breathing in our lives, helping and guiding us to become more like Jesus. Allow us to focus on you and your word and what we are to learn from it. Amen.)

Song – Lighthouse (Actions)

Notices – Tuesday – Bible Study (Ephesians 5) – favourite song, Thursday (Colin), Sunday (Heather) + Quiz Night.

Song - Glow – Spring Harvest went online over the Easter Holiday and James really liked this song from the Big Start sessions for kids. Today we’re going to be looking at the Holy Spirit which is partly what Spring Harvest was about this year as they were looking at the Acts church. There’s a line in the song ‘By the Holy Spirit we are all empowered to glow’ and I really like the BSL for that which you’ll see in the video which I think conveys it really well in the sense that it is probably better than the words.

I’m going to look at the Holy Spirit in a couple of different ways this morning, and to start with I want to use Romans 15:13 which says, ‘Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.’

One of the themes that has been coming up in our Bible studies has been that of the power of the Holy Spirit, especially seen in Ephesians 1:17-23 where it talks about the incomparably great power that we can access that is the same as the power that rose Jesus from the dead.

This power only comes from God through the Holy Spirit, we can’t magic it up when we want to or make it ourselves, it is only when we’re acting in accordance with the will of the Holy Spirit. Now to get there – we’ve got to have got a greater understanding, another of Pauls prayers in Ephesians, of God. And luckily for us God’s got this one in hand too. In John 14:25-26 Jesus says that God will send the Holy spirit “who will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you”. It is this foundation of understanding what God wants us to be trying to understand and retain and develop, which will be the next ‘topic’ after we finish Ephesians in Bible study, that allows us to access that power that God has made available to us through the Holy Spirit. It is this foundation that acts as the lighthouse, illuminating our paths and what God wants us to be seeing and responding to in the world.

So far I’ve briefly highlighted some of the idea that we have got this immense power that we can access through having a closer understanding of God and His will. And I think this power should have a knock on impact to another word beginning with P which is peace.

Because God has given us the power to do anything that He asks of us through the Holy Spirit, that can….should? give us a sense of peace that we can face anything we’re coming up against. That doesn’t mean we can do it in our own strength but with His help we can. It is a bit like James the other day when we went for a bike ride. He was getting a bit worn out part way round, well actually about as far from home as we could have been on the loop we were doing, and stopped. After a bit of a chat and a bit of strawberry squash, he decided that if I pushed him he’d be ok with that. So I gave him the little push that he needed, but he then speeds off at in his words ‘mighty speed’ giggling that he’s played a joke on me.

Now I’m not suggesting that we’re playing tricks on God – that’s not a wise move, but God has the power to help us do the bits that we can’t on our own do – he’ll give us that push, nudge, support that we need to get through it. And that’s vital that we realise that and tap into it. If you’re feeling like you need God’s help to do something – ask Him!

The other thing that the Holy Spirit does for us, which is in Romans 8:26-27 is interceding for us on our behalf. When we don’t know how to ask God, and we’re groaning, crying, screaming – that’s when the Holy Spirit steps in and helps us. I vividly remember a time at uni when I had run out of words, and was silently screaming (I know that doesn’t work as a concept but hopefully you get the idea) and then I saw a white blanket lay over the bed and that sense of peace that transcends all understanding came. It was instant. The situation hadn’t changed, but that white blanket gave me that sense of peace.

The other thing that the Holy Spirit does that should give us a sense of peace is that it is the mark that we’re in God’s family, gaining that inheritance with Jesus of being in heaven. Our future is sealed and secure because of the Holy Spirit living and working in our lives. In other places it talks about this being our hope, a certain hope of our place in heaven.

This morning I want to take a few minutes whilst the next song is on for you to pray by yourselves or with those in your house – talk to God, ask to understand more of the Holy Spirit. Maybe you’re feeling weak and unable to do what is in front of you – ask for the power of the Holy Spirit to help you do God’s will. Maybe this morning you’re fearful and frightened – then I pray that you’ll experience that same sense of peace that I had at uni and ask for that.

Song – Spirit of the living God.

If there’s anything that you want particular prayer for – drop me a message in the chat (just make sure it is just to me, not everyone) and I’ll arrange for a trustee to call you and pray with you.

One of the other phrases that came up on the Big Start was to do with one of the leaders saying well it’s all good that the Acts church did this and saw this power, but that was 2000 years ago, what about us? And the response from the other was ‘a long time ago but the same power to glow’. And they then demonstrated this with stories of different Christians through time, so looking at the celts, Francis of Assisi, up to Desmond Tutu. Now I’m going to play you one of the stories based on the life of Corrie ten Boom which we’ll watch now.

Video – Corrie ten Boom.

So Corrie ten Boom was alive in World War Two and had been arrested by the Nazis for hiding some Jewish people in her house. Now she was in a pretty tough situation, with the constant threat of death in the concentration camp. But inspite of everything going on around her, she retained a sense of peace through the power of the Holy Spirit working inside her. Even though it was tough, she still glowed. She managed to get out of the concentration camp on an admin error, which I’d put down to God, and not long after that the other people who she’d been living with were all killed.

But after the war, she didn’t just continue to look after the Jews, she also looked after some of the locals who had collaborated with the Nazis in the war. I doubt humanly that would have been an easy thing for her to do, but with the help of the Holy Spirit she managed it.

So even though Corrie had a tough life, she still managed to glow and there is a Psalm that we’re going to use to build towards communion that I want to read part of to you, and it is Psalm 42:1-5

Psalm 42[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14557a)][[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14557b)]

**1**As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.
**2**My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?
**3**My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, “Where is your God?”
**4**These things I remember as I pour out my soul:
how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14560d)] with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.

**5**Why, my soul, are you downcast?
    Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

When I read the part about ‘I used to go to the house of God’ it resonated a bit as we’re not able to meet at church at the moment, and it is easy at the moment to become downcast because so much of our normal way of life has been changed. But this Psalm reminds us in verse 5, which is repeated at the end as well in verse 11, by giving yourself a firm talking to, to put your hope in God, our Saviour and our God. This is something that we mentioned this week in Bible study about everything we do being controlled by our mind, and how we need to control it and pull it into line – in this case about thinking negatively.

Our hope, our peace, and the power to do all of these things that seem impossible all come from God through the Holy Spirit living in us, in communion with us, being one body. We can only access this peace and power through gaining an understanding of the will of God and living it out with His help. So this morning I want us to celebrate communion together, and acknowledge God for what He has given us.

To take us now into communion we’ll sing our next song – As the deer.

Song – As the deer.

How we’ll do communion is a little different to normal, besides it being over zoom! I will read the passage from 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, and then play a video of a song called ‘What wondrous love is this’. Whilst the video is on I would like you to pray to God, reflect on the lyrics of the song and break the bread and eat it. At the end of the song I will then pray and we’ll drink the wine/squash together.

# **1 Corinthians 11:23-26 New International Version (NIV)**

**23**For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, **24**and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” **25**In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **26**For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Video – What wondrous love is this.

Pray – Father thank you that we are able to have communion with you through Jesus sacrifice, in shedding his blood for our sins. Thank you that because of the Holy Spirit in each of our lives we’re able to have the communication and communion with you to be able to live lives more like Jesus and accessing your power and peace. Amen.

We’re going to close with a scary song. And I don’t mean like thriller or another one where I do some actions. The song is Oceans.

It talks about us calling on the Holy Spirit to walk on the waters. Now unless it is a very unusual day, the oceans are pretty wavy. This isn’t a ‘safe’ song to be singing. It is full of asking for God’s power to allow us to walk on the waters of life, which are pretty choppy at the minute, but also finding that peace in His embrace. So lets think about what we’re singing and use it as a prayer to God.

Song – Oceans.

Father thank you that you long to embrace us, and make us feel loved and protected by you. Help us to know that deep inside us and give us peace, so that when you challenge us to do something ‘absurd’ in our minds like walking on water that we trust in your power to overcome the challenge that we have in front of us. As we end this time together may we all come to know you better and to trust you more – relying on your Holy Spirit to guide us to live better lives to serve You and those around us on Your behalf, sharing the love and sacrifice of Jesus with them. Amen.

A reminder that if you want particular private prayer for something to mention it in a private chat to me and I’ll get a trustee to call you if you don’t have their number to call them.