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Dear all,

Briefing 15: Wednesday 27th May, 2020.

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people." Acts 2: 17a

Some 50 days after Jesus had died and 11 days after his ascension to Heaven, the *Promise* Jesus spoke of in Acts 1 came in power as the Holy Spirit fell upon the disciples. The results were astonishing.

The *frightened* disciples who'd run from the soldiers and hid in the upper room, were now **bold**; declaring the good news of Jesus in public to anyone who'd listen. Filled with the Spirit they did not fail to declare the gospel, and in just a few short weeks the church had grown from a handful to many thousands.

The *timid* disciples who feared arrest, who panicked during the storm on the lake, who wanted seats besides Jesus in glory but who balked at the idea of the cross, were now **brave**. The endurance of the early disciples in the face of persecution, torture and death (and those who have followed) has been a witness to their fervent, unshakeable faith in Jesus. A faith strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The *frail*, sinful, failing disciples who so often let Jesus down and acted out of anger and envy and pride, were changed. Not completely- none were perfect. But as the Holy Spirit did his work their characters were amended; they became **better** people. More like Jesus.

The *ignorance* of the disciples, even after 3 years in Jesus' own school of discipleship was often staggering. But filled with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom and insight, they were able to see the truth in the Old Testament scriptures, and some were carried along by the same Spirit as they wrote letters and books full of grace and truth for us to read. The word **brainier** doesn't quite cut it, (*although it begins with B!*) but the Holy Spirit brought true enlightenment to them, and through them, to us.

And as these *Jewish* men and women grew in faith and godliness and wisdom, living lives of courage, speaking the good of Jesus to a hostile world, so the community of faith grew **broader**. Barriers were broken down as Gentiles heard the good news of Jesus, rejoiced, repented and came into full fellowship with their Jewish brothers and sisters.

Without the coming of the Holy Spirit, there would have been no change, no courage, no witness, no growth and no church. In their own strength the disciples would have achieved nothing, but in the power of God they changed the world.

Oh how we need the Spirit's power today! As we approach Pentecost, let us commit ourselves to pray for God to make us bold and brave and more like Jesus.

Let's pray that the Holy Spirit would not only draw us to God's Word, but also enlighten our minds to understand it and apply it to our hearts so that we obey it. Only then will we have the joy of seeing God's kingdom grow in us and through us.

May that happen in our day!

Yours in Christ,

Dave

Notices and Updates...

MEN'S VIRTUAL BREAKFAST: The men are gathering for another virtual breakfast at 8:30am on Saturday 30th May. For a link to join in contact Mike on mikewilton@hotmail.com.

CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED: Starting Tuesday 2nd June at 7:30pm we will be running a virtual Christianity Explored course. We will start to advertise this from this Sunday, and place ads on YouTube as well. Please pass them on your friends and family, and share the links widely. And if you'd like to join in and refresh yourself on the basics of our faith, then please do.

READING FOR SUNDAY: If you want to read the passage ahead of Sunday, it is Mark 1: 1-11.

CHURCH FAMILY QUIZ NIGHT: Sunday 7th June from 6pm-7:30pm. Come and join us for an online family quiz via Zoom. Email me if you'd like to come along and I'll send the link out on a couple of hours before.

SOMETHING FOR YOUR SOUL...

Video for the week: If you're not too fed up with the Dominic Cummings controversy, do take a look at this short video from our friends at Speak Life. It will give you a whole new way of thinking through your response, and why you feel that way: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26upxqH5uiM>

The song for the week is a new song that reminds us that above all earthly powers and authorities is our God, a God the book of Daniel calls the **Ancient of Days**. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPpGphzScjA>

THE LATEST VIDEOS...

There is a new **all age family worship service** available from today. **PLEASE** remember to **share, like** (that's the thumbs up sign!) and **leave your comments** to any video you watch! Our YouTube Channel is here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzRGAaIRTsJuKFRBvkLjAtQ>

You'll also find an invitation for people to join our next Christianity Explored course. PLEASE share this video as widely as you can. You might want to consider coming on the course yourself too.

REMINDERS...

PREVIOUS LETTERS AND INFORMATION: These can all be accessed via our websites or Facebook pages.

If you'd like to lead the **PRAYERS** or do the **BIBLE READING** for our on-line service, please get in touch!

KEEPING IN TOUCH: Please do keep going with the **4UP/4DOWN** challenge and call people regularly and let me or Lynda Matthews (Pastoral Team leader) know of any concerns you have. Let's not let 'lockdown fatigue' stop us from loving one another.

SERVICE DOWN A TELEPHONE LINE: A reminder that our '*service down a telephone line*' is now up and running. The message will be updated every few days with Evening Prayer services and the Sunday sermon. Simply dial this **local number 01438 907143** (you'll need the area code as well), and listen.

PRAYER: We are still gathering on Tuesday mornings from 7am to 8am for a virtual prayer meeting. If you'd like to join us, send me an email and I'll send you an invite.

NEED HELP? Do ask! We are a family after all. If you or a neighbour need help that you can't provide, contact Herts Help on 0300 123 4044 or via <https://www.hertshelp.net/hertshelp.aspx>.

WANT TO VOLUNTEER? See <https://www.goodsamapp.org/NHS> or <https://www.thvolunteering.org.uk/>