

THE WORD FOR TODAY

THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (John's Gospel Chapter 14, verses 15-26)

Pentecost this year falls on 8th June and this is the day when the Holy Spirit came to the disciples, 10 days after Jesus had returned to his Father in Heaven. They had been asked by him to go out into the world and make disciples and this must have been very daunting—but they had been told to wait for power to be given to them. I wonder how much they remembered of what Jesus had said just before he was arrested? How he had promised a Counsellor, a Helper, to everyone who loved him and was following his commandments.

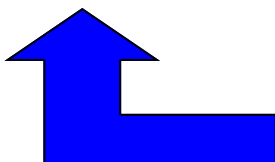
At Liberton Kirk we have recently lost our Minister to his well-earned retirement, and we have the task of being the church in this place without that much-loved leader until a new appointment can be made. Quite daunting! This promise from Jesus speaks to us too of the gift of the Holy Spirit to each and every one of us who loves him and seeks to follow him. We can always trust the promises of Jesus and this is no different—the power and whatever help we need will be provided!

It's not easy to picture the Holy Spirit, so the pictures are of the various names we give to the Spirit: a spring of living water, a flame of fire, a dove, water pouring down, a breath, a rushing mighty wind, a Counsellor. They could just as well have been pictures of the nature all around us in Liberton, which always gives me a powerful sense of God's presence.



Follow the words of this passage round the church, beginning on the north wall of this little building. We use the New International Version of the Bible, which you can find on the internet under Bible Gateway.

The whole "Word for Today" can be found on the church website, www.libertonkirk.net. You can also find there previous "Words for Today", meditations and prayers on other Bible passages.



Turn immediately left to find the first Bible extract on the bench

***“If you love me, you will obey what I command.
And I will ask the Father, and he will give you
another Counsellor to be with you for ever—
the Spirit of truth.”***

1



Most of the counselling I have come across is one-to-one. It is a personal thing—someone to help and guide, and in this case “for ever”. A constant companion.

When Jesus came to earth one of his names was Emmanuel, meaning “God with us”. When he returns to his Father, forty days after his resurrection, we who believe receive his Holy Spirit, who is everything we need.

If we need a parent’s arms around us, he is God the Father. When we need a friend to hold our hand he can be God the Son, and when we need a nudge in the right direction he can be God the Spirit, who is a great nudger. Behind the nudging is all the power of God Almighty! What a gift from him to each of us who believe in our Lord and Saviour!

***Lord, thank you for the Holy Spirit, who makes you real in my life
and helps me to follow in your ways,
a source of help and guidance and power
for the whole of my life.***

(No. 2 is on the bench just round the corner of the church building you are looking at)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

***“The world cannot accept him,
because it neither sees him nor knows him.
But you know him, for he lives with you
and will be in you.”***

2



We who believe are so privileged to have this gift of the Spirit. How do we know? Because he lives with us and in us. How do we know that? We find the courage to go and speak to somebody we have wronged. We find the right words to say to someone in distress. We discover we can let go of grudges. We can forgive. We can pray more meaningfully. We can know peace when the world seems to be exploding around us. We can know joy in the midst of sadness.

A little prayer before a daunting task and courage will come—try it and see!

***Lord, help me to recognise your Holy Spirit with me and in me.
Give me the courage I need to tackle difficult situations.
Give me wisdom to choose the right way forward.
Thank you for this amazing gift.***

(Continue along this side of the church to find No. 3)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

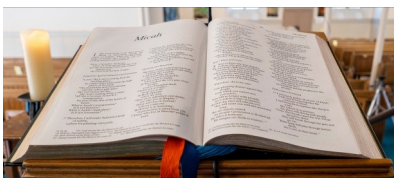
*"I will not leave you as orphans;
I will come to you.
Before long, the world will not see me any more,
but you will see me.
Because I live, you also will live."*



Such reassurance to the first disciples and to us today. Yes, Jesus was going to his death, but he would rise again and be seen by those who loved him and they would know that death had been defeated and eternal life was a sure hope. This is why Good Friday and Easter are so special for us. Jesus died and rose again so that we can be forgiven for our sins, be free from our burden of guilt, brought back into God's family and look forward to everlasting life. How can we take that in?

*Lord, thank you that you will never leave us alone.
Thank you for your death and resurrection
Which gives us the promise of forgiveness and everlasting life.
Lord, we praise and worship you!*

(Walk along the back of the church and turn right to find No. 4 on the Prayer Bench)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

***“On that day you will realise
that I am in my Father, and you are in me,
and I am in you.”***

4

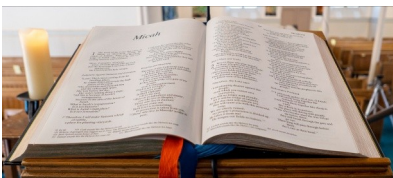


Jesus’ resurrection changed the disciples’ perspective on life! When he appeared to them it opened up a future to them. They had not lost him—he was alive and would never leave them.

Jesus doesn’t stand in front of us in the flesh. But we encounter him in the Spirit living in us—he is real! We know that he is living and that we have a future life to look forward to.

***Lord, thank you for being a living God
who is always with me in Spirit.
Thank you for a future to look forward to,
always with you, my Saviour and Lord.***

(Turn left to find No. 5 on the bench at the side of the church)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

***Whoever has my commands and obeys
them, he is the one who loves me.
He who loves me will be loved by my Father,
and I too will love him
and show myself to him."***

5



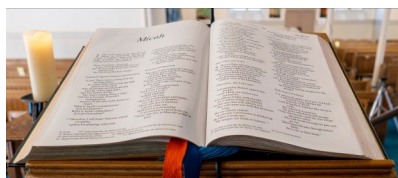
Love and obedience go hand in hand—
Jesus says this more than once.

We can't say we love and believe in Jesus, accept his forgiveness, and then deliberately go off and do exactly the same wrong thing again! Such grace from God surely demands that we try to obey his commands, even though we may fail at times. We can rely on God's help through his Spirit.

The rewards are great—that grace and love poured out and a life-transforming close relationship with our Lord!

***Lord, it isn't easy to follow you
but your grace and love demand that I try with all my heart.
Thank you that you will be with me always to guide me.
Let me not fail you, I pray.***

(Walk towards the front of the church and find No. 6 on the bench beside the cairn.)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, ‘But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?’ Jesus replied, ‘If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.’”

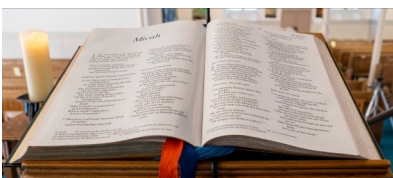
6



Like the crowds on Palm Sunday, the disciples probably wished Jesus would appear like a knight in shining armour and show his power. Have we not wished something similar ourselves—that God would show his hand, sort out the wars that rage all round the world and let some of the leaders know who was in charge? But God wants his faithful people to play their part—to get his message over to the rest of the world. It’s down to us (but with his help of course).

*Lord, there is work to do in a world longing for peace and justice.
Help me to realise my responsibility.
Deepen my faith in the guidance and power of your Holy Spirit
working in me.*

(Walk round the corner of the church to find No. 7 on one of the benches)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

***“All this I have spoken while still with you.
But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the
Father will send in my name, will teach you
all things and will remind you of everything I
have said to you.”***

7



The disciples had a special face-to-face relationship with Jesus while he lived on earth, but we have a relationship no less special through his Spirit. He brings us a reminder of all Jesus' teaching and helps our understanding. As we walk this earth with Jesus we have his support and power with us always.

***Come to me, Holy Spirit of the Risen Lord Jesus,
and live in my heart for ever.
Guide my steps in your paths and keep me close to you always.***



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