

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 256

Pentecost Sunday 19th May 2024

‘Virtually Church but with some way to go...’

Welcome

Welcome to Cutting Edge Camelot this Sunday.

Scripture Passages

Acts 2: 1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

² And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵ Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶ And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.

⁷ Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs - in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” ¹² All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?”

¹³ But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. ¹⁵ Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ ‘In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.

¹⁸ Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

²⁰ The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.

²¹ Then everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

John 15: 26-27, 16: 4-15

“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.

²⁷ You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

^{16:4b} “I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. ⁵ But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. ⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come

to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ about sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

¹² "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Reflection

It was all a misunderstanding, a breakdown in communication. This is what the lawyers for the world's top golfer, Scott Scheffler said as their client was arrested in a traffic incident on his way to play a round of golf. We have yet to see what the court will make of this argument.

But it does illustrate the point that misunderstandings and breakdowns in communication can lead to some very serious consequences.

It can be so difficult to get our point across in the way we would like to do so. Even where there is goodwill, messages can become changed beyond recognition as they are passed from one person to another. The game of Chinese Whispers often provides amusing examples of what can happen. When I tried this at North Cadbury school this week, the children were rather impressive in their ability to pass on messages accurately although the pink apple did turn into the orange apple!

But there is not always goodwill. When a relationship has had a difficult history, the result can be that we are automatically suspicious of anything

the other person might be saying. We can read into their words a tone of hostility or disparagement even when this does not in fact exist.

And sometimes we just hear what we have decided in advance we want to hear. Anything awkward that does not fit in with our own preconceived notions simply gets 'screened out'.

Some people may find themselves more comfortable with some forms of communication than others. Some may prefer to put their thoughts down carefully in writing or by email. Others may just instinctively pick up the telephone and trust that all that they want to say will simply and naturally form part of the flow of conversation.

But the effects and costs of miscommunication can cast shadows across relationships which can take a very long time and a great amount of effort to dispel.

In the light of this, what would we not give for a form of communication in which we understood others perfectly and, in turn, were understood by them?

This is one of the promises given to us by the Holy Spirit whose coming we celebrate on this Pentecost Sunday.

Representatives of the whole known world of the time have been gathered together in Jerusalem to celebrate the existing Jewish festival of Pentecost. Many visitors had come from across countries which we now know as modern day Iran, Iraq, Israel and North Africa together with visitors from Rome. The list of these countries is a long one and those who are asked to read this lesson on Pentecost Sunday often raise questions about pronunciation. I am not sure I know all the answers to these queries so sometimes I just respond with 'Pronounce it like that and if you do it confidently no-one will question you !'

But each of these representatives of different nations heard the apostles speaking about the wonders of God in their own native tongue. It was like a reversal of the Tower of Babel in which human languages were separated resulting in confusion and the inability of people of different nationalities to understand one another.

This was a miracle, a result of the apostles being filled with the Holy Spirit and beginning to speak in different languages from their native tongue.

So far, we have focussed on the means of this communication. And that is miraculous enough in itself. But what of the content of what was being communicated? After all, the ability to transmit a message such as 'Rat-a-tat-tat. The cat sat on the mat' perfectly in any number of languages is unlikely to give us a life transforming message.

However, at Pentecost we should not focus on the extraordinary method of communication to the detriment of focussing on what was actually being said in all these different languages.

For the visitors to Jerusalem from all over the world heard a message concerning the mighty and life changing works of God. This is the message of the gospel and we find this theme picked up in our gospel reading from John's gospel this morning.

In this reading, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Advocate. There are many words and symbols for the Holy Spirit, each one of which throws its own light on who the Spirit is. The underlying Greek word which is being translated here is Paraclete. Literally this means the One who is called to come alongside and help another person. In this way, an advocate or a mediator or intercessor or simply helper are all possible ways of translating this into English. Other words that can be used are Comforter or Counsellor.

But underlying all these nuances of meaning is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the truth. So, this Advocate is also the Spirit of truth. The truth can be uncomfortable both for ourselves and for other people. It shows the reality of sin and what we are truly like. And yet it also shows us all that God has done for us in Christ and that if we are to be put right with God, we need to accept what Christ has done for us rather than struggling to be accepted by God through our own efforts. Surely this message is truly a wonderful and life changing one.

As we think not simply about ourselves but as we look outwards at our world, we see how much we need truth and truthfulness. This was the subject of much searching and complex discussion at our Men's Breakfast in Galhampton yesterday.

We live in a world which speaks of 'my truth' and 'your truth' and in which any claims to a truth which stands over and above such personal understandings are treated with suspicion. And yet without any belief that there is a truth 'out there' we can so easily slip back into that pre-Pentecost world of confusion and misunderstanding.

And then we have the world of politics where so often competing claims to truth are decided not on the basis of any objective standard but on the basis of which voices are the most popular and speak the loudest.

Recently, the results of an inquiry were published into the loss of a ship, Sir Galahad, in the Falklands War more than forty years ago. For decades an army regiment was blamed for this loss. Now, however, the inquiry has completely exonerated the regiment. Meanwhile, survivors have had to endure the publication of false accounts of what happened and the abuse which has followed such publications. Not surprisingly, one survivor of the regiment has commented tellingly on the inquiry, 'All I want is the truth,'

In this kind of world, do we not crave and need the calm and settled assurance that Jesus is indeed, as He claimed to be, the truth, the way and the life? And as we rest on this assurance, so we will find the promise of the Holy Spirit to be true, that the Spirit of truth will guide us into all the truth.

Tristram

Points for Prayers

- Receiving the Holy Spirit and being guided into all the truth
- For continuing and new conflicts including those in the Ukraine, Israel, Gaza and Iran
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- For Elliscombe House in Higher Holton and its residents
- For teachers and children of North Cadbury church school

Hymn

One well known hymn set for Pentecost Sunday is ‘Come down, O love divine.’

Services for this week and next

Sunday 19 th May	9.30 am Communion, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 19 th May	11.00 am Communion, Maperton
Sunday 19 th May	11.00 am Sunday Worship, North Cadbury
Sunday 19 th May	6.30 pm Evensong, Yarlington
Sunday 26 th May	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 26 th May	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury

Sunday 26 th May	9.30 am Matins, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 26 th May	9.30 am Morning Worship, North Cheriton
Sunday 26 th May	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 26 th May	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlinton
Sunday 26 th May	6.30 pm Evening Service, Galhampton

Excalibur online

The May edition of Excalibur has now been published online at camelotparishes.co.uk. It contains details of Camelot people, a record of baptisms, weddings and funerals undertaken through the church in the Camelot Parishes.

The Parish Office

If Rob is not in the Office during normal office hours please contact him via email (office@camelotparishes.org.uk) or on 01749 850934.

Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family

*We pray that 'we might live in love,
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us'*

(Ephesians 5: 2)