

# Pentecost: Bible Study:

## Happy Birthday Church! Acts 2: 1-41

The festival of Pentecost was a festival to show thanks for the Lord's blessing of harvest. It was a festival of joy, where people would bring the first fruit of their wheat harvest as an offering. Also known as the festival of weeks / harvest. It was traditionally known as the day Moses received the law and comes 50 days after the Sabbath of Passover week.

<b>Find out more:</b> Exodus 23:16, 34:22; Lev 23:15- 21; Num 28:17- 25; Dt 16:3,4,8.
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Read Acts 2:1-13

How many people are gathered together? (c.f. 1:15)

What happens?

What does loud wind signify in Ezekiel 37:9,14?

What does fire signify in Exodus 3:2?

What is the impact of the disciples being able to speak in other (unlearned) languages?

Why do some people make fun of them?

Read Acts 2:14-41

What is the end product of this experience of the Holy Spirit? (41)

What are the key elements in the passage that help those who hear and see these things make that decision?

## Study Notes: John 16:5-15

## Christ Church W4

What would it have been like to see Jesus in action? Would it take away any doubts you have about healing, miracles, who Jesus is, whether God is real etc?

What does John 16:7 say? How does this challenge our answers to the opening question?

Is Jesus right? How could it be?

### Read John 16:5-15

Mike described the word 'para-kletos' as being both the God who is close/comforting and the God who is a truth-teller.

*Kletos* is the truth-teller part. Where have you valued someone telling you the truth, even when it was tough? When have you known God to tell you a hard truth through the Holy Spirit?

*Para* is the alongside comforter. Why is it that real comfort is coupled with truth?

### Over to you

Are you naturally more on the comforting people or speaking truth side?

How would your relationships change if you tried to marry speaking comfort and truth more fully in the way you relate to other?

## John 14:15-30 Study Questions:

### The Holy Spirit as comforter

Introduction: What is your usual reaction when you are worried about losing someone/something precious to you?

#### Read John 14:15-30

The word *paraclete* can be translated many ways:

Counsellor

Comforter [lit. strength giver].

Advocate

Which of these means most to you, why?

Jesus talks about the *paraclete* as 'another *paraclete*', he being the first one.

*Another* means an identical other – 'a *paraclete* just like me'

Why would that have been a) confusing; b) ultimately comforting to the disciples.

What does that teach us about who the Holy Spirit is...

What roles will the Holy Spirit play?

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What is your personal experience of the Holy Spirit?

Do you realise he is the Spirit of Jesus?

How might you open your life to him today?

# For Personal or Group Reflection: John 15:1-17

## **Vision Series: John 15: 1-17 (weeks commencing 17/4/18 and 22/4/18)**

Welcome back to Small Groups: on Tuesday 24 April please join us as a whole group at 7:30pm for our Annual Big Vision Night. Venue St Alban's. It will be a key night in the life of the church with space for small group discussion, Q&A on the vision and the past year, worship, praise and much more besides.

Here are questions as you get back into groups and for personal reflections (they can be done over 1 or 2 weeks).

### **Read John 15:1-17**

#### **'I... am the vine' Teaser Question:**

*How good are you at working from rest, rather than just resting from work?*

#### **A) Review the Old Testament passages re: the vine (Ps 80, Isa 5, Jer 2)**

What did the Vine represent to Jewish people?

What do these passages say about the health of the vine?

What do you think Jesus is claiming to be in saying that he is now the 'true vine'?

#### **B) Context**

Where is Jesus as he gives this speech?

Look at verse 3. When did Jesus previously talk about them being clean?  
[think back to Holy Week!] ('cleansed' has the same root Greek word as 'pruned').

This speech continues through Chp 14-17 and all that happens on that same night. How might this passage about the Vine encourage them given what is about to happen that very weekend?

#### **C) Abiding/remaining/obedience and bearing fruit**

What could abiding look like in the Christian life:

- i) on a daily basis,
- ii) on a weekly basis,
- iii) on an annual basis,
- iv) on a 7 year cycle.

What do you think he means by bearing fruit? Where can you see this fruit?  
Does this passage mean God's love is conditional on your fruitfulness?

## D) Pruning...

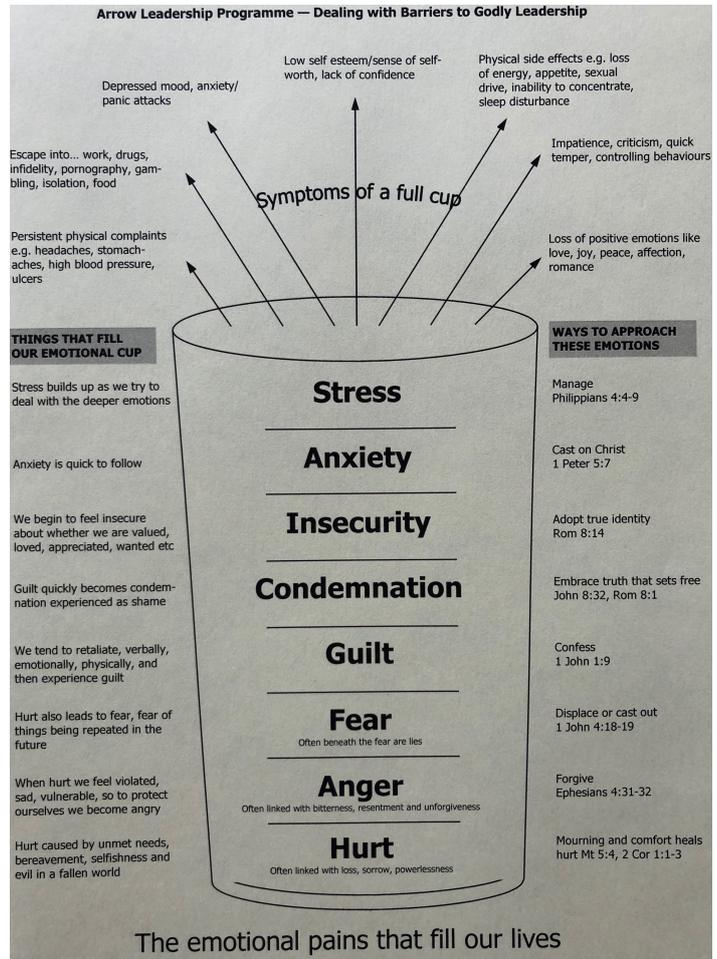
Does it seem unfair to you that the gardener wants to prune those bits of your life that have been bearing fruit? What could you tell yourself when you seem to be going through a time of pruning?

## E) Analysis

Have a look at the 'symptoms of a full cup' talked about on the Lent Freedom course.

Where has hurt in your life led to anger, fear, guilt etc...

Is there any dead wood God might lovingly like to strip away from you and burn up?



**Use the grid below to check the extent each pressure applies to your life.**

	Applicability	Applicability	Applicability	Applicability
Bad habit/ Attitude	None	Low	Medium	High
Workaholism				
Lust for money				
Unforgiveness				
Anger				
Retail Therapy				
Lying				
Alcohol abuse				
Unfaithfulness				
Pornography				
Power seeking				
Escapism				
Other...				

**Biblical stress busters - tips on abiding, obedience & bearing fruit**

Internal	External
Stay healthy	Set right priorities - God, family, Work
Pray & read the bible	Get enough rest & respect the Sabbath
Fight fear	Manage priorities not time
Take joy seriously	Check for compulsions / addictions
Take an emotional break	Root out idols (including Workaholism)
Minister in the opposite spirit	Get free (cf <i>Freedom in Christ</i> course) forgive!