



## Sermon Notes

**Term** – Summer 2019

**Series** – Worship

**Gathering & Date** – the 10, 9 June

**Title** – Worship and overflow

**Preacher** – Paul Langham

**Readings** – Ezekiel 11:19-20 / Ezekiel 36:26-27 / Jeremiah 31:31, 33 / Luke 24:45-49 / Acts 1:3-8 / Acts 2:1-8, 11, 12, 14-21, 37-41

**Main message of this talk in one sentence** – Pentecost was THE empowering event which prevented the Christian story fading into obscurity ... and if we want to see similar outpourings in our day, we need to be people of waiting and longing, and those who devote time to the Lord in ‘the upper room’ of our hearts and minds

### **Main points** –

Humans are creatures of habit ...

Part of our created nature

- Days
- Weeks
- Seasons
- Jewish festivals
- Church

Habit = something that you do often and regularly, sometimes without knowing that you are doing it ...

God’s work will often disrupt those habits.

Jewish Festivals are key to a full understanding of Pentecost

There were 7 Jewish Festivals or Sacred Feasts given by God in the OT. 3 are significant for our understanding of the events from Easter to Pentecost

- Passover (celebrating freedom) – when the lamb was sacrificed, to remind the people of their ancestors’ deliverance from slavery in Egypt. What we call Good Friday, when Jesus was sacrificed to set us free from our sins
- FirstFruits (celebrating new life) – the day after the first Sabbath after Passover (Sabbath runs from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday – remember that Jesus’ body had to be taken down on the day of Crucifixion:

*Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. John 19:31*

Paul explicitly links the resurrection of Jesus with the festival of firstfruits

*Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 1 Corinthians 5:20*

- Weeks (celebrating the Law of Moses) – 50 days after Firstfruits (i.e. also a Sunday). Now called Pentecost (from Greek for 50). Recalling the giving of the Law at Sinai (which in rabbinic tradition was said to have happened 50 days after the people crossed the Red Sea.

Remember our readings ... new heart, spirit within them, write my laws in their hearts – we can see the significance of the Holy Spirit being poured into human hearts (what Jesus calls the promise of the Father) on the very day that remembered the giving of the Law on tablets of stone.

So what need we do to pursue today's outpourings of the Holy Spirit? We take our cue from the disciples in the upper room

- They waited – that's what Jesus had told them to do (Luke 24:49 / Acts 1:4). Are we people who wait? People of longing? To wait requires a future-focussed mind set. Are we focused on the future or are we looking to the past? Has church become a habit which makes it hard for us to accept change when the Lord wants to do a new thing?
- They put in the hours in the upper room (which to me stands for the hidden places of our own private devotion) – talking, no doubt, wrestling with questions, poring over scripture ... but above all praying, crying out to their Father in heaven to send what Jesus had promised

Pentecost was in essence a missionary spark to a flame which would burn ever more brightly across space and time.

Everything we do – including our worship – comes as an overflow of everything God has poured into us.

**For further thought –**

- What does 'waiting' mean to you? Are you focused on the future or on the past? How much are you longing for the 'more' that God always has in store for his people?
- What does 'the upper room' signify to you? How is your private place and time with the Lord?
- Where do you see evidence of the overflow in your life from all He has poured in?