

# **FIVE FORKS BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH**

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**SERMON:** *Now What*  
**SERIES:** *Easter – 1 week later*  
**SCRIPTURES:** *Acts 2:1-4; John 14:16-17;*  
**SPEAKER:** *Shaun Kipe*  
**DATE:** *4 – 19 - 2020*

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Well good morning, it so great to worship with you.

Before we get into the message for today, just a heads up about next week. We've had to adjust our calendar a little. Next week was supposed to be our annual Youth Sunday, where our teens take over the church, run the Sunday morning services.

But because of restrictions in place, it was just not possible for the teens to prepare for youth Sunday. But, we still believe that our our student ministry is critical to the life our church. And so, even though they won't be leading next week...our message is gonna be in honor of and celebration of our young people and why they're so important to community life at Five Forks church.

And I'm really excited that our Student Ministry Director, Brady Smith is gonna be team teaching with me. So really looking forward to that.

Well, last Sunday was Easter. Wow, what a celebration. Singing, hope, restoration, joy... It's the climax of the Christian calendar.

But I realized that for a lot of us...we're in danger of thinking...that's it. That's the end of the story. Pack up and head home until next year. Easter is one of the most highly attended Sundays. But it is no coincidence that the Sunday after Easter is

often one of the least attended and I believe it has to do with the mentality that, “the game is over.”

But I thought, you know, that’s not quite right. Truth is, Easter, the resurrection, wasn’t the end of the story for the disciples, it was the beginning. And if we pack up and head home after the Easter story, we may just miss out on the grand finale.

And so this morning on the Sunday after Easter I want to talk about **“Now what?”** What are God’s people, what are Jesus followers, up to after Jesus resurrection?

And to find that answer, we’re gonna take a look at what those original followers of Jesus were doing shortly after the resurrection. The Easter story is found in the Gospels **Matthew, Mark, Luke and John**, but what comes next?

What comes next, is found in the **book of Acts** and kick-started by an event called “Pentecost.”

## **I. Pentecost**

If you have a Bible turn with me to Acts 2. The resurrection has happened. Jesus has appeared, alive again to his followers, he ascends back to the Father. Now what? Ready...fascinating story.

**Acts 2:1 - When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues<sup>[a]</sup> as the Spirit enabled them.**

Many of you know I grew in Zambia. And this story always bring back a childhood memory for me. You know how songs that you sang, when you were little just stick in your brain. I remember the Zambians, loved to this song called, “Fire fell on me.” or as they would say, “Fire fell on me.”

And as I begin singing through the words of that song, my thought is, “Wait, what on earth is going on in this story? What exactly is Pentecost?”

In Churches today, Pentecost is celebrated on the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Easter. This year Sunday, May 31<sup>st</sup> is Pentecost Sunday. It is a day set aside to mark “the arrival” of God’s promised Holy Spirit.

Jesus during the week leading up to Easter, had told his disciples, he would be with them for only a little while longer and then that he would be returning to the Father. But promised he would not leave them alone.

**John 14:16-17 - <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. 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<sup>cl</sup> in you.**

And after Jesus has returned to the Father, the disciples are awaiting the arrival of God’s Holy Spirit as Jesus promised. And Pentecost is the Day God’s Holy Spirit arrives.

Which is why, Pentecost has traditionally been viewed as the “Birthday” of the church. Easter isn’t the end of the story, it’s the beginning of the story. It’s the beginning of new life, guided and empowered by the presence of God’s Holy Spirit living in us.

From this point on in the Bible, and even for you and me today, the Holy Spirit, becomes the central figure in the life of the church and the followers of Jesus.

What are the earliest followers doing after Easter? They are **becoming familiar with God's Holy Spirit.**

And so for the rest of our time this morning, that's what we are going to do. Become familiar with God's Holy Spirit. Truth is, if we're being honest, we're not very good at talking about the Holy Spirit. In fact in a few weeks, my Dad, Pastor Ray, is gonna spend a couple of weeks talking about God's Holy Spirit.

I'll just confess on a personal level, I'm not very good at talking about the Holy Spirit.

If you hang around Shaun long enough, I'll talk about Jesus. Jesus resonates with me. Jesus seems concrete, relatable, and understandable. Jesus loves people. He teaches, he forgives, he heals. For the most part, He fits in my box.

I'm even comfortable with conversations about God the Father. From childhood, that's kind of how I grew up picturing God...God the Father.

But the Holy Spirit...mysterious, vague, shadowy, unpredictable.

Somebody has remarked that the Holy Spirit is kind of like the mysterious and forgotten member of the Trinity.

So first,

**A. Accept the mystery surrounding the Holy Spirit.**

Remember, when we are talking about the Holy Spirit we are delving into a conversation about the nature of God's existence. We should expect that at a certain level our language and ability to comprehend is going to be inadequate.

*Here's one way to think about this. Just do this with me for a moment, wherever you are seated...stretch your hands out into the shape of v (PIC OF V)...stretches to infinite and in a way represents the Holy Spirit. The point is where infinite meets finite. Jesus. (Cavey)*

Think about the description of the Holy Spirit, in the passage we read this morning.

**“tongues of fire...came to rest on...them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues”**

About 11 years ago, Jenny and I were on a trip in Honduras. And we attended a charismatic prayer service while we were there. And the gentleman who was leading the service had our group stand up in a circle and he was going to pray over us. One by one, he went around the group, laying hands on us and praying over us. And I remember he was very animated, and energetic in his prayer.

And he was praying in Spanish, and my Spanish was ok, but not great and so mostly I was just trying to follow along as he prayed. He finally came to me and began praying...I realized at one point he was talking about visualizing me as a pillar of strength. He kept saying, “Fuerte, Fuerte, Fuerte”, which in English means “Strong, strong, strong.” Needless to say, this was not something that had been prayed or spoken over me before. And so I'm not gonna lie, I kind of opened one eye and peeked at him.

Then no, joke, I was totally unprepared for what happened next. He stepped back, leaned over and head-butted my stomach.

I was surprised, shocked, unprepared. I remember walking out of that prayer time unsure, confused. And I had to admit a certain level of distrust and suspicion. Was this man really praying under the power of the Holy Spirit, is this what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit, was this all a show?

Maybe you've felt this way about your experience and understanding of the Holy Spirit. Unsure, confused, suspicious.

Perhaps you hear others speak confidently about their experiences of the Holy Spirit (speaking in tongues or miraculous healings) and you feel left out.

Maybe you've thought, the Holy Spirit is for religious professionals. But not for ordinary people like you.

Or the HS is for just for people who are a little weird and that makes us a little uncomfortable.

It's kind of fascinating in the Pentecost story. There are those that are suspicious & skeptical about the tongues of fire. **"They've had a little too much wine."**

For many of us raised in modern, North America, who think we know more about real life than others can be quick to look down on others' experiences. It is easy to be skeptical. But I just want to caution us.

Scholar, Justo Gonzalez calls this **the disadvantage of the advantaged.**

We also find the

## **B. Mystery in the language**

we use in talking about the Holy Spirit. The most common title is **“the Holy Spirit.”** Others will say adding “the” in front of Holy Spirit makes the Holy Spirit impersonal. You don’t say “The Jesus” or “The God”. And so some just say **“Holy Spirit.”**

And is the Holy Spirit a person or an it? He or she? What is the correct pronoun to use?

Some traditions, don’t use Holy Spirit at all they use “Holy Ghost” and that brings up a whole new set of images and emotions, doesn’t it?

Remember, when we are talking about the Holy Spirit we are delving into a conversation about God’s nature; how He exists. We should expect that at a certain level our language and ability to comprehend is going to be inadequate, we’ll need to be prepared to accept some of the mystery surrounding the Holy Spirit.

But within the mystery, there are many important aspects we can understand about the Holy Spirit. And so I just want to briefly mention a couple this morning...

## **II. What we do know about the Holy Spirit.**

### **A. The Holy Spirit is personal.**

The Holy Spirit is God’s, very real, active and personal presence at work in our world and in our lives.

When Jesus told his disciples in John 14 that he was going to be sending an **“advocate”** to be with them. The Greek sense of the word advocate, implies that Holy Spirit will be for us today, what Jesus was for his disciples back then...God with us.

We have this tendency to think of the Holy Spirit as an impersonal power, or invisible force, or abstract influence...but not the constant, active and personal presence of God in our lives. There is a huge difference between an invisible, impersonal force and the personal presence of God.

I think a lot of people think of God's Holy Spirit like they think of modern day digital devices like Siri or Alexa (**PIC OF ALEXA**). Always listening and working behind the scenes but not really alive. I can call on Siri, when I need her to answer a question for me, but I'm never really concerned with whether Siri approves or disapproves of the choices I make. If I'm deciding what to do for dinner. I might ask Siri...

*"Hey Siri, what restaurants are near me?"* She'll give me a list and I'll pick my favorite. And I won't think twice about what Siri would do for dinner or what Siri would want me to do for dinner.

But the dinner conversation, changes significantly when I think about the personal presence and influence of my wife Jenny. Even when Jenny is not physically present, I am still very much aware of her personal presence...which impacts and influences the choices I make.

So, if I'm deciding what to do for dinner? I no longer think just about me and my wants, there is this other part of me that is just as real, it's alive, it's personal. How will my choice about dinner, affect her? What does Jenny like? What would make her happy? What did we eat last night? How many dirty dishes will it create?

Do you see the difference? Jenny's personal presence is very different from Siri's impersonal presence. How might we live differently if we truly became aware that God's personal presence was with us, every moment of every day? Just think about how practical this concept is?

How might the words coming out of your mouth change if you were fully aware that Jesus was walking around with you during your day?

Other EXAMPLES??

He is...the Holy Spirit is with you.

But second, it's not just God's personal presence with you each moment. He's not just there to watch your behavior in hopes of catching you doing something wrong. He's actually there to help you. The Greek word, advocate means helper. One who comes alongside of you to help you do what you wouldn't be able to do on your own. And so second,

### **B. The Holy Spirit is our Guide**

Examples of this all over the books of Acts...

**Acts 10:19 - <sup>19</sup> While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three<sup>[a]</sup> men are looking for you. <sup>20</sup> So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”**

**Acts 13:2 - <sup>2</sup> While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”**

We are a people led, guided by the Holy Spirit. And so let's just clarify how it is that the Holy Spirit guides our lives, because there's a lot of confusion about this. You hear people say things like, “the Holy Spirit told me to...” As sincere followers of Christ, we want to do what God wants for our lives, we just don't know what that is?

Perhaps you are a high-schooler, trying to make a decision about what to do when you graduate. Do I get a job? Do I go on to college?

Or maybe you are a “young-adult.” Do I plan to stay in this area or move away from home? Which job should I take? All of your friends are getting married and you begin to wonder what God’s plans are for you?

Perhaps you’ve been wondering if it’s time for a career change. Maybe you’ve been at this job for 10, 15, 20 years and you just don’t find the same joy in this work that you used to. Or perhaps you have several new job opportunities available to you and you are wondering which one God wants you to take.

Is it time to consider retirement? Do we send our kids to public school or private school or homeschool?

Author Trevor Hudson, used a really helpful analogy for me in thinking about the way in which the Holy Spirit guides our decision making. He talks about the difference in theater between...

### **1. Following a Script vs. Improvising.**

Sometimes we get the idea that the guidance of the Holy Spirit is like “following a script”. God gives us his plan word for word.

**What job you take to where you live to who you marry.** All the way down to things like **what kind of pizza to order** or **which t-shirt you should wear** today. And when you think about the Holy Spirit’s guidance in this manner...your job, is to figure out the script, and live it out “word for word”.

The problem is, expecting to hear God's voice in this way, one, turns you into a robot. And second, can be extremely worrisome, even debilitating. What if you get it wrong? What if you hear incorrectly?

What if you took the wrong job? What if you married the wrong person?

You'll mess up the entire story. There are a lot of people worried they've messed up God's Script for their life.

And so, Hudson suggests it is more helpful and more accurate, to think about the guidance of the Holy Spirit in terms of **"theatrical improvisation."**

Now listen carefully. Improvising...does not mean, complete randomness, anything goes and you can just make up anything you like.

Theatrical improvisation **gives freedom of choice within boundaries.**

We allow our kids 30 mins of screen time, per day, at the Kipe house. That's the guideline or boundary. But within that guideline our kids have the freedom to improvise, to choose how that screen time will be spent. We don't script which device they must. They have freedom to choose Ipad, or the Wii, or the Nintendo Switch. In addition, we don't script out exactly what they must play. They have the freedom to improvise whether they want to watch youtube, or play minecraft or Mario Kart.

What you discover throughout the book of Acts and all throughout Scripture is that the Holy Spirits guidance is often more like theatrical improvisation than following a script.

Freedom to improvise within boundaries.

Sometimes the Spirits guidance is in the form of a dream or a vision. Sometimes it's a voice in a burning bush. Sometimes it's a talking donkey. Sometimes its just a still small voice.

Sometimes it's a series of closed doors, missed opportunities. Sometimes it's the words that someone else speaks to us. Sometimes it's the burdens that he lays on our hearts that point us in the direction he wants us to go.

The key to making wise-Spirit-led decisions is to immerse ourselves in the storyline! The Bible, regularly gathering with other believers, our using/training minds, reflecting on our life experiences all help to immerse us in God's grand story...in this way we come to sense the character and influence...the leading of God's Holy Spirit.

Look my kids know **the story-line of the Kipe household**. They know, the boundary is 30 mins of Screen time and how they may freely improvise, within those 30 mins. And when they begin to step outside of that boundary, they sense the "Spirit of their mother" whispering in their ears saying, "*you are now leaving the guidelines of the story*". Jenny does not have to be physically present, they know, they have this sense because they know the storyline in the Kipe household.

We have added benefit at our house, if they fail to sense the spirit of their mother, then the prophet Keagan gives voice to her presence. He got a watch for Christmas and he's always setting timers on his watch to make sure everyone stays within the boundaries.

So, familiarize yourself with the storyline and as you do it will put you in tune with God's Holy Spirit so that you can sense the Spirit's guidance.

Ok, so Holy Spirit is personal presence of God. And Holy Spirit guides us in decisions-making. Finally,

### **C. The Holy Spirit empowers us to live like Jesus.**

When we become filled with, the Holy Spirit. It's not so much about magical, mystical powers. It's not mostly about speaking in tongues or performing miracles. It's mostly about living like Jesus. Paul wrote in...

**1 Corinthians 3:16 - <sup>16</sup> Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?**

And...

**Galatians 5:22-25 - <sup>22</sup> the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control...<sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.**

If you have been attempting to take on the character of Jesus and to live the new resurrection life he offers under your own strength, you need to know you were never intended to and you will fail.

One of the annual traditions in our Student Ministry has been a trip to Raystown Lake and a day spent out on the lake swimming, tubing and water skiing.

The first year we went, I had never been water skiing before and I was really looking forward to this. I was so excited in fact, I didn't really pay attention when they were describing how water skiing works. And so I missed the part where they said, you can't learn to water ski slowly. So hold on tight. You won't have time to get your balance slowly and then work your way up to full speed. It's not possible.

You can't even get up out of the water and stand still on water skis.

You can only water ski if you have an incredibly powerful outside source, if the outboard motor is cranking and pulling you along for the ride.

It was also during this talk they went over hand signals to use, if you want to go faster or slower or if you want to stop. Missed all of that. I remember when the boat first took off and I went flying up out of the water like a shot out of a canon. And so I began to gesture wildly for the driver to slow down, but of course everyone the boat thought I was signaling for the boat to speed up. And for about a minute I was flying across the water like a skipping rock, eventually launched into the air and hit the water with a thud. What a ride.

All that to say, it's impossible to water ski without the power of the outboard motor.

Trying to take on the character of Jesus and live the new life he offers (a life of love, joy, peace, patience) on your own, without the, real, active, personal and empowering presence of the Holy Spirit is like trying to water ski with a canoe.

You'll be left floating in the water, sinking, clawing, fighting, and scrapping.

And God never intended for life to be lived that way. What you're missing is the outboard motor...God's Holy Spirit.

That's why Pentecost matters. Because on Pentecost, God turned on the outboard motor. Once his outboard motor grabs hold of you, you'd better be prepared because you're headed for the ride of your life.

As we close our time this morning, we are reminded that at Pentecost God sent his personal presence to be with us, to guide us, to empower us and to unite us as His community. The Holy Spirits arrival happened during the gathering, the communion of Jesus disciples in a little room. And so today in each of our own little rooms at home, would you join me in sharing the communion elements together.

**BREAD:**

As we take the bread may we be reminded of the presence of God in Jesus, whose physical body was broken on Easter. But who overcame that physical death and lives with us and in us, no matter where we are, through His Holy Spirit.

Eat

**CUP:**

As we take the cup may we be reminded of the shed blood of Jesus. That shed blood for all people. And as we each, individually accept his shed blood on our behalf, we are united together in this community of faith.

Drink

As we share bread and cup together, even apart, we are reminded of God's presence with us.

**Closing Song**

Spirit of God  
Lord and Giver of Life  
Moving between us and around, in freedom,  
Like wind or water or fire,  
Breathe into us your freshness that we may be empowered,  
Cleanse our vision that we may see you more clearly,

Kindle our senses that we may feel you more sharply,  
And give us the courage to live, as you would have us live  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.