

**Abbey International Baptist Church, Reading**

**Worship Service 10:30AM 11<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

**Selina Chan leading & Simon Bird Preaching**

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**THEME: THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (John 15:26-27; 16:7-15)**

**CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Come, all who seek truth and long for transformation

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, who speaks not on His own,

But bears witness to Christ and leads us in righteousness.

**We come to worship the God who sends the spirit,**

**Who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgement.**

Let us open our hearts as the Spirit opens our eyes.

Let us worship in spirit and in truth.

**HYMN MP 1004:**

O God of burning, cleansing flame: send the fire!

Your blood-bought gift today we claim: send the fire today!

Look down and see this waiting host,

And send the promised Holy Ghost;

We need another Pentecost!

Send the fire today!

Send the fire today!

God of Elijah, hear our cry: send the fire!

And make us fit to live or die: send the fire today!

To burn up every trace of sin,

To bring the light and glory in,

The revolution now begin!

Send the fire today!

Send the fire today!

It's fire we want, for fire we plead: send the fire!  
The fire will meet our every need: send the fire today!  
For strength to always do what's right,  
For grace to conquer in the fight,  
For power to walk the world in white:  
Send the fire today!  
Send the fire today!

To make our weak hearts strong and brave: send the fire!  
To live, a dying world to save: send the fire today!  
Oh, see us on Your altar lay, we give our lives to you today,  
So crown the offering now we pray:  
Send the fire today!  
Send the fire today!  
Send the fire today!

WILLIAM BOOTH. ADPT. LEX LOIZIDES. COPYRIGHT © 1994 KINGSWAY'S THANKYOU MUSIC.

### **FAMILY TIME: Holy Spirit, We Welcome You**

*(\*An offering will be taken during the following song, after which teenagers and children will leave for their groups)*

#### **SONG MP 241**

Holy Spirit, we welcome You.  
Holy Spirit, we welcome You!  
Move among us with holy fire,  
As we lay aside all earthly desires,  
Hands reach out and our hearts aspire.  
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,  
Holy Spirit, we welcome You!

Holy Spirit, we welcome You.  
Holy Spirit, we welcome You!  
Let the breeze of Your presence blow,  
That Your children here might truly know  
How to move in the Spirit's flow.  
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,  
Holy Spirit, we welcome You!

Holy Spirit, we welcome You.  
Holy Spirit, we welcome You!  
Please accomplish in us today  
Some new work of loving grace, we pray -  
Unreservedly - have Your way.  
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,  
Holy Spirit, we welcome You!

CHRIS BOWATER © 1986 SOVEREIGN LIFESTYLE MUSIC.

**A PRAYER OF PRAISE:**

**Gracious God, we praise You for the gift of Your Spirit –  
The Advocate, the Comforter, the Truth and Light-bearer.**  
You have not left us as orphans but have drawn near.  
We praise You for Christ, who lived, died, rose again,  
And who now reigns at Your right hand.  
**We thank You for the Spirit who convicts and transforms,  
And for Your love that makes all things new. Amen.**

**A PRAYER OF CONFESSION:**

Spirit of God, You shine light into our hearts.  
You reveal what we often try to hide –  
our pride, our apathy, our rebellion.  
**You speak truth that convicts, not to condemn,  
But to lead us to repentance and new life. Amen.**

*(\*Let us take a moment in silence to confess personally before the Lord.)*

**THE LORD'S PRAYER: YOU ARE INVITED TO PRAY IN YOUR OWN LANGUAGE**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name,  
Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins,  
As we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are Yours  
Now and for ever and ever. Amen.**

**BIBLE READING 1: John 16:7-15**

**BIBLE READING 2: Acts 2:37-39, Ephesians 4:29-32**

**TESTIMONY - YOUSEF**

**HYMN BP&W 293, MP 488**

O Breath of Life, come sweeping through us,  
Revive Thy church with life and power.  
O Breath of Life, come, cleanse, renew us,  
And fit Thy church to meet this hour.

O Wind of God, come, bend us, break us,  
Till humbly we confess our need;  
Then in Thy tenderness remake us,  
Revive, restore; for this we plead.

O Breath of Love, come, breathe within us,  
Renewing thought and will and heart:  
Come, love of Christ, afresh to win us,  
Revive Thy church in every part.

Revive us, Lord! is zeal abating  
While harvest fields are vast and white?  
Revive us, Lord, the world is waiting,  
Equip Thy church to spread the light.

ELIZABETH A. P. HEAD (1850-1936) ALTD.

### **SERMON (John 16:7-15) The Holy Spirit at work in the world and us**

How much do you remember from Chris's great sermon, last week, and discussion afterwards about the work of the Holy Spirit? What name did Jesus give for the Holy Spirit that explains why he was sent? What did Jesus promise the Holy Spirit would do in us? We have a quiz here!

We learn what the Holy Spirit does from the book of Acts, and we learn more truth from the letters in the New Testament. But the best place to understand the Spirit is from how Jesus introduced Him to the disciples. Last week Chris spoke on this from John 14 in what is called Jesus' farewell message. This had comforting themes.

This week I pick up further things from Jesus' farewell message, in John 16. The main thing is what Jesus tells us how the Holy Spirit will be at work in the world. He reveals where the world has gone wrong. This is perhaps less comforting than other themes, but it is really important we face that. This tells us what the Holy Spirit is like and that will bring a challenge to us too.

So, from the passage, Jesus again explains to his disciples that he was going away (John 16:7). As Chris explained last week, Jesus had been with them for three years, so naturally they feared what will happen. But Jesus promised to send one like him, who would not be limited in space and time. Rather than walking alongside just 12 men for three years in Galilee, it means he can be with, even live inside, each of the billions of believers around the world, for ever.

It may be helpful to remember that Jesus' work was to bring us into relationship with God - by dying and rising for us; but it is the Holy Spirit's work to make this relationship real to us in our hearts. Jesus is now in heaven, in glory, at the Father's right hand, but it is the Spirit with us on earth. It is less easy to visualise the Holy Spirit and understand His work than that of Jesus, but that is quite deliberate: the Holy Spirit does not bring attention to himself, but points to Jesus (v14).

Jesus explains in these chapters many things the Holy Spirit does. Saya's picture. This passage points to one aspect (v8). As Chris explained, the Holy Spirit is at work in our consciences, and as I said before this is uncomfortable for us, but necessary. This needs to happen to draw us to God.

The word in the original language for what the Spirit does has the idea of showing someone's fault with a view of bringing them to repentance. Other words used in the English translations are convict, convince, and prove.

John explains that the world is wrong about three things: sin, righteousness and judgement (9-11). One commentary confirms that the original language is very compressed. The simple meaning for me is that the Holy Spirit will make people aware (in their consciences) that they have sinned (especially the main sin of failing to believe in Jesus); that their righteousness does not match up to God's standard, and that Jesus was the only righteousness one, who therefore could be offered in our place, and that a free gift of

righteousness is available, and that there will be judgement: these sins, if not repented of, will lead to death.

What happened on the day of Pentecost is a good illustration of this (Acts 2:37). Peter spoke to the Jews who assembled after they heard the disciples glorifying God. He told them, through all the time Jesus' ministry they refused to believe and come to him (their sin). They thought, as good Jews, they were right with God, and didn't need God's way of righteousness (through Jesus' death) and they falsely judged Jesus (not from God and so executed him). The result was that they were 'cut to the heart.' Peter's words were important, but it was the work of the Holy Spirit that made this real in the heart of each person listening.

We could say here the Holy Spirit is the best evangelist. We are called to go, to witness, to testify, and to preach (Jn 15:27); but this is in partnership (shall I say as junior partner?) with the Holy Spirit that our ministry has effect. That should encourage us as we go, but keep us humble – it is not just down to us (thank God!).

I want to move on from this and draw out lessons for us. We see the Holy Spirit comes alongside. He guides us into truth (v13), which is doctrinal truth, but one area of truth is about ourselves. As we come into his light (Jn 3:19, 1 Jn 1:7), he shows where we are wrong. There are some important truths about the Holy Spirit.

**He is Holy.** He cannot just come alongside and allow us to live in sin. You will know that sin separates us from God, so actually it is in the mercy of God that he does not leave us alone, but tells us about sin, so we can come and repent and be made right with God.

**He is a 'person,' not some kind of impersonal force.** Commentaries tell us that John alters the word for Spirit to masculine, rather than neuter, in the Greek (15:26). He emphasises that the Holy Spirit has the qualities of a person within God.

**He feels and is sensitive.** We read that we can grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30), and that the Spirit within us longs jealously for us (James 4:5). This is the language of an intense lover, wanting close relationship with us. But how can we approach a God who is holy. We must come to him on his terms: in repentance and faith in the power of Jesus' blood to cleanse us from sin. Sensing how our sin affects God's heart is, I think, the greatest incentive to allow the Spirit to work in us.

**He does not condemn.** There was a key thought in our earlier prayers. 'You speak truth that convicts, not to condemn, but to lead us to repentance and new life.' As we seek to grow close to God, the Devil attacks sensitive Christians and accuses them of sin (Rev 12:10, see Zech 3:1). He makes us feel dirty and unworthy in a general sense. This is not the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will show us our specific sin, so we can repent and be cleansed of it and walk in new life, not weighed down by past sins. Resist the Devil and he will flee. There is no condemnation for those in Christ (Jas 4:7, Rom 8:1).

The key thought this morning is that the Holy Spirit speaks into the hearts of both unbelievers and believers. He is holy, and a sensitive person, who feels and yearns for us and wants to draw us into God, but he has to show where we are wrong in order that we might be drawn to and forgiven by Jesus.

What does this mean for us?

1. When we go out and talk about Jesus, we can pray for the Spirit to go before us, to work in hearts. He is the best evangelist and we are not trying to convince people on our own.

2. Be aware of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives, showing us where we may be wrong, convicting us of sin. We do not want to grieve the Holy Spirit.

### **SONG MP 880**

Lord, I come to you, Let my heart be changed, renewed,  
Flowing from the grace, That I found in You.  
And Lord, I've come to know, The weaknesses I see in me,  
Will be stripped away, By the power of Your love.

*Hold me close, Let Your love surround me.  
Bring me near, draw me to Your side.  
And as I wait, I'll rise up like the eagle,  
And I will soar with You, Your Spirit leads me on, In the power of Your love.*

Lord, unveil my eyes, Let me see You face to face,  
The knowledge of Your love, As You live in me.  
Lord, renew my mind, As Your will unfolds in my life,  
In living every day, By the power of Your love.

GEOFF BULLOCK, © 1992 WORD MUSIC

### **PRAYER OF INTERCESSION: Mary Brockington**

Father God, you are a powerful Lord. You understand the human mind with all its frailty and weakness.

In this week of celebration of the end of the Second World War, we thank you for that past victory over an evil regime and for the relative peace which it brought to your world for many years. Sadly, we humans are unable to maintain your peace in our world. So, we pray for places where today there is ongoing war and conflict: Gaza and Israel, Ukraine and Russia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda; the internal conflicts in Myanmar, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, and many others too numerous to mention.

We pray for our sisters and brothers in the Roman Catholic Church as the cardinals are meeting in conclave to choose their new leader to be Pope in succession to Francis. May your Holy Spirit be with them in this important task.

In all these situations, and many more known to us, and too many to mention, we pray that the Holy Spirit will fill the hearts and minds of those involved and guide their deliberations. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, **Amen**

### **HYMN BP&W 570, MP 178 (TUNE MP 631(i) MICHAEL BAUGHEN)**

Go forth and tell! O Church of God, awake!  
God's saving news to all the nations take:  
Proclaim Christ Jesus, Saviour, Lord and King,  
That all the world His worthy praise may sing.  
Go forth and tell! God's love embraces all;  
He will in grace respond to all who call:  
How shall they call if they have never heard  
The gracious invitation of His word?

Go forth and tell where still the darkness lies,

In wealth or want, the sinner surely dies;  
Give us, O Lord, concern of heart and mind,  
A love like Yours, compassionate and kind.

Go forth and tell! The doors are open wide:  
Share God's good gifts – let no one be denied;  
Live out your life as Christ your Lord shall choose,  
Your ransomed powers for His sole glory use.

Go forth and tell! O church of God, arise!  
Go in the strength which Christ your Lord supplies;  
Go till all nations His great name adore  
And serve Him, Lord and King forever more.

JAMES E. SEDDON (1915-83)

**BENEDICTION:**

Go now in the power of the Holy Spirit,  
who guides you into all truth,  
who convicts not to shame, but to save,  
who speaks not for Himself, but points you to Christ.  
May your hearts remain tender,  
your steps bold in faith,  
and your lives filled with the grace and the truth of our Lord Jesus.  
Amen.

**THE GRACE:**

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore, Amen.**

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**Events to highlight next week:**

Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup>	10.30	Renew Wellbeing
	12.15	Bible Study
	2.00	Start 3
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup>	10.30	Bible Study
	10.30	Julian Meeting
	10.30	Toddlers
Friday 16 <sup>th</sup>	10.30	Prayer Meeting
	5.00	Table Tennis Club
	6.30	Iranians Meal and Bible Study

QR Code for

Offering

