

24th May

Pentecost and Aldersgate Sunday

“The Wild Spirit of Christ”

This week is both Pentecost Sunday and Aldersgate Sunday. We celebrate both the coming of the Holy Spirit on the disciples in the Upper Room as well as that moment when John Wesley’s heart was “strangely warmed”. The focus this week is on the Holy Spirit as the “Wild Spirit of Christ”. This idea of the Holy Spirit being “wild” is not to say that the Holy Spirit is disordered, uncivilized, or barbaric. But rather that the Holy Spirit is exciting, awesome, cannot be tamed or controlled by human desires, cannot be restrained or regulated by human control. The Holy Spirit “blows” where the will of God desires, moves us in profound and unpredictable ways, and can perform great works within and around us. Let’s explore the “Wild Spirit of Christ”!

1. What is the “wildest” story you have heard, or an event you have experienced?
2. Read Acts 2:1-18. What is happening in this story? Why is this moment so significant for the disciples but also for the world at large?
3. Sometimes the Holy Spirit is “wild” around us (exciting and awesome) but sometimes the Holy Spirit is “wild” (exciting and awesome) within us (this is perhaps what it was like for John Wesley on Aldersgate Sunday when externally everything was calm, but internally something exciting was happening). Often it can be both. Reflecting on 1 Kings 19:11-13, how does this expand or challenge how we think of God’s presence?
4. The “wild” Holy Spirit is not conformed or controlled by human standards, let's think of John 3:8. What does this teach us about what it is like to live with the “wild” Holy Spirit?

5. Sometimes being “wild” has an element of destructiveness to it. This could be true too of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can dismantle, untangle, and destroy that which stands against the Holiness of God. This is perhaps evident in Mark 11:15-18. What would this look like in our lives today as we live with this same Spirit within us?
6. John Welsey gives the below quote as a reason for why the spiritual gifts within the Church seemed to disappear for a long period of time. What do you think about his reasoning? Would you agree/disagree with him? Why so?

It does not appear that these extraordinary gifts (spiritual gifts) of the Holy Ghost [tongues, prophecies, miracles, etc.] were common in the church for more than two or three centuries. We seldom hear of them after that fatal period when the Emperor Constantine called himself a Christian... From this time they (spiritual gifts) almost totally ceased; very few instances of the kind were found... The real cause was... The Christians had no more of the Spirit of Christ than the other Heathens... This was the real cause why the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were no longer to be found in the Christian Church — because the Christians were turned Heathens again, and had only a dead form left.

- from his sermon, “The More Excellent Way”

7. Lastly, what does Pentecost Sunday mean for you personally at your present walk with God? What are you needing the Holy Spirit to do in your life? How can something from this teaching be applied in your life?