

## Introduction

- There is an intense feeling of **anticipation** in this passage at the start Acts:
  - something is on the way, and though it is nearly here it has not quite arrived yet!
- Not unlike a couple of experiences I had **during the process of coming here**:
  - during the process of applying I felt a strong sense of excitement and anticipation; not quite a certainty that things would work out as they have, but certainly very positive!!
  - the week running up to the first interview was **General Assembly** week, and I was a commissioner;
  - **during the course of the week I met at least two people who had strong connections to Fintry, who I really wanted to tell, but couldn't!!**
  - (one was Mike Goss, minister at Mains!)
- Sense of **excitement, anticipation**, but what was coming had **not yet come to fruition**, to completion, to the point where it could be talked about openly.
- That's where the disciples were as we come to the beginning of Acts:
  - **Jesus has risen, there is good news to share, and yet it isn't quite the time!**
  - Jesus has told them to wait...

### **Why not the time?**

- **Because the Holy Spirit has not come yet.**
  - and Acts 1:1-11 sets out Jesus own reasons why the disciples should wait for the Spirit's coming.
- We are going to be looking at the book of Acts over the coming weeks, exploring what it teaches us about being the church - then and now.
  - there are several things this passage highlights about the work of the anticipated Holy Spirit, which we'll look at just now:

## Spirit Clothed (Acts 1:4, 5)

- First is that the disciples were to be **clothed in the Spirit**:
- No one here has yet had the misfortune to see me in my **cycling gear**:
  - doesn't just change way I look (**RoboCop!!**)
  - also **changes what I can do** - cycle comfortably, safely, in wet weather...

### **Spirit clothes/covers/changes disciples**

- The coming Spirit will have a profound effect on the disciples:
  - v.5 "**baptised with the Holy Spirit**"
  - He **immerses, deluges, covers, fills** and **cleanses** them.
- They became **spiritual people**, full of the dynamic of God and the character of Jesus.
  - **changed in who they are**, in their innermost beings;
  - and also **changed in what they could do**, take on
- The Spirit's clothing, deluging, immersing us also changes who we are and what we can take on:
  - **small congregation, large parish....**

## Spirit Motivated (Acts 1:8)

- Second aspect of the Spirit's work that is highlighted is that the Spirit **motivates**
- **Have you ever met someone motivated by some clear goal?**
  - studying for exams, to get entry into a College course, or to get a degree;
  - to get a promotion;
  - to save for a holiday or for an extension on the house...
- That **motivation** changes the way they **behave!**
  - work hard, get up early, self-discipline not to spend, or whatever...

Spirit Motivates disciples

- "You will be my witnesses"
- The Holy Spirit puts in us a desire to **share** and to **be good news** in word and deed (Acts 2:14; 1 Cor 9:16)
  - (Acts 2:14) *Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say...."*
  - (1 Cor 9:16) *Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!*
- There is a compulsion that changes our behaviour.
- A number of years ago I **witnessed a robbery** in a small corner shop near where I stayed; the robbers were detained, and in time the **case came to court**:
  - I was called upon to **bear witness** to what I had seen
  - extremely nerve wracking experience!!
  - responsibility to **tell what I'd seen!**
  - not to do so in an eloquent way, or to add my own spin!
- I was a witness, I couldn't do anything about it, I had seen what I had seen:
  - and as a result **I was constrained to speak**
- Like it or not, **we are witnesses to what Jesus has done in our own lives**
  - the Spirit **motivates** us, **constrains** us, to tell our story, to say what the Lord has done in & for us.
- We no longer seek our glory, but that of Jesus.

**Spirit Empowered (Acts 1:8)**

- The third thing the Spirit does (after clothing & motivating) is to **empower us**:
- There is **electrical equipment everywhere**, very used to it...
  - remarkable how easy it is to go wrong, to not plug it in and wonder why it isn't working...
  - baby-sitter, bulb blew, tripped circuit, side lights on but main lights off - left sitting in semi-darkness because they didn't know how to restore power to the circuit!
  - **or us and new oven in the manse!!**
- Hidden power we all rely on.

Spirit Empowers disciples

- The Christian gospel is powerful - it changes people
- It is demonstrated as well as preached, both in lifestyle and occasionally in mighty acts.
- Without the Spirit's power, our mission is limited.
- **We cannot**:
  - speak effectively for him;
  - bring forth the fruit of the Spirit (**love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control**)
  - nor use the gifts of the Spirit - gifts of words of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, prophecy, spiritual discernment, tongues, administration...
  - **....without his aid.**
- But **the Spirit is given to empower us**, to give the ability to take on what would otherwise be impossible.

**Spirit Directed (Acts 1:8)**

- Finally, the Spirit **directs us**:
- Folk came to visit Helen in hospital shortly after Mark was born - **got lost!!**
  - **asked for directions**, but maybe no one in Bellshill is any good at giving them directions, or they weren't listening very well...
- Without direction, you won't hit mark!

Spirit directs disciples

- Starting in Jerusalem, the **commission is to take the good news everywhere**.

- This is not a nationalistic mandate (v.6) but a world mandate.
  - the book of Acts tells how the Spirit directed the believers to fulfil that commission.
  - tells the story of the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem, first through Judea and Samaria, thence to the ends of the earth
- We do not need a fresh call to take part in that mission; the world awaits our response to the commission already given.
- We'll spend more time on this later in Acts, as the disciples grapple with this issue at length, but it is worth pointing out that the call here is to take the message not just to those physically at a distance, but also to those "beyond the pale", outside our comfort zone
  - not just to South America, or Africa, or South East Asia...
  - but also to Dundee, to Fintry, to neighbours who don't see things our way, to the youngsters who we struggle to know how to cope with as they muck around in our church grounds....

## Conclusion

- G K Chesterton said: *"We do not want, as the newspapers say, a Church that will move with the world. What we want is a Church that will move the world."*
- How do we become such a church?
  - by the Spirit at work in us: drenching our lives, motivating us, empowering us, directing us
- Martin Luther King said: *"Most Christians are thermometers that record or register the temperature of majority opinion, not thermostats that transform and regulate the temperature of society."*
- How do we become world movers, thermostats, agents of change???
  - by letting the Spirit fill our lives, allowing him to motivate us, direct us and empower us
  - may God grant us such an openness to the Spirit that he will transform us!