

Pentecost

It was an amazing day when the Holy Spirit came to those first Christians. It touched their lives and made them speak in languages unfamiliar to them, but understandable to those around. It was a memorable and potentially life changing day for all involved.

I have always wondered about the day *after* Pentecost. After the wind died down and the flames of fire ceased, surely not everyone's life was changed by the event. There were probably some who went on, business as usual, even in the aftermath of such an extraordinary event.

It is an interesting thing about the Holy Spirit that it is often referred to as the "Silent Partner" of the Trinity. The dramatic action on Pentecost was an uncharacteristic display of power; namely to mark a new beginning—The Birthday of the Church. As Jesus said, the Spirit is like the Wind that you cannot see but can always notice the effects of its presence.

The Spirit is most often behind the scenes. The Spirit blows through our lives filling us with a restlessness and a void that only God can satisfy and fill. The Spirit does not force itself on us anymore than the Father or the Son do, they simply try to win us over by their love and grace.

Every encounter with our Lord is marked by this gentle loving Spirit at work. He gives total freedom of acceptance or denial to the individuals involved, whether it is Nicodemus or the rich young ruler. Without exception there is not one encounter in which Jesus does not invite change, but it is not always well received. You cannot make someone love you or graciously accept a gift. The Jewish Talmud puts it this way: "The Spirit of God gently surrounds a hardened heart so that when it does crack, the Spirit will seep in."

Lord,

Take my hard heart and soften it by your Spirit. Make me always open to your Spirit of gentleness and love. Fill me up with Yourself so that I may be an overflowing vessel spilling grace and love to all those around me. Amen.

"God has made it a rule for Himself that He won't alter people's character by force. He can and will alter them—but only if the people will let Him. In that way He has really and truly limited His power. Sometimes we wonder why He has done so, or even wish that He hadn't. But apparently He thinks it worth doing. He would rather have a world of free beings, with all its risks, than a world of people who did right like machines because they couldn't do anything else. The more we succeed in imagining what a world of perfect, automatic beings would be like, the more, I think, we shall see His wisdom."

--C.S. Lewis—"The Trouble with 'X'" God in the Dock"