

The driving force for our life as a church today.

Luke 24:48-49

'You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised, but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.'

Acts 1:4-8

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Last month I commended the missionary intent of the founders of St. Thomas', their insight, vision and energy and suggested that the same mission imperative has to be the driving force for our life as a church today.

I believe also that we are at this time well placed to begin a powerful missionary work in this area. We have good relationships with a number of groups from outside the church, we have nurture courses such as Alpha and Life and Beyond ready to roll out. I also suggest that we know what the Kingdom of God looks like and that we have a genuine desire to be what a Church community should be. What we lack is the power to make things happen and I suggest that our immediate priority as a church is to seek that power. In past weeks and months we have seen evidence of the work of God among us and we should give thanks for that but I suggest that it is only a glimmer of a greater light that is to come.

The two Bible passages above came to light during our Lent prayer days. They have been with me ever since that time and have not yet been fulfilled in our experience. In the autumn I intend to hold a series of conversations, open to the whole church to help us get to a place where we really know the Spirit's empowering .

In the spring I was recommended the book 'More' by Simon Ponsonby who is coincidentally speaking at New Wine every morning next week. The book makes two things clear

- The Holy Spirit is given to the Church for fruitful evangelism and the transformation of the wider world. He is not just a gift to be enjoyed by the church.
- Fruitful evangelism and transformation cannot be achieved without the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

I for one do not believe that I've experienced such an empowering in anything like sufficient measure either to live a genuinely holy life or to be an effective witness and agent of transformation. God is I believe imploring us to ask for more of his Spirit for both personal and corporate renewal. Over the summer, please pray that God might provide a fresh outpouring of his Holy Spirit that His kingdom may come and his will be done on earth as in heaven.



Over the summer, please pray that God might provide a fresh outpouring of his Holy Spirit that His kingdom may come and his will be done on earth as in heaven.



*More: How you can have more of the Spirit when you already have everything in Christ.
By Simon Ponsonby.*