REFLECTIONS ON THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

In the run up to Pentecost, or Whitsun, I am going to write a few words about each of the gifts of the Spirit which Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12. These are wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues and interpretation.

I will give Bible references, so you might like to have a Bible to hand.

In the Old Testament these gifts were bestowed upon some chosen individuals, but since the death and resurrection of Jesus, and as prophesied by Joel, (Joel 2 v 28) they have become available to all his followers. Every Spirit–filled believer may receive and use any gift, but some gifts seem to be more suited to some people than others. And there is a degree of overlap among the gifts. I will be as clear as I can.

The most important thing about the gifts of the Spirit is that they must be used with love.

May I suggest that on the Day of Pentecost, we each choose a gift that we would like God to give us, and ask him for it. The gifts are given for the benefit of the Christian community. It might be difficult to use some of them while we are socially distancing, but perhaps not impossible. And life won’t be like this for ever!

6. PROPHECY

Prophecy in this context means a communication from God, perhaps predicting what will happen in the future, or a message about how we should behave, or telling us off, or encouraging us.

There are many prophets in the Old Testament, for example, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel. One of their main purposes was to tell the Jewish people that they should repent and turn back to Jehovah before the coming judgment. There are also many prophecies about the Messiah, particularly in the Book of Isaiah.

“He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities.” (Isaiah 53 v 5)

And that is what happened to Jesus.

In the New Testament there is copious evidence that the prophecies about the Messiah are fulfilled in Jesus.

Jesus himself was a prophet because he spoke the words of God and he made it clear that he was doing this.

“My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me.” (John 7 v 16)

In many churches today people often receive and speak out messages from God, They can be very encouraging, even if there is sometimes a human element as well! Some of it will be from God!

PRAYER

Dear Lord

Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

May we remember that all your gifts are freely available to us, if we truly want them and if we ask you for them.

May we not dismiss any of your gifts just because they may not be part of our church culture. Please may we be open to them.

May we never belittle the power of the Spirit and the extent to which that power is available to us.

Please forgive us when we do.

Holy Spirit, please fill me now. (*At this point ask the Holy Spirit for one of the gifts if you would like to.)*

Through Jesus Christ

Amen