

‘Forgotten God’ Sermon Series: - ‘The Holy Spirit in the World’
Sermon 11th June 2017

“God loves the world. So when the church is in the world, God is in the church. And when the church is no longer in the world, God is still in the world.” Kennon Callaghan.

I. Introduction

A. The Series = Forgotten God. Why?

1. Because we can be an evangelical Christian Church that believes in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and not encounter him (trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Book)
2. But also, we can be a charismatic Christian Church and have a profound longing for an experience of spiritual power (like an impersonal force, i.e. Star Wars) and not have any desire to let the person of the Holy Spirit live in us.

B. The Holy Spirit in...

1. The church (last week). The Holy Spirit wants to immerse us in his inter-racial, international kingdom community (church) but we want nice parochial groupings. If we want the Holy Spirit to be evident in our midst, we need to co-operate with what his agenda is and not ours. The Holy Spirit is not just present in us as individuals, he is present in the midst of Jesus’ body. We want people to be able to come, worship with us and live with us and conclude “God is really among you!”
2. This week we want to look at the reality of the Holy Spirit in the world. And this can seem contradictory. How can the Holy Spirit be in the world? It is sinful, broken, power mad, depraved, greedy, unloving and God-denying. How can the Holy Spirit be in the world?

C. That “T” word (‘Trajectory’)

1. I used that word last week and Susan asked me what it meant as she wasn’t familiar with its meaning. I am so grateful because it is easy to assume everyone understands what I am trying to say when they don’t.
the path followed by a projectile flying or an object moving under the action of given forces.
"the missile's trajectory was preset"
synonyms: [course](#), [route](#), [path](#), [track](#), [line](#), [orbit](#), [flight](#), [flight path](#), [ambit](#), [direction](#), [bearing](#), [orientation](#), [way](#), [tack](#), [approach](#)
"aerodynamic forces change the trajectory of the ball"
2. I was saying that the grace of God is not a passive overlooking of our faults, it is the power of God at work in our lives to bring about transformation. The ‘trajectory’ of God’s grace is transformation.
3. Last week I said that the ‘trajectory’ of the Holy Spirit was to immerse (baptise) us into the body of Christ.
4. Then Andy came up to me and said something quite significant. There are forces at work to deflect the object and change the trajectory so that it misses its target! (Show slide.)
5. The Holy Spirit wants to get the church into the world so that He can impact the world with the Kingdom! Why is it then that we seem to want to get the church out of the world and stay out?

II. The Holy Spirit in the World.

- A. John Eldridge in his book “Killing Lions” writes to his son Sam as he is coming into adulthood:

“You have entered the Warrior Stage of a young man’s life. Young men have been at the centre of most of history’s revolutions. Deep in your marrow lies a passion to bring down tyrants, overthrow oppression, and fight for a better world – to be part of something *big*. And why did God give you such hearts? Isn’t that fascinating – why you and all your peers have a heart to change the world? Was that placed in you simply to be killed? Never! I know older folks love to look down at you over their reading glasses and say something dismissive about “the idealism of youth” and how it’s high time you settle down to real life, but that is not my opinion. I don’t think it’s God’s opinion either. That counsel comes from folks who have killed their heart and soul in order to “get along” in the world. Christianity is all about revolution – is a revolution to its core – and that is why God gives young men and women passion to change the world. God have you that heart in order that you might discover both the joy of being a part of his revolution and your own unique place within it.

There is a lot wrong to be set right in the world. Everywhere you look, the planet is bleeding, children are trafficked, slavery is on the rise, and truth itself has all but shattered. This is a time for revolution, and one of the great wonders of Christianity is the idea that you are born into your times, to set your times aright. What could be more exciting? Frederick Buechner believed that, ‘The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.’ What could be more hopeful?”

The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet! Wow!

- B. Think of that as we read: Acts 1:6-8
1. Q. Are you now going to usher in your kingdom? A. That time is not for you to know. But...
 2. You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses. There are two promises: 1) The Holy Spirit will give you power, and 2) You will be my witnesses.
- C. What is a witness?
1. In a court room, a witness is someone who has seen an event and can give their version of what they saw (as “Did you see this man stab that man in the street?” or “Did you see who left this parcel on the train?”)
 2. A witness is someone who says “this is what I saw and heard”. Example in Acts 4:8-10 and 4:18-20. “For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”
 3. But there is also what is called an “expert witness”. This is someone who can look at facts and with training and experience reach conclusions about what has happened (as in “this fracture indicates blunt-force trauma” or “this wound was made by a 28 calibre bullet.”)

4. So as witness is also someone who can give explanation to something can see but don't understand. Example in Acts 2:1-13, 14-16 and 36. This is evidence that Jesus Christ is Lord and Christ. This is That.

D. There needs to be a "This". For that to happen, two things are essential, I believe: An expectant faith and an observant heart.

1. An expectant faith. I believe that was what Mike Williams challenges us to reclaim on our weekend away. God wants to break down the walls of the Jericho's of our day. The world does have its walls up against the Gospel. What is needed is expectant faith and prayer *for God to act*. It doesn't mean that God cannot act without the church, but that God would prefer to act through his church.
2. An observant heart. Go to Acts 14:8-10 Paul was in the market place somewhere. He saw a man who was crippled from birth. And as Paul was speaking he saw something "*that he had faith to be healed!*" (What does that look like? I sometimes think I know. But more often I miss it.) So Paul told him what? To stand up on his feet and immediately he did! That gave them quite an opportunity to witness – in fact they had to tear their clothes and be quite distressed to prevent the crowds from sacrificing to them as gods!
3. So we can be blown off course if we want the power of God to be demonstrated most on Sunday morning inside the walls of a building! We can be blown off course if we try to get the church out of the world (as someone once said: so heavenly minded that we are of no earthly good).
4. God so loved the ... that he gave his only Son. (not the church but the world)

III. Conclusion

1. I have been brooding over the results of our recent elections and the possible outcome of them for the UK. As I was preparing this message, I realised I had not thought of the impact of them for the Kingdom of God. We have a confidence (wrongly placed in my mind) that we can do fine apart from the other nations of the world. What we need is power to withdraw and run our own country thank you. (But not Scotland nor Wales!) And what happened. A large number of people began to be more concerned about schools and the NHS and welfare and the elderly. Labour, with a leader who was old school and non-progressive, stirred up a minor revolution in this country and the result is a hung parliament.
2. Can this be a kingdom opportunity. The people and principles we placed our faith in are crumbling all over. Is it time to talk about a greater Kingdom and a greater love and a greater redemption? Do we need to pray with expectant faith and observant hearts for breakthroughs in our land and in our town? It may be God's time.
3. Q. How can the Holy Spirit be in the world? A. When the church is in the world? God loves the world. God loves this town. Let us pray for it?

WALLY FAHRER