

## Word and Spirit Sermon - Gal 2. 20, Acts 2. 17, 18

**Open in Prayer** – Would you continue to shape us with the heart of the gospel. AMEN

### Intro – Good morning

I've been part of some about 18 different churches in my life, some tiny, some massive, some rural, some city, all not perfect, but all had Jesus Christ right at the centre of them and took the life of the Holy Spirit seriously. The churches looked different, emphasised some different things but had the same heart. St Swithin's, is a Simeon's trust church that sits in that same wonderful heritage, carrying and sharing the good news of Jesus at its centre and heart.

### Values

We're looking at our vision and values this Summer. Our values are incredibly important as they reflect the culture we want create, they reflect our theological and spiritual convictions that we live out and grow into, and we want others to experience.

Our Values are pairs, **BothAnds**, reflecting the fact that from the beginning to end, the Bible is a **BothAnd** book reflecting the **BothAnd** nature of God's kingdom. Christians are called to live out the tension of seemingly contrasting values. A God of creation and covenant, A God who cares about all, but has special relationship with his own people. We're called to Love God and other people at same time, offer justice and mercy at the same time.

So as we begin today, what is the Word and Spirit all about? (Glimpse)

### Evangelical - Word

Evangelicals are Christ and cross-centred, focussing on the centrality of God's word, **the Bible**, as our ultimate authority for truth, faith and practice. And the Bible tells God's story and the gift of God's Son, the living Word, Jesus Christ, as a gracious gift for all people to be **personally saved and transformed** from the wages of Sin and death. Through Jesus' death **on the cross, God** made possible our forgiveness and redemption once and for all.

***Theologian Alister Mcgrath puts it this way“ whatever grasp we have on the knowledge of God, and whatever hopes of salvation we may possess, are totally dependent on Jesus Christ as our saviour and Lord, the only Son of God and his death and resurrection are unique, necessary and sufficient basis for our salvation”***

*Paul puts it like this in Gal 2. 20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”*

This radical **conversion experience**, powers Christians as Christ's ambassadors to make an **active** difference in sharing the good news in the world, This is captured by this story from the war

*There was a Lutheran Pastor Martin Niemoller. During the war Niemoller had a nightmare where he saw Hitler standing before the judgement seat of God. In the dream Jesus came from the seat, put an arm around Hitler, then with pain and sorrow in his voice, said Adolf how could you have done those cruel and evil things - in the dream Hitler answers nobody ever told me of your love for me and what you did for me” Niemoller would wake up in a cold sweat, that in all his meetings with Hitler he couldn't remember once telling Hitler about Jesus love for him.*

### Pentecostal - Spirit

Pentecost shows us there is no Christian experience at all without the work of the Holy Spirit. The Bible paints a picture of the Christian life, where God is present, active, powerful, vibrant and joyful, overflowing with life, seeing radical change and transformation, the sick are healed the poor are cared

for. We experience the Reality of God's love. Yet, In the UK so many people appear bored of Christianity, they see it as trivial, dead and tired. Even the church loses its way

*The great evangelist Billy Graham said this "Everywhere I go I find that God's people lack something. They are hungry for something. Their Christian experience is not all they hoped for and their experience is prolonged and recurring defeat. Christians are hungry for spiritual fulfilment. The most desperate need of the nation today is that people who profess Jesus be filled with the Holy Spirit"*

**People come alive when we experience God's Power and Presence, whether its for mission or personal holiness,** The book of Acts shows us at Pentecost God's promised Spirit being poured out

*"In the last days, God says,  
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your young men will see visions,  
your old men will dream dreams.  
<sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,  
and they will prophesy. Acts 2. 17, 18*

God gifts us His wonderful Spirit, producing fruit, releasing his gifts for mission and service. And we see here how God's Spirit draws people in , in-spite of gender, race (there no racism in the kingdom of God), age, class, the blood of Christ washes away the dividing lines between us and draws us into God's kingdom.

### **Summary**

The biblical picture is of Word and Spirit together. A passion for the Salvation of the lost with the power to get the job done. Yet, the church has often tried to separate them. *When I was growing up, we used to say in our household*

***All word and no spirit you dry up  
All spirit and no word you blow up  
Word and Spirit together you grow up***

*So I Imagine you want St Swithin's to be a church of joy where we experience God's love, where the sick are healed and the broken restored, and we hear God's voice and call for ourselves. Where the Spirit powers to reach out in mission and evangelism, justice and mercy. Where with word and spirit at play we're being transformed into his likeness.....*

### **Let's Pray**

**Holy Spirit thank you for your power, thank you for revealing Jesus to us  
Continue your work amongst us we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen**