

2021-05-23 ... 6.30pm Pentecost Evensong ... Revd Sam Johnson
Ezekiel 36: 22 – 28; Acts 2: 22 - 38

'Brothers - What shall we do?'

'Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins can be forgiven, and receive the Holy Spirit. Amen'

Shall I sit down? That feels like all I need to say!

That is the heart of the message we have – the death and resurrection of Jesus, forgiven, free – repent and be baptised. This is the moment we celebrate as the Birthday of the Church ... The gathering of people in His name, so its Birthday.

So ... this week was my 30th birthday! I celebrated with Leah by climbing some trees in Cannock chase!

We did something called **'Go Ape'** which is an assault course suspended in the trees. You may have seen one, they have one at Delemere forest too.

Anyway, we were about, I don't know, 15 meters up in the air and you clip on and off various wires with a safety harness and two different clips before you do the activities. And the way it is laid out is that you clip one at a time and that way you are always connected to something.

Their safety briefing and several times on each tree platform there are signs that say **"always stay attached"**

Believe me when you fall off the particular obstacle – which happens... you're glad you followed the safety instructions and clipped on correctly. The harness holds you and you can clamber back on and carry on.

It's about staying connected, staying attached.

"Always stay attached"

Always stay attached.

Every obstacle, every tree, in the training beforehand... all you can think of by the end is **"always stay attached"**

Today we celebrate Pentecost which for many is said to be the 'Birthday of the Church.'

To celebrate perhaps we should stay attached. I think it's the same message. Stay attached to God, connected to him, through his Holy Spirit. Always stay attached through the Holy Spirit to God.

Not just for when you fall ... but for the whole of your life, always stay attached!

What do I mean by this? What might this look like?

I think it's seeking first the Kingdom of God, seeking what he is doing, discerning what he is doing in our lives and the world around us and going after that ... Laying down our own desires and going after that.

It might be really big – it might be that like Peter it's about standing in front of people.

If that is what you are called to do, then go with it! It's not for everyone – but maybe you are being called to something else, something that maybe seems much smaller ... But in God's plan this is perhaps something that has a bigger impact

If we go down the passage we hear and see what the disciples did next ... fellowship, praying, meeting ...

So, **always staying attached** is hospitality, communion, fellowship ... sharing in everyday life with those around you ... To tell someone tomorrow, to say to them – **'I was in church, it was Pentecost – let me tell you about Pentecost'** ... and you can go from there.

It's a little scary, but like Peter we can be emboldened by the Holy Spirit.

And then Peter, scared Peter, 'put-your-foot in it' Peter stands up ... and explains what is going on – the outpouring of God's Spirit is here, all can receive, all can be saved. They testified on Jesus' behalf as we heard in the John reading (**John 15: 26 – 27**).

It's a bit like a flute – I used to play the flute. The flute sitting in my cupboard doesn't do anything anymore, but the moment breath travels through the piece of metal it makes a noise, a joyful noise!

When we stay attached we are letting God breath through us, filling us with his Spirit and sending out his Spirit through us. When the flute is played no-one thinks "**what a great flute**" but the glory goes to the flute player, so when God uses us, it is to his glory – we are used for his glory ... The flute almost 'doesn't do anything' ...

But it does ... it allows itself to be moved. It requires maintenance, it requires cleaning. ... It's almost like the flute has a role, the flute has to do something.

We have to do that same thing – maintain our connection with God, to be used by him to do something far beyond that which we could do ourselves, and for his glory and his Kingdom.

It's seeking God ... it's prayer, its staying devoted to the teaching of the Apostles and to Jesus.

Conveniently bound and printed for us is what we call **the Bible**. Spending time in prayer, in fellowship in the Bible keeps us attached, keeps us ready to be used by God, keeps us seeking him ... keeps letting God's Spirit work through us.

Maintaining our connection to God, for his glory, his Kingdom ...

Always stay attached.

Amen.