**FROM RESURRECTION TO PENTECOST**

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out. Visiting Jews to Jerusalem heard the wonders of God in their own languages and a crowd gathered (see Acts 2:1-11) – this was the antithesis of the sound of Babel that caused people to scatter (see Genesis 11:1-9).

The first Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit primarily to be witnesses for Christ (Acts 1:8).

During the time between when Jesus rose from the dead to Pentecost, the disciples spent 40 days with Jesus learning about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3).

Then they spent the time between Jesus’s ascension and Pentecost joined together constantly to pray (Acts 1:14).

Then at Pentecost, on the 50th day, the Holy Spirit fell, the gospel was preached and 3000 were added to their number on that day



We have received this word from the Lord:

* Spend 40 days focussed on the kingdom of God
* Meet together for 10 days
* On the 50th day, harvest

We have been given the ratio of **50:50** – 50 days for 50 salvations

Connect Church took the step of moving to the MSCC for the sake of the gospel – it is where we believe we will reap a harvest. We had a picture some years ago of a banner of the name of Jesus being over the area. We have the promise of Galatians 6:9 which we believe is for us as a church, that we will reap a harvest at the proper time.

We have responded to this word by spending 40 days reflecting on the kingdom of God, from 27 May to 5 July. On 6 July we will meet each day for 9 days and then on the 10th day of meeting, on the 50th day, we will hold a special service, to which guests from our fun day (8 July) will be invited, we will preach the gospel and we are believing to see 50 salvations.

**WHAT IS OUR PART IN SEEING THIS HAPPEN?**

It is to be prepared and have faith. We are using these 49 days to prepare for what God wants to do on day 50. Spiritual and practical preparations are taking place over this period; this message looks at how we should prepare spiritually.

**THE EXAMPLE OF ELIJAH ON MOUNT CARMEL: PREPARATION AND FAITH**

**Background:**

In 1 Kings 17:1 Elijah pronounces there will be no rain on the land for three years except at his command. In 1 Kings 18:1-2 Elijah tells Ahab there will now be rain on the land.

Elijah requests for the 450 prophets of Baal (a fertility god, the worship of whom required human sacrifice and ritualistic prostitution) to assemble with him on Mount Carmel. Elijah instructs the prophets to erect an altar to Baal whilst he does the same to the God of Israel, for them respectively to call on the name of Baal and of Yahweh and the god who answers by fire is God (1 Kings 18:24).

The prophets of Baal call out to Baal, eventually shouting and yelling in a frenzied way and cutting themselves with knives, which goes on all day, but no answer comes.

Then it is Elijah’s turn – *read 1 Kings 18:30-39*

**PREPARATION**

**1.**

**ELIJAH REBUILDS THE ALTAR**

Ahab and Jezebel had ordered the altars to the Lord to be torn down and altars erected to Baal. The devil wants to see altars of worship to God to be removed from us. If altars of worship have been broken down in our lives through circumstances, disappointment, failure of ourselves and others, we need to make the decision to rebuild them and worship no longer at altars to gods lesser than God (these may be altars where we have made an idol of selfish ambition, pride, comfort, sexual and other immorality, even religion, even our own failure).

God is a jealous God who requires us to choose whom we will worship:

*Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.” But the people said nothing.*

*1 Kings 18:21 NIV*

We received a word from Numbers 14:24 at the beginning of the year – to be people of a different spirit, who follow God wholeheartedly.

Where we believe God has spoken clearly as to what he wants us to do, we should give ourselves to this vision and make God’s agenda our own.

**2.**

**ELIJAH BUILDS ON WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE**

Elijah builds the altar on the foundation of what God established for the nation - 12 stones for the 12 tribes of Israel. Build on the foundation of those who came before you (see Ephesians 2:19-20). We do not try to relive the past, but build on what God has done before, trusting that he will move powerfully again in our day!

**3.**

**ELIJAH PREPARES THE OFFERING**

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God---this is your true and proper worship.*

*Romans 12:1 NIV*

*Joshua told the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.”*

*Joshua 3:5 NIV*

We are to take responsibility, recognising that we offer our lives together as God's church. We are parts of his body and his family, positioned by God just where he wants us to be to fulfil what he wants us to fulfil (see 1 Corinthians 12:18).

**FAITH**

Elijah puts himself in a place where only if God shows up will he succeed – he makes it impossible for what is about to be happen to be explained by anything other than a move of God. After the altar is assembled a trench is dug, the offering is placed on it and 12 amounts of water are poured over the offering, covering it with water and filling up the trench!

**Elijah makes room for God to do immeasurably more than could be anticipated!**

God sends the fire and the offering is consumed and even the water from the trench is licked up!

**ELIJAH WAS A MAN JUST LIKE US!**

James 5:17 says that Elijah was a person just like us.

*Read 1 Kings 19:1-9*

Despite the great power on his life, we see Elijah in the next chapter threatened by Jezebel, running for his life and asking God to take his life.

We can all have fears, doubts, insecurities, can lose heart and be prone to failure. God restores Elijah – he can restore us and encourage us again.

**HEARING THE SOUND OF RAIN**

*Read 1 Kings 18:41-45*

Elijah hears the sound of rain in his spirit before it comes. He has an expectation that rain is coming and sends his servant out seven times to the sea to look for a cloud.

God is calling us to trust that we have and will continue to hear the sound of what he wants to do in and through us. There are things we may need to tune out to hear what he is saying. He is calling us to respond by making good preparations and having faith!

**QUESTIONS FOR STUDY/REFLECTION**

1. Can you think of times, like Elijah on Mount Carmel, where you have seen God win a mighty victory? Celebrate and share them!
2. How did Elijah go from one minute calling down fire from heaven to running away and asking God to end his life?
3. Do you need to rebuild an altar of worship to God where it has been torn down or perhaps has crumbled with the erosion of circumstances or the lure of things that have become idols to you? Are there altars to lesser gods in your life? The answer to this question may be answered by examining your life and looking at the way you spend your time, energy, money.
4. Pray that God would enable you to hear the sound of what he wants to do over these 50 days and respond to what you hear.