

Home Group Series 2024

2. Witnessing through relationship.

My father was a master builder who could turn his hand to any job in the trade, and in the school holidays he would take me with him 'to help him,' as he tackled any task that came his way. But I quickly learned there was one essential rule, without which everything else was useless, and that is, whatever the job, it would be no good going at all *if you did not have the right tools with which to do it!*

Now, when Jesus left His disciples and went back to his Father, He left them with a list of impossible tasks. Essentially. It was to let people know about him and what He could do for them – beginning at Jerusalem and ending up worldwide! It's surprising that they didn't all resign on the spot! Plenty of others have since. Yes, the task is impossible, except that Jesus, even when was with them, as well as finally when He left them, promised them that He would give them all the tools that they would need to get the job done.

And that is what the work of the Holy Spirit is all about, for the fact is that it is impossible to do what needs to be done *without Him!*

Now that's a bit of a blow to human pride, because, let's face it, we might all think that we can accomplish something for God, and sometimes we don't realise that we can't until we try, and then discover it doesn't work – because it's essentially God's work, not ours.

It's God's work to show people how far short they fall from God's requirements and therefore need Christ for themselves; it's equally God's work to show them just how much Jesus had to do to make us in any way acceptable to Him. Only God can do that. Only God can change a person from the inside out. Only God can provide those spiritual tools that we need to serve Him etc. etc. Only God can bring us to that point when we honestly admit, along with the old hymn-writer: 'Every virtue we possess, and every victory won, and every thought of holiness are His alone' – His, that is, God, by His Holy Spirit.

I have had the privilege of spending my life studying most of the ins and outs of the Christian faith and of Christian service, and I am more convinced than ever, that unless God does *His* work, by His Holy Spirit in us, with us, by us or even sometimes in spite of us, there will be no lasting or worthwhile effects. God alone, by His Holy Spirit, can do God's work. Without Him, we just don't have the tools. And how they got them and used what we're going to see happening as we read on.

JB

Questions for Home Groups

Witnessing through relationship

Acts 2 : 36 -47

- Peter refers to Jesus as both 'Lord & Messiah'. How would you describe or understand the difference in these two names? (v 36)
- Why do you think the people reacted in the way they did? 'Cut to the heart', and asking what shall we do? (v 37)
- How does it make you feel knowing that the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit is not just for us, but 'for our children... for all whom God will call' (v 38 & 39)
- What makes a generation 'corrupt'? (v 40)
- Verses 42 - 47 describe a 'fellowship of believers' who appear to be in harmony and committed to the faith in word, and by deed; growing in number and popular. Too good to be true?
- In light of the previous question, what would be a fair description of St Andrew's & All Saints' fellowship of believers? Strong points... and those maybe not so?
- Why do you feel it is important to share in the fellowship of Christian faith?
- How do you feel our witness through relationship with each other displays the Gospel to those outside the church?