

Pentecost Sunday

24th May 2026



The Pentecost Spirit Still Empowers us to Witness

Three years ago, I found myself kneeling in front of a young man in Northern Ireland.

He was sitting in a wheelchair. His body was weakening because of severe muscle atrophy. He lived with constant pain. And as the SOMA team spoke about the power of the Holy Spirit, something stirred in him.

He looked at us and said, "Would you pray for me?"

So we did. We prayed with faith. We asked God to heal him. But... nothing happened.

At least, nothing we could see. And if I'm honest, those were difficult moments. When you pray, and there's no visible change. No breakthrough. Just silence.

Yet, in faith, we encouraged him: "Keep trusting that God is at work—even when you can't see it."

Three years later, as I returned to Northern Ireland, the team just happened to go to an event, where this same young man happened to be present.

Only this time—he was standing. Walking. Free from pain. And beginning to dream again about his future as a sports journalist.

That's the kind of story that makes you stop and ask: What does it really mean that the Holy Spirit gives power?

And that's exactly what Pentecost is all about. Because Pentecost isn't just a moment we remember—it's a reality we are invited to live in.



Point 1 | The same Spirit that was poured out at Pentecost is given to every believer, empowering them to witness to a supernatural God.

Last week, we listened to the words Jesus spoke about the coming of the Holy Spirit. He said this in Acts 1:8: *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses."*

Let's prepare our hearts to hear that: Power ... to witness.

Not just comfort—though the Spirit does comfort us.

Not just guidance—though the Spirit does lead us.

But power. Why? So our lives would reveal that Jesus is alive—and that the gospel we proclaim truly represents a supernatural, powerful God.

I've just returned from a SOMA mission trip where I saw something of this same Spirit at work in a fresh and global way. Part of that time included attending the Alpha Leadership Conference.



There were around 5,000 Christians gathered—from all over the world, across many denominations. But what struck me most was this: about 90% of them were young people.

And the atmosphere in the room was electric with faith.

Point 2 | The Church is hungry and filled with anticipation of what God is doing.

There was passionate worship. A deep hunger for God. A sense that people weren't just interested in ideas about God—they were expectant that God would move. It felt like standing in the middle of a Church that was alive and bursting with anticipation of what God was about to do.

As I listened to testimony after testimony from young people who had been invited to learn more about Jesus, and responded by giving their lives to him, I was convicted of my doubts over the likelihood of God moving in the hearts of the unbelievers I knew. I asked myself, "Lord, am I giving opportunity for your Spirit to move when I share about my faith?"

During that time, we also gathered with SOMA National Directors from around the world, and we reflected on our calling to help "tend to the nervous system of the body of Christ."

It's a curious phrase—but a powerful one.

The nervous system is what carries signals through the body. It enables movement, responsiveness, connection. Without it, the body may still exist—but it cannot function as it should. And in many ways, that's what the Holy Spirit does within the Church.

He connects us. He animates us. He directs us. He brings life and responsiveness to the body of Christ. And what became so clear is this: across the world, the Church is hungry—not just for better structures or clearer strategies—but for the living power of the Holy Spirit.

Point 3 | The Spirit of God gives us power to witness. God's powerful Gospel requires God's power to adequately represent it to the world.

But what does that power actually look like? The early Church gives us the answer.

In Acts chapter 4, the disciples are facing opposition. They've been threatened and told to stop speaking about Jesus. And when they gather to pray, they don't pray for safety.

They prayed this: *"Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."*

They prayed for boldness. And they prayed for God to act—through healing, through signs, through wonders. Because they understood that a supernatural gospel requires supernatural power. Their witness wasn't meant to be words alone—it was meant to be accompanied and validated by a demonstration of the power of God.

That is, in fact, exactly how Paul modelled his ministry. He wrote, *"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power. I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God."* (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)

And that brings us back to that young man in Northern Ireland. Because what we saw in his life is exactly what happens when we pray as the apostles prayed—and when we trust that the Holy Spirit is at work, even beyond what we can see in the moment. Sometimes the power of God is immediate and visible. And sometimes... God's healing power unfolds over time.

But it is real. And it is active. And it is still at work today.

So what does this mean for us? Firstly, we are invited to expect power. The Holy Spirit has not changed. God is not less active today than He was in the book of Acts. And while we don't control how or when He moves, we are invited to live with expectation—that God is present, and that He is working.

Secondly, we are invited to pray boldly. The early disciples didn't pray small, safe prayers. They asked God to stretch out His hand. They asked for healing. They asked for signs and wonders.

Is that what we ask for in our prayers? Perhaps, for some of us, our prayers have become a little cautious. Pentecost invites us to pray again with boldness.

And thirdly, we are invited to witness confidently. Because our message is not just a set of ideas. It is not just a philosophy. It is not just about events that happened long ago.

We carry the message of a living, active God. And the Holy Spirit empowers us so that when we speak about Jesus, we are not speaking alone—He is at work through us.

We are part of that “nervous system” of the body of Christ—people through whom the life and power of the Spirit flows into the world.

So as we come to a close, I want to invite us to make the prayer of the early Church our own.

Let’s pray: “Lord, enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

Come, Holy Spirit. Fill us again. Empower us again.

That we might be your witnesses—in word, and in power. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Lord God,

We thank you that you are not distant or uninvolved, but present and powerful.

Thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit—given not only to comfort us, but to empower us to live as your witnesses. Forgive us for the times we have settled for less—when our prayers have been small, or our expectations low.

Today, we ask for boldness. Like the early disciples, would you enable us to speak your word with courage and clarity. Would you stretch out your hand to heal, to restore, and to reveal your power in our lives and in our world. Holy Spirit, come and fill us afresh. Awaken in us a deeper faith. Stir in us a greater expectancy.

And send us out as people who carry not just words—but the living presence of Jesus. We offer ourselves to you again. In Jesus’ name,

Amen.

Self-Reflective Questions

1. Where in my life have I settled for a “safe” or purely intellectual faith, instead of expecting the power of the Holy Spirit to be at work?
2. When was the last time I prayed with boldness—truly asking God to move in ways that only He can?
3. Who is God inviting me to be a witness to right now, and how might the Holy Spirit want to work through me in that situation?