Reflection for Pentecost 31 May 2020

Have you ever been drunk? So drunk that you lose all your inhibitions, and do or say something that others remind you of later to your embarrassment?

Alcohol exaggerates emotions so that however you were feeling before is made more so, both in celebration and in misery. This is why it can be so dangerous.

The disciples on that first Pentecost were accused of being drunk because they had come out of hiding and were shouting in the streets in languages that everyone could understand. In my experience, when someone is shouting when drunk, it is very difficult to tell what they are saying!

But the disciples were not drunk – they were filled with a life giving Spirit, that enabled them to leave their place of safety to go out and tell everyone about Jesus. They were enabled to speak in words that people could understand, they had the confidence to come out of hiding and make a great speech – Peter especially who, not so long ago had denied all knowledge of Jesus for fear of the crowds.

This Spirit did not stop there. The disciples then went on to risk everything – even to give up their lives – to take that message around the world. That Spirit very much lives on today.

How confident are we feeling about the relaxing of lockdown? How safe do we feel coming out of our homes after such a long period of isolation. No, I am not suggesting that all we need is a hit of the Holy Spirit and we’ll all be out and back to normal. But where do we get our confidence from to take that leap of faith outside?

The Spirit of God, yes, gave the disciples the loss of inhibition and fear needed to go out and proclaim Jesus as Lord. But the Spirit of God continues to work in and around us, so that we can walk alongside those who are fearful, to comfort those who are grieving, to enable those who are struggling.

Coming out of lockdown is going to take time. It’s going to take patience. It’s going to need some sense of security that it is safe. Some will be ready to come out and shop and chat and do all the things we used to do before. But some will not be ready for some time. And that’s ok. Let us be inspired by the Spirit to walk alongside those who are ready, those who are not and all those in between. The language of love is open to all as we travel together – yet apart – until all this has passed.

Happy Pentecost!

Rev Ruth