

It is famous enough to be spoken each day by billions in hundreds of languages and yet intimate enough to draw us ever closer into friendship with Jesus Christ. It is simple enough to be memorised by small children and yet profound enough to sustain a whole lifetime of prayer. When we pray it with sincerity and with joy, there is no imagining the new ways in which God can use us to his glory.”

Very good additional prayer suggestions here: <http://thykingdom.co.uk/>

They suggest we pray for:

the renewal of the Holy Spirit

the confidence to share our faith.

5 people to pray for each day for a week who we long to come to faith—why not get into prayers in your small group and begin your prayers for your 5 now?

Also:

- Pray for people on the Alpha course at Brockhill.
- Pray for the hoped for new Alpha course to begin next week—for people to risk joining it.
- For our young people’s baptism and confirmation groups

Close by saying the Lord’s Prayer together.

Holy Spirit may we know that we are not alone, abandoned or orphaned.

Will you fill us today,

and continually refill us

so that we might be hope-filled people

who bring your new life to others.

Amen

St Andrew’s Goldsworth Park
Sunday 8 May 2016
Kate Wyles

‘I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you.’ **John 14.16**

study notes

Ezekiel 37.1-14

John 14.15-26

Not abandoned

Not abandoned Ezekiel 37.1-14 , John 14.15-26

Opener

Fire, wind, water, cloud, bird, advocate...

Q: Which of these descriptions of the Holy Spirit do you relate to the most? Can you recall where these descriptions occur in scripture?

Read Ezekiel 37.1-6 together. For further background on Ezekiel's time see 2 Kings 24 and 25.

Ezekiel is called to speak God's words to an exiled people who have lost everything to the Babylonians: land, homes, temple... And their sense of God with them.

Q: What does a valley of dry bones express about them? (*From the sermon: In scriptural imagery when something affects us in our bones it affects us to our deepest selves. At our core – and the emotion at the core here is that the bones are dried up...*)

Q: What happens when Ezekiel prophesies? Are his words enough? (*...even when skin, tendon, muscle is added the hopelessness remains...*).

Q: What three things does God promise in the third prophesy (see verses 11-14)? (*I'll open your graves: bring you back from the dead/resurrect you; put my Spirit in you; settle you in your own home*).

Q: Can you recall a time when you lived but did not have life—emotionally or spiritually? Can you share something of that time?

God wants his defeated people to know that his life-giving breath makes all the difference. Where you able to experience this in your situation? What helped/ Where did you find 'life-giving breath'?

Clues to the nature of the Holy Spirit

Read John 14.15-26

Clue 1: He comes alongside

Q: What does the word advocate mean for you? Have you ever had an advocate or acted as an advocate for someone? Can you describe what you did?

In the Gospel 'advocate' (paraclete in Greek) is a legal word - someone who advocates for you in a court of law, and also a relational word - the one who brings help, consolation, comfort, encouragement. At its most basic level the word simply means to "come along side."

Q: Can think of times when someone has come along side you with comfort and encouragement... Did this help you move from a sense of being 'a life-less being' to someone with hope? Can you describe something of this?

Clue 2: He is *like* Jesus

Notice in verse 16 the word **another** (...to send another advocate). Jesus is the first advocate—how is that so? Can you think of places where scripture backs this up?

How are these 'clues' helpful in understanding the purpose and nature of the Holy Spirit? How might they influence the way you live your life as a disciples of Jesus?

Prayer

In this week leading to Pentecost the Archbishop's of York and Canterbury are calling for a wave of prayer for evangelism. Use their '**Thy Kingdom Come**' handout from Sunday for ideas for prayer. Justin Welby writes:

In their letter the Archbishops said: "At the heart of our prayers will be words that Jesus himself taught us – 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.' It is impossible to overstate the life-transforming power of the Lord's Prayer. It is a prayer that is reassuring enough to be on the lips of the dying and yet dangerous enough to be banned in cinemas.