

**Sermon:** Are we Jesus' hands and feet?

**Reading:** Acts 2:1-21

**Introduction:**

When the Son of God entered this world, it was in an undramatic way, born into a little known town, in an obscure part of the world, in an event which passed everyone by without much notice, except for a few shepherds.

When Jesus mission was completed, nailed to the cross at Golgotha, the sky turned black when the sun stopped shining. The earth was violently shaken, walls of the city shifted and cracked, rocks split apart and graves burst open as the ground reeled in anguish when the Son gave up His life. The City of Jerusalem knew something supernatural was taking place, no eclipse ever lasted 3 hours, prompting the Roman centurion to say, 'Truly this was the Son of God'.

Fifty days after Jesus resurrection, the Holy Spirit made His entrance into the world. By contrast the Holy Spirit arrived in a dramatic fashion. 120 believers were gathered together in prayer, saw and heard the Holy Spirit's dramatic arrival, as they were each anointed by Him. Arriving with the sound of a rushing wind and anointing with tongues of fire. Everyone in the room knew He had arrived, everyone was conscious of His presence and everyone was filled with the power of God. A new joy and courage filled their hearts and transformed their lives.

Jesus waited 30 years to begin His public ministry, the Holy Spirit after His dramatic arrival set to work immediately and has remained in the world ever since. Peter knew this was the moment Jesus had told the disciples to wait for. Now the work of the Great Commission could continue, starting in Jerusalem, then going out to the ends of the world.

Jesus hadn't left the disciples to continue alone, to face the wolves in the world without their Shepherd. For now the Holy Spirit would lead them in the mission.

**The Day of Pentecost**

Peter after receiving the Holy Spirit left the lockdown and entered the busy streets with great boldness, proclaiming the Good News of Jesus. The City was filled with many visitors, travelling from near and far, Medes, Parthians, Greeks etc to attend the festival. As Peter preached and the disciples witnessed to Jesus resurrection and saving grace. The disciples supernaturally proclaiming the message of God in languages not their own, and that day 3000 people were saved marking the birth of the Church.

**The Church of Jesus**

The word translated "church" comes from two Greek words that together mean "called out from the world for God." We are a people whom God has called out of the world to walk a new path, a new way and follow Him who calls us in obedience. He has set our feet upon a different path, a heavenly road and He has promised to build His Church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it. Sadly this supernatural entity, the Church of Christ is seen as irrelevant to many people today in our post modern culture. Some have come to see the church as a meeting place for a weekly services, others a form of social club. Many don't understand the purpose of the church and think it is mainly a charitable organisation or some sort of NGO within communities.

## **We are Jesus' hands and Feet, Really!!**

I have titled this sermon, are we Jesus hands and feet? What do you think? Is this how you see the church? St. Teresa of Avilla famously said, "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours."

We must be careful when we use this statement saying, Jesus has no hands but ours, or that we are the hands and feet of Jesus in the world, as it can mistakenly give the impression God can do nothing without us and He needs our hands and feet to give Him a helping hand. This unfortunately produces a very small view of God along the lines of many who simply see Jesus as the babe in the manger, helpless and needing a mother's hand. We must remember what the Scriptures tell us, Genesis says, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters' (**Genesis 1:1-2**). God didn't need my hands and feet in the beginning when He created the heavens and the earth. When we consider the amazing variety and complexity of life in the world around us, from the oceans depths to the life in the skies, and He did it all without my hands and feet!

Paul speaks of us being like a body that has many parts with different functions but all work together. I can see how the hands and feet idea came about, but the concept of Jesus has no hands but mine unfortunately leaves us with a very low view of God indeed. We lose the view of the supernatural and replace it with our own efforts alone. We are the body of Christ, Jesus is the Head of His Church. The Head gives the body direction, vision, coordination, control and life. Without the head the body is dead and moves nowhere. If it is still moving like a headless chicken, it may look alive but will soon keel over!

## **Jesus builds His Church**

Jesus said, 'I will build my Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it'. Notice Jesus didn't say my people will build my church! Matthew 16:18 Jesus says, upon this rock, I will build. This rock is not the rock of charitable works, good deeds or even social activism, but the rock of the Gospel. Upon the gospel Jesus will build His church. We must never lose sight of this important foundation stone.

When Jesus gave the final instructions He tells Peter to wait for the Holy Spirit before he run ahead in the work of the Great Commission. The Psalmist makes this point well when he says, 'Unless the Lord builds the house the labourers about in vain (**Psalm 127:1**).

## **Church Trinitarian in nature**

The Holy Trinity working together to build the church is another important point to consider. The Father is the one who calls us out of the world. For Jesus says, 'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him and I will raise him up on the last day' (**Jn 6:44**). Of the Holy Spirit Jesus says, 'And when He comes, He will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment' (Jn16:8). The Holy Spirit convicts a sinners heart for the need of salvation and sanctification, thus pointing the way to Jesus as our Saviour and Redeemer. The Father draws, the Spirit convicts and Jesus saves. All Three persons of the Godhead (The Holy Trinity) are involved in each of our salvations, no wonder the angels sing when a single sinner repents (Luke 15:10) and why Jesus builds

the church not us. We have roles of ministry, preaching and teaching but it is the Father who calls, the Spirit converts and Jesus saves.

Pentecost is significant because without the Holy Spirit there would be no Church and yet for many denominations today the Holy Spirit is probably the least mentioned and the most neglected of the Trinity. The mainstream denominations have developed sophisticated patterns of worship, ministry and service but somewhere along the line we have got off track and left the Holy Spirit on the pages of Scripture rather than at the heart of Jesus Church.

A.W Tozer says it so well when he writes, "If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95 percent of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95 percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference."

Jesus didn't simply leave the disciples to go off into all the world as sheep amongst wolves with the Good News without their Shepherd to guide them, comfort them, energise them, enable and equip them for the tasks at hand. For every conversion is a miracle requiring the 3 Persons of the Holy Trinity. The church never converts people to faith, God does. The church is the agent God uses and Paul reminds us, 'How can they call on the One in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without preaching to them? (**Romans 10:14**).

The churches role is to speak and share the Gospel, introduce people to the Saviour and then to teach them all we have learned about Jesus. This is the job of the true Church and this can only be done in partnership with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not just central to the health and mission of the Church but also beating heart of every Christian?

### **Doesn't everyone have the Holy Spirit?**

Its important to remember what Jesus said about the Holy Spirit, he says, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever" (**John 14:16**). The Greek word translated here "Counsellor" means "one who is called alongside" and has the idea of someone who encourages and exhorts. Among those functions is that of revealer of truth. The Spirit's presence within us enables us to understand and interpret God's Word. Jesus told His disciples, "when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth" (**John 16:13**). He reveals to our minds the whole counsel of God as it relates to worship, doctrine, and Christian living. He is the ultimate guide, going before, leading the way, removing obstructions, opening the understanding, and making all things plain and clear. He leads in the way we should go in all spiritual things. Without such a guide, we would be apt to fall into error. Thats why Paul uses these strong words to the church in the letter to the Romans,saying, that if a person does not possess the Holy Spirit, he or she does not belong to Christ: "You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." **Romans 8:9**,

### **When do we receive the Holy Spirit?**

The apostle Paul clearly taught that we receive the Holy Spirit the moment we receive Jesus Christ as our Saviour, declaring, "For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." (**1 Cor 12:13**)

**Ephesians 1:13-14** teaches us that the Holy Spirit is the seal of salvation for all those who believe: “Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is our deposit, guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.”

These passages make it clear that the Holy Spirit is received at the moment of salvation. We receive the Holy Spirit by repenting of sins and giving our lives to Jesus Christ as our Saviour (**John 3:5-16**). The Holy Spirit becomes our permanent possession the moment we believe, inviting the Holy Spirit to dwell within us, making our bodies His temple. Once we are saved and belong to God, the Spirit takes up residence in our hearts forever, sealing us with the confirming, certifying, and assuring pledge of our eternal state as His children. Who would not want that certainty?

There are many misconceptions about Holy Spirit, some think of the Spirit as a power given by God to energise or empower, like electricity, others think it’s an impersonal force like the wind which just comes and goes, blows where it wills for a time and then dies out. Those who think of the Spirit in these terms will often refer to the Spirit as a ‘thing’ or ‘it’. This is a big mistake, we should never refer to the Holy Spirit in these terms as the Spirit is a Person. The Spirit is divine, read Acts chapter 5 and see what Peter says about the Holy Spirit. He possesses a mind, emotions, and a will. Jesus refers to the Spirit as He and the Scriptures tell us He is omnipresent; “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.” (**Psalms 139:7-8**). He is Omniscient; “But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” (**1 Cor 2:10-11**).

The Holy Spirit thinks and knows (**1 Corinthians 2:10**).

The Holy Spirit can be grieved (**Ephesians 4:30**).

The Spirit intercedes for us (**Romans 8:26-27**).

He makes decisions according to His will (**1 Corinthians 12:7-11**).

The Holy Spirit within the believers of Jesus can truly function as the Comforter and Counsellor that Jesus promised He would be (**John 14:16, 26, 15:26**).

### **Spiritual blessings**

Another one of the Holy Spirit’s roles is that of gift-giver. The spiritual gifts given to believers in order that we may function as the body of Christ on earth. All these gifts, both great and small, are given by the Spirit so that we may be His ambassadors to the world, showing forth His grace and glorifying Him. The Spirit also functions as fruit-producer in our lives. When He indwells us, He begins the work of harvesting His fruit in our lives—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

### **Summary:**

The Holy Spirit is a great and precious gift. All what Jesus was in the physical to the disciples, the Holy Spirit is to us today in the spiritual/supernatural. We have a companion who is constantly with us. Want to walk closer to God, be led by the Spirit and walk with Him who is God. Ignore the Holy Spirit and we will lose His touch, quench the Holy Spirit we will dry up and produce no fruit. Walk close to Him and He will lead us and fruit will come. Jesus doesn’t need our hands and feet to do His work, He will build His church, His way. He doesn’t need us, but desires us because His love for us is great. Rejoice, we have a precious gift given to us, Learn to be obedient to what He calls us to do and let Him Build the Church for His glory. **Amen.**