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I recently heard of a very senior naval officer who retired not long ago. After a short period of moping around the house, he went to work for Waitrose, stacking shelves.

On the first day he arrived for work at 9:05am; on the second day at 9:15am; on the third at 9:10 am and so on. At the end of the week, his supervisor called him into the office and said, *You know that we start work at 9:00 am, but your attendance record shows you arrive consistently late. I am aware that you are a disciplined Naval man; what would they say to you if you arrived late?*

Without a moments pause, the retired Navy man said, *They would say, **"Good morning Admiral!"***

On the fiftieth day after the resurrection of Christ, little did the Apostles know, who would be coming into their midst, and how!!

The story of Pentecost is another familiar story in the Bible. After His resurrection, Jesus spent 40 days in the company of His disciples, teaching them about the Kingdom of God.

Luke specifically mentions, during this time, Jesus instructed the Apostles *"through the Holy Spirit"*. The Holy Spirit did not suddenly spring into action at Pentecost; He was about God's work from the beginning!

One day, while sharing a meal with them, Jesus said, *Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. John baptised with water, but in a few days, you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit. ... You will receive power (i.e. enabled beyond your natural ability) when the Holy Spirit comes on you; then you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

No indication exactly when and how this would happen; they were told simply, to **wait**, and when that happens, *you will be my witnesses...* Would you take instruction from anyone who would not give you details about, what, when, where and definitely, **HOW?**

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Faith and *trust* are two important human character attributes God has given us, but not before He demonstrated *faith* and *trust* to us. In *faith*, God made this earth perfect for us to live in, and in *trust* He gave it to us, to look after.

At Pentecost, in *faith*, God gave the Holy Spirit a fresh mandate to look after Christ's Church (not buildings, not institutions) but we the people, until His return, and in *trust* God gave us His most precious possession, Christ's Church; imagine, God has given us to each other, to love, to look after, care for, to minister to, that the world may see us loving our neighbour as ourselves, as we love God with all our heart, soul and mind.

Let me leave you with two thoughts to consider:

First, never underestimate the significance and the power of the resurrection. The central theme of God's message to us, is the resurrection of Jesus as Christ. Jesus did not conquer death by dying on the cross; He conquered death through His resurrection. Luke makes this an important statement at the start of the life of the Church, *After His suffering (Jesus' crucifixion), He showed Himself to these men **and gave them many convincing proofs that He was alive.***

The apostles struggled with the resurrected Christ before them. They witnessed Jesus' death, but needed *many convincing proofs that He was alive.*

We need to get our head around this: God will not **explain** everything to us (we said this a few weeks ago: when we get to heaven God does not owe us an explanation of what went on and why!), but He will give us *many convincing proofs, **only if*** we choose to spend time with Him, in His Word.

Until and unless we make the conscious effort to approach God with a desire to know Him more, He is not going to shout from the Heavens to make Himself known. The Psalmist makes this very clear, *God's glory is on*

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display in the skies, God's craft is exhibited across the horizon. One day gushes the news to the next, and one night informs another what needs to be known. Their words aren't heard, their voices aren't recorded, But their silence fills the earth: unspoken truth is spoken everywhere¹

Convinced of Jesus' resurrection *with many convincing proofs*, Peter could say with confidence, *God has raised this Jesus to life, **and we are witnesses of the fact***²

The unspoken truth is this, without Jesus resurrection, there is no Pentecost. The two go together like a braided rope, and we are incomplete one without the other.

Christ's resurrection and Pentecost represent our Christian life in two baptism's. First, the baptism by water which we are all familiar with, is a personal expression of *identifying* with the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Paul explains to the Church in Rome, *That's what baptism into the life of Jesus means. When we are lowered into the water, it is **like** the burial of Jesus; when we are raised up out of the water, it is **like** the resurrection of Jesus. Each of us is raised into a light-filled world by our Father, so that we can see where we're going in our new journey to God's grace-filled sovereign country.*³

The second baptism is the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Jesus made specific reference to this just before His ascension, *John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit*⁴. It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to live the God-centred and Christ-focussed life; it is the Holy Spirit who guides us, protect us and directs us into God's work in His world, because that is His God-given mandate: to look after

¹ Psalm 19:1-4

² Acts 2:32

³ Roman's 6:1-14 (paraphrased from The Message)

⁴ Acts 1:5

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and to keep safe, God's most precious creation, we the Church, you and I, until Christ return's in God's glory.

So, the first thought I want to leave with you is, not to underestimate the significance and the power of Christ's resurrection, because without His resurrection, there can be no Pentecost.

The second thought I want to leave with you is, at Pentecost, God invites us to cooperate and collaborate with Christ and the Holy Spirit, who are at work in this world. We cannot do what Jesus did on the cross, and we cannot do what the Holy Spirit does, but together with them, and under their direction and counsel, we can do what God wants done.

The Church born on the fiftieth day after Jesus' resurrection, is a *body of individual believers*, united with Christ in His death and convinced of Christ's resurrection, *and it is a collective body*, united in commitment to God's work in His world, through the Holy Spirit.

The fact of Jesus' physical resurrection is central to the faith and work of the church; it is the solid foundation of our faith, without which our work does not makes sense.

Experiencing the love of God through Jesus Christ is foundational; living this new life requires God's gift of the Holy Spirit, who gives us the Church, the resources we need to fulfil our missionary mandate, and what greater resource do we need than God Himself at work in and through us!

This means that we can go to our families, our neighbours, into our places of work, enabled by the Holy Spirit beyond our natural abilities, and with the resources go Heaven, to declare the simple, world-changing, life-altering message, in word and in deed:

Jesus is alive!

Through Him, we are reunited with the Father!

AMEN.