

Pentecost Sermon, 28 May 2023

St Thomas a Becket, Ramsey

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In the beginning, I was there.

The Holy Spirit of God.

I was there, with the Father and the Son. I was with God and I was God.

I was the Spirit of God, with God in the beginning.

All things came into being through me. And without me not one thing came into being.

I was there, in the beginning, sweeping over the chaotic waters.

Hovering, brooding, like a bird with wings outstretched, ready to bring order from chaos, to knit the world into being and to hold it together forever.

We created because we loved. Because we ARE love. Loving is what God does.

We created to give ourself in love to our creation. To nurture and sustain it. To be in close relationship with it, knowing its intricacies, its joys and its pains.

Sharing our love with all creation so that all creation might find life in us.

I breathed life into the first creatures, and the first humans too. Made in God's own image to care, to nourish, to create, to shepherd the creatures of the earth and to share in God's work with us.

I wept when humans turned away from this call, neglecting the care of God and choosing self over love.

I groaned with the whole creation as it fell into decay and destruction, grieving for the closeness I once had with the world. Pained by the pain the world now felt in being torn from closeness with us, its Creator.

And I longed with the Father and the Son to rescue the world, to save all creation from their sin, and to bring all things back into close relationship with us.

We chose a people. A people who would be our people and we would be their God. A people through whom the world might be saved, and all creation would once more know closeness with God.

So I came to individuals to equip them for God's work. I filled them with my Spirit to help lead the rest of the people, and all creation, back into relationship with me.

I filled crafts people and artists, so that the whole people might be drawn back into relationship with me, their God, through the beauty and the ritual of worship.

In the days of the judges, when Israel had no king but God, I filled Shamgar and Deborah, and Gideon and Samson, to lead God's people so that they might live in peace and trust in God, their King, their provider and their sustainer.

When the people demanded a king, I inspired Samuel to anoint Saul, so that he might lead God's people in my ways and be drawn back into relationship with me.

I grieved when Saul was not a good king. So I came again to Samuel and led him to anoint David, the shepherd king, to turn the people back towards their God once more.

I spoke to the Prophets, giving them dreams and visions, words and warnings to share with God's people. Through me, they urged all creation to turn back to us, to the loving embrace of the God who loves them and will heal them. The God who breathes life into them and sustains the universe. The God who wants to be in close relationship with them once more.

I chose and filled each of these people, human beings, made in God's image. Made in our image to care, to nourish, to create, to shepherd the creatures of the earth and to share in God's work. Equipped by me to share in the work of God, and to draw the whole creation back into close relationship with us, their Creator.

And I spoke to the prophet Joel spoke of a day when I would be poured out on all flesh, so that all God's people would be filled with the Spirit.

Prophecy, dreams and visions would be for many, not just for the few.

I was there when the light came to dwell in the darkness. When the Word became flesh and the Son stood incarnate among the created beings of the world. One through whom all things had come into being, had come to dwell enfleshed within the world.

Heaven opened at his baptism, and they saw me descending on him like a dove. Like a bird with outstretched wings, hovering over the waters of baptism like I did over the waters of creation in the beginning. Filling him with love and closeness in his human body, one with the Father and one with me.

I was with him when he prayed, when he cried, when he healed and taught and sought the will of God.

I was with him, and with the soldiers too, and the crowds who cried "Crucify!". I was there.

I was there when the heavens darkened and the Father wept as the Son of God bled and died to save all creation.

I held the universe together as the moon and the stars wept for their crucified King, feeling in myself the pain of Creator and Creation, torn apart yet longing for each other.

I wept and waited.

And I was there as the bewildered disciples woke to a new dawn, a new reality for all creation. As they heard and saw and touched the risen Christ, alive, among them once more, the firstborn of the new reality of Spirit-filled new life.

The day was now coming when I would baptize the believers with myself, the Spirit of the living God. And they would receive power to be witnesses to the truth about God in Christ in all the earth.

I was ready to enter all people once more, to draw them back into close, personal relationship with us, their God. Their Creator, who loved them from the beginning.

And so the day came, when the followers of Christ were all together in one place.

Suddenly, with a sound like the rushing wind, the sound of recreation was heard. The sound of heaven touching earth, bringing order from chaos, filling the people of God to share in God's work and equipping them to be his witnesses in the whole earth.

I, the promised breath of God, poured out on all flesh as the prophet Joel had foretold.

Now, all God's people would be filled with the power of God through me.

Now, the work of God would be for many – whatever their age, gender, race or background - to draw all creation back to the love of their Creator and into close relationship with us once more.

In that earth shattering day, I rushed through the earth, like the wind of God sweeping over the waters in the beginning. Bringing order from chaos, light from darkness, life to all.

And still today, I am here. Hovering over creation, wrapping my wings around the created universe to sustain and transform, to bring new life with the Father and the Son, longing for all creation to know our love and fullness of life in us once more.

Today, I am here.

Here to equip you, the baptized people of God – made in God's image and filled with the breath of God – so that you might share in my work of drawing all creation back into close relationship with the God who loves them.