

The Meaning of Pentecost

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Nathan and his sister had been sad and gloomy for weeks and weeks.

Nothing their parents did seemed to make them happy.

Their father brought them to the seaside to visit their grandfather who owned a big fishing boat. Even though they spent several days sailing through sparkling blue waters, watching dolphins and flying fish leaping and twisting out of the sea, they were still very sad and downcast.

Nathan wouldn't play with his kite anymore.

He lost interest in playing ball and joining in hide and seek games with his school friends.

And Sarah showed no regard for her dolls, or helping her mum feed the animals (something she had always been interested in the past).

On the evening when they came back from their fishing trip their mother made them their favourite desert, but they only picked at it with their forks.

Nothing could console them or make them happy.

Even when their friends called one night to see if they were interested in looking at a bright comet that was blazing across the sky, Nathan and Sarah preferred to stay in their bedrooms with their heads under the pillow and their bodies screwed up tight under the sheets.

They were a very sad little boy and girl.

But why were they so sad?

They lived in a mountain village twenty miles from Jerusalem.

During the past year they had gotten to know a friend of their parents who used to stop-over in the house as he travelled around the country helping people who were poor and sick and who needed to hear some good news.

His name was Jesus and he came from Galilee, which was about a three days journey to the north.

Every time Jesus came to stay in their home Nathan and Sarah were filled with excitement!!

Lots of amazing things had happened when Jesus came to their village:

A blind woman received her sight.

A deaf boy screamed with delight when Jesus touched his ears and made him hear for the first time.

A sick baby became better when Jesus picked it up and touched its head.

A man who had been nasty to his wife for many years, started to be a loving husband after a late night chat with Jesus.

A little girl, a friend of Sarah's, who was brought to Jesus with a broken arm, not only got it mended, but was healed of all the pain she felt too.

And an old man who was dying said he wasn't afraid to die anymore because of the good news Jesus brought him about God's love. He died peacefully three days after Jesus' last visit. Everybody was amazed because the man had been so afraid of death.

According to Nathan's school teacher people in the village really, really, began to trust in God after listening to Jesus' parables and stories.

So Nathan and Sarah loved it when Jesus came to stay at their house.

Here are three things they said about him:

He's great fun to be with!

He makes us excited about God!

He helps us to be kind to horrible people!

And here are three things they used to do with Jesus every time he came to their home:

Fly Nathan's big red kite on the nearby hilltop!

Feed the animals after supper!

Drift into sleep listening to stories about God's love for the whole world!

It came as a terrible shock to Nathan and Sarah when their parents told them that Jesus had been killed in Jerusalem.

Their mother cried for many days.

And their father was silent for a whole month.

Everybody in the village was talking about what happened to Jesus.

People who had relatives in Jerusalem heard that he had been crucified by the Romans.

Nathan and Sarah were very sad, and even when their mum and dad tried to make them happy again, they kept thinking about Jesus and only felt more empty and miserable.

Every night when they went to bed they used to talk about Jesus and end up crying themselves to sleep.

In their dark bedroom they asked all kinds of questions.

Who would want to kill Jesus – he was so good and kind?

How can we be happy if we can't be with Jesus anymore?

Who will teach us how to understand all the stories in the bible?

How will we be able to love horrible people if he isn't here to help us?

Just before they nodded off to sleep Sarah said from under the sheets:

"I feel very lonely and afraid without Jesus.....!"

And Nathan said:

"Now we'll never know what special surprise Jesus had for us".

Because when Jesus last said goodbye to them he said he would send them a very special gift from God.

One day, many weeks later, Nathan and Sarah were feeding the animals when suddenly they could hear their mother rushing up the garden path.

She was calling their names at the top of her voice.

At first they were frightened because they thought something was wrong.

But then they saw that she was beaming with joy and excitement!

"Jesus is **NOT** dead", she said.

“Jesus is alive!”

They all went into the house together, and she told them the stories that she had heard from other followers of Jesus who were travelling around the country spreading the good news.

Nathan and Sarah could hardly believe their ears!!!!

Then Nathan said:

“When will he come to visit us again?”

Just then their father walked into the room.....

And behind him was a tall man with a long beard.

For a moment Nathan and Sarah thought it was Jesus – but they soon recognised that it was one of his disciples who used to come with him to the village.

“Hello”, he said, “my name is Peter – you might remember me –“

“Yes!” said Sarah, “we know who you are – but where is Jesus? Is he with you?”

Peter said:

“Yes, he is with me. And he’s come to stay with you too.... forever”.

“*Forever?*” asked Nathan.

“Forever,” replied Peter.

“Where is he, then?” Nathan demanded, trying to peer over Peter’s shoulder.

Peter took Nathan and Sarah onto the nearby hill where they used to fly their kite with Jesus. And he told them that if they truly loved Jesus and wanted to know him and be with him forever all they had to do was ask him to come into their lives.

Sarah was puzzled and asked: “how can he come *into* our lives?”

Nathan added: “I’m not always a very good boy – why would he come into *my* life?”

Peter told them about the Holy Spirit.....

“He’s God’s gift to people who want to know Jesus and be like him”.

“When our lives are filled with the Holy Spirit”, Peter continued, “Jesus becomes our friend and he never leaves us....”

Peter waved goodbye to Nathan and Sarah and headed off on his journey back to Galilee.

Nathan and Sarah stood on the hill and wondered what to do.

They couldn't see Jesus anywhere.

But they remembered Peter's words: *ask Jesus to come into your life and the Spirit of God will make it happen.*

The sun was beginning to set over the hills.

Nathan and Sarah started to walk back towards their house.

"What shall we do?" asked Sarah.

"Perhaps Peter wanted us to pray or something" said Nathan.

They stopped in their tracks and looked at each other.

"Shall we?" replied Sarah.

Nathan and Sarah bowed their heads and closed their eyes. This is the prayer they prayed.

Dear Jesus we love and miss you terribly. We want to be your friend and we want you to live with us forever. We feel so unworthy inviting you into our lives because we often do things which are not very pleasing to God. But if you will forgive us we would just love it if you would come back among us again. We need you and don't know how to get by without you.

In the coming days and weeks Nathan and Sarah knew that something was very different.

They knew that Jesus was with them.

They could sense his presence everyday.

They could talk to him whenever they wanted – at any time of day – and for any reason.

Whenever Nathan went out to fly his kite on the hilltop he was able to share his excitement with Jesus – because he knew that Jesus was with him.

Sarah found that she was becoming a more kind and helpful person because Jesus filled her heart through the Holy Spirit – and she wanted to do good to all kinds of different people she met everyday. And when she felt lonely she discovered that Jesus was always close at hand to bring her comfort and friendship.

Once when some boys were calling Nathan bad names at school, Nathan found that Jesus gave him strength to love his enemies.

Jesus really, really was with them!!

He had risen from the dead and come to share their lives by the power of the Holy Spirit!!

This is what Pentecost was all about.....

When the Holy Spirit came it was to prove that Jesus wasn't dead and gone.....

But his coming was also God's special gift.....

Because you see through the Holy Spirit Jesus can be with us *all the time*, wherever we are.....

Before Jesus' resurrection he couldn't do that.....

He always had to wave goodbye to Nathan and Sarah whenever he went on his journeys.

But because the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost – *HE CAN BE WITH US ALL THE TIME....*

This is what Nathan and Sarah discovered.....

And God invites you to make the same discovery today.....

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