

sure I affirm this in principle. It becomes problematic when our desires and the objects of our love and loyalty are influenced by false promises and the selling of dreams that seldom deliver.

I bring to mind another translation of the exhortation of *'Do not lack diligence in zeal; be fervent in the Spirit'*. The old RSV translates it *'Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord.'*

I Pray.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." Psalm 51:10

Through your Holy Spirit Lord, grant me that I hear your living word afresh today and every day. As Christians gather throughout the world, may we be extra diligent in our hearing and in our responding. May your Holy Spirit continue the work of transformation, creating in me a clean heart and steadfast spirit. May we recognise opportunities to build one another up, to share words of encouragement, to be attentive to the needs of those we encounter, and to show your kindness, love and mercy to everyone we meet. Amen.

I Reflect.

This is true worship: *Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.*

The Spirit gets to parts of our being that nothing else in all creation can transform or renew. True knowledge of God provides an indispensable foundation for faith, but this transformation is so much more than knowledge. It works in us such qualities as love, faithfulness, hope and purpose.

It also enables us to know ourselves better, and more positively. Our redeemed selves have the potential to be holy and pleasing to God. The Spirit frees us from the enslavement of fear and constant self-reproach. We can be our own harshest critics, and the evil one wants nothing more than our refusal to receive the mercies and grace of God. It is by this grace that we are not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought, but more positively we are urged to ‘think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one.’

This transformed and renewed mind is not just an individual thing. It is communal, and the body of Christ into which we are drawn is stronger and more effective in action when we recognise that in Christ, we are ‘individually members of one another.’ We each have *charisms*, gifts from God. The intention is that we put such gifts to use for the building up and encouragement of others.

I Challenge Myself.

Do I underplay or down-value the gifts God has given me? There can be a type of false-humility where we worry about affirming our gifts and prefer to diminish ourselves. I know at times that feels like a safer place to be. But the mission of God can suffer as a result of our hiding our gifts under the proverbial bushel.

And so I listen once again to this profound truth, instructed and assured by the Spirit:

Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one. Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function, in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: If prophecy, use it according to the proportion of one’s faith; if service, use it in service; if teaching, in teaching; if exhorting, in exhortation; giving, with generosity; leading, with diligence; showing mercy, with cheerfulness.

Let love be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good. Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Take the lead in honouring one another. Do not lack diligence in zeal; be fervent in the Spirit; serve the Lord.

I am struck by the clarity of Paul’s urgings: be real in how we relate to others. This is no place for masks, and they only entangle us in any event. “Detest evil, cling to what is good.” I am

Lord, I am thankful that you are not silent, nor do you leave us in the dark to guess or speculate over the great questions of life. All that is essential for a true and living faith has been revealed in and through your life, death and resurrection.

Spirit and truth. The former animates and enables a fulness of life; the latter is such a timely provision in our world otherwise awash with falsehoods and self-interested spin. Truth matters, and spiritual truth is as important as ever.

And so I pause and pray, using a prayer of St Augustine of Hippo:

Grant me, even me, my dearest Lord,
to know you, and love you, and rejoice in you.
And, if I cannot do these perfectly in this life,
let me at least advance to higher degrees every day,
until I can come to do them in perfection.
Let the knowledge of you increase in me here,
that it may be full hereafter.
Let the love of you grow every day more and more here,
that it may be perfect hereafter;
that my joy may be full in you.
I know, O God, that you are a God of truth,
O make good your gracious promises to me,
that my joy may be full;
to your honour and glory,
with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign,
one God, now and forever. Amen.

I return now to Paul's profound summary of the transformation that flow from the mercies of God:

Romans 12:1-11

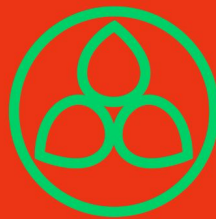
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PENTECOST RETREAT



ARNA
Anglican Renewal Network Australia

ARNA PENTECOST PODCAST 2023 *The Holy Spirit and Study*

Today is *Sunday*, the 11th day of June and the final day of this week's podcast series exploring the vital role of the Holy Spirit in enabling our study of the wisdom and ways of God.

We have seen how the Spirit enables us to identify truth over against falsehood, wisdom over against foolishness, and character that is shaped more and more by the example of Christ. The Spirit also reveals things that cannot otherwise be known, the mysteries of God now disclosed and to be declared to all the world.

We have focussed particularly on the prominent, game-changing role the Spirit plays in enacting the gospel as the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. One key aspect of this working of God is in setting aside our former mindset, shaped as it is by lies and distortions that result in sinful and rebellious lives.

Today we revisit this profound outworking of salvation as the transformation and renewal of the mind through the agency of the Holy Spirit. This transforms the core of what makes us who we are, how we think and view the world and decide what it is to live well. It includes our ambitions, our passions and desires, now directed to all that is good and right before God.

It is only through this work of the Spirit that we are now able to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—our true worship.

It is in that spirit and with a sense of anticipation, I focus now on being drawn into God's presence.

John 4:23-24

But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth."