

# WEEKLY SERMON

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## God is active in our neighbourhood

The sixth Sunday of Easter follows with the celebration of 'Rogation' days. During this week some believers might be having a fast in preparation for the Ascension Day.

Rogation is a Christian substitute for Roman pagan festive 'Robigalia': Prayers for blessings and protection of the crops and farmers.

In Acts 10:44-48, our attention is drawn to God's ways of sharing his love for all the people who listen to His message.

The seekers who listened to the message of God's love and assurance were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. Before the baptism they declared their allegiance to Jesus.

Who could stop them from being baptised now formally? The Holy Spirit is hovering over the whole world. The Holy Spirit is not the personal property of any institution.

It was difficult for Peter to get away from his Jewish cultural hegemony and treat Cornelius the gentile with equal respect. He was led to discover something significant about the other beyond Jewish history.

Jesus guided Peter to change his perception of others. God does not show any partiality. For Jesus, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile. Those who listen and follow Jesus' message irrespective of their culture, race, ethnicity or language become children of God.

We are called to participate in the mission of God. God's Holy Spirit is not confined to the four walls of the Church. God is already active in our neighbourhood. We have to learn to act appropriately and connect with the traces of God's grace in our communities.

Psalm 98 is quite apt in pointing out that when God will judge the earth, only those who respect His name and praise him in words and action will live victoriously. Christian faith is not a bundle of precepts but a way of life where precepts are practiced.

Let us ask God to help us to live a life of love for others. We are chosen to have the lasting fruit of Jesus' joy, love, and the spirit of sacrifice in our ongoing ministry. John, the loving disciple of Jesus, invites believers of Jesus to keep Jesus' commandments to combat against all kinds of evil and overcome it in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

**Rev Dr Sarah Gill, Vicar of Blackburn St Stephen and St James**

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES