

This is the full script of the Rev. Mike Weldon's article which was inadvertently not fully published in the June Magazine. Our sincere apologies to the Rev. Mike Weldon

Flat Batteries!

Recently in the middle of the night I needed some light, so I switched on my very small torch. After a short time, the torch went out, with no warning. There had been no flickering or dimming of the light. One moment brightness, the next moment darkness.

I have a USB charging point by the bedside, so I thought I would plug my torch in, and get its battery charged. Of course, I couldn't switch on the bedside lamp, as I didn't want to disturb Pam. So in the darkness I fumbled about with my left hand, trying to put my torch into the USB port. Eventually, I succeeded.

Then, horrors! A bright light flooded the bedroom! I had expected the torch to start off with a dim or flickering light. But, no way. As soon as the torch was connected to the power source, it shone with a full light. I hadn't switched it off. I hastily reached down and unplugged the torch. Mercifully, darkness filled the bedroom.

I switched off the torch, and then after fumbling about in the darkness yet again, managed to reconnect the torch to the USB port and get the battery recharged this time. After a while my rapidly beating heart slowed down, and before going back to sleep, I was able to think over what had happened.

My thoughts were led to the Day of Pentecost. The disciples and other believers were in the Upper Room, waiting for the arrival of The Holy Spirit, as Jesus had commanded. Suddenly, following on from the sound of a violent wind, and the sight of tongues of flames, all the folk in the room were "filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in tongues." Acts 2:1-4. Then they went straight outside to a gathering crowd, and preached with great power. So effective were they, that 3000 people became believers, and were baptised.

Notice, there was no gradual filling or empowering. Like my little torch: once connected to the source of power, they immediately radiated that power!

Some days later, after the healing of a lame man at the Temple Gates, Peter and John were arrested by the religious leaders. But Peter, Acts 4:8 "filled with the Holy Spirit" spoke powerfully to them. The religious leaders threatened them, and told them to stop preaching.

Peter and John went back to a meeting of the believers and reported what had happened. Then they held a

prayer meeting, and what followed? Acts 4:31 "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke the word of God boldly."

Did you notice? They were "all filled with the Holy Spirit", again. So it appears that the early believers were actually like my torch battery – rechargeable. It wasn't a matter of "once filled always filled" at Pentecost, was it? They needed to be refilled, recharged on a regular basis.

We later read that Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit even as he was being stoned to death, and the Apostle Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit as he confronted Elymas the sorcerer.

So whether they were in groups at prayer meetings, or on their own facing persecution or spiritual challenges, New Testament believers were filled with the Holy Spirit. Fully recharged!

Interestingly enough, Paul had this to say in his letter to the Christian believers at Ephesus. "Be filled with the (Holy) Spirit," Ephesians 5:18. The verb "be filled" is written in the present continuous tense in the original Greek, so it has the meaning, "be being filled" with the Spirit. So according to the Bible, it is not a one-off experience of being filled, but a regular one. Like the early Christians, we present day Christians are also meant to be regularly filled with the Holy Spirit. We are in fact, re-chargeable believers.

To be recharged, we need to be connected to the source of power, don't we? Like my torch needed to be connected, so do we. So how to be connected? Via prayer, (both personal and corporate), Bible reading, and "waiting on the Lord", as we say. And of course, we must recognise our need regularly to be filled or recharged. We are unable fully to live our Christian lives in our own strength, in our own power. But thank God, through the Holy Spirit we can do so.

As we come out of lockdown, is your spiritual battery fully charged? When did you last have a top-up? Keep connected to our Lord, and regularly ask him to keep your spiritual battery topped-up. He will not let you down.

Rev Mike Weldon