Sermon: **“What he commands is that we believe in his Son Jesus Christ and love one another”** (1 John 3.23)

“You made me love you. I didn’t want to do it.” Can love be forced? It seems contradictory.

“**Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples**” (Matt 28.19) Can you order belief?

Yet: **“How unbelieving you people are! How long must I stay with you? How long do I have to put up with you?”** (Mark 9.19)

Just think of how often the people of Israel went astray, how Peter & Judas let Jesus down.
TEXT - Yeah, right!

This is not just a problem from years ago; true also today.

We know we can order people to do things – Gallipoli, young children, but whether through fear or in love, it still seems impossible to order love, or order belief. These are surely things individuals have to choose to do.

Indeed when belief can be forced it seems wrong, unnatural. Gloriavale community. Imagine if I told you that God had called you to preach, etc. Some ministers demand obedience because *they* know God’s will.

Imagine if in your marriage that the husband demanded obedience – it is biblical...

Eventually the disciples did believe - what happened to change them?

Had God bullied them into belief, forced them to love? No. Resurrection and Pentecost transformed them. God gave them his Spirit; ie God inspired them. As last week, they ‘got’ it; they ‘knew’.

*We* were not at Resurrection or Pentecost but have the same Spirit. This is not a call for a repeat of Pentecost, but a call for the same inspiration. How might it work for us?

The trouble with Gloriavale, etc is not inspiration, but not enough inspiration!

Anyone can claim inspiration and call others to all sorts of acts (radicalising for Islamic State?)

This does not make the leader right. A husband, a minister, Army leaders can all go wrong.

In our God/us relationship, it is not God who we need to be inspired to lead us (that is a given) but those who follow who need inspiration. We obey because *we* are inspired to do so!
Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Inspire us with your Spirit, Lord,

Your Spirit who is Peace,

That we, beset by endless fears,

May find in you release.

*O Spirit of the Risen Christ,*

*Come down to us, we pray.*

*O Spirit of the Risen Christ,*

*Come down to us today.*

Inspire us with your Spirit, Lord,

Your Spirit who is Goal,

That we, who yearn to know your way,

May offer you our soul.

Inspire us with your Spirit, Lord,

Your Spirit who is Power,

That we, who strive to follow you,

May do so hour by hour.

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