In college, when I was studying in Germany there was a term paper that I really did not want to write. So, in an effort to forestall doing any actual researching or writing, I convinced myself that before any of this could be done, I had to get some paperclips. I have no recollection of what anarchic group of papers needed so desperately to be clipped, but I do have some fairly vivid memories of wandering the streets of Freiburg in pursuit of this essential piece of writing paraphernalia, before finally settling on a cozy little box of 100 multicolored paperclips. I think I may have even stopped for a celebratory beer afterwards. The paper was ultimately written and perhaps three or four paperclips were engaged in its execution, but I am pretty sure that they made no real impact on the paper’s quality. And I guess my great paperclip chase of 1991 could be classified as procrastination, but it seems like it needs a slightly more specific taxonomy. It was procrastination in the sense that I put off doing something, but the way I did it contained a fair amount of self-delusion. I had convinced myself that I required one more thing in order to be successful. In my mind I wasn’t putting off but rather was being diligent and ensuring that, like a master builder, I had the proper tools by which to be successful. If I were making up a term for this type of behavior, I would call it “one more thingism.” In other words, it is the phenomenon in which we believe that we cannot be expected to do what is required of us until we have gotten just one more, very essential, thing. And maybe it is something that people named Philip do because in today’s Gospel we hear a very similar story. “Philip [says] to Jesus, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.’" Now just for a little context Philip has been with Jesus during his earthly ministry, he has seen miracles, he has heard the parables and the beatitudes but here today he is telling Jesus that in order to really be a disciple he still needs one more thing, he needs to see the Father. Put another way, he will be an awesome Christian tomorrow if Jesus will only show him the Father today. In Philip’s mind if he is not a wonderful and accomplished Disciple, it is really all Jesus’ fault. After all he has not given him all the required tools – its like assigning a term paper without handing out paperclips.

But of course, Jesus is not buying what Philip is selling. He doesn’t say, “You poor thing how could I have been so obtuse.” Instead, he says, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, `Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.” Jesus just kind of lays it out there, saying that you have seen plenty, there is not one more thing that Philip needs in terms of knowledge.

But here is a question: Why do we like to locate our issues somewhere else? That is why do we like to justify our lack of progress by laying the blame on someone or something else? There are probably psychological reasons and if we spent enough time on the couch maybe we could figure them out. But I don’t know if this is a time for introspection because today is the day of Pentecost. This is today is the day when the disciples went from not doing a whole lot (they are described as simply being all together in one place) to rushing out in the streets telling complete strangers about what has happened in the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Today marks a shift from one thingism to actually doing something. Which means, on some level, Philip was right when he says that he needs one more thing, but, of course, he located the reason for his inability to do something in the wrong place. It was not knowledge or understanding that he lacked rather what he lacked was the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is what moves the disciples from being sedentary to actually doing something and as uncomfortable as this might make us Episcopalians the Holy Spirit is available to us as well. And this need not be frightening. The Holy Spirit is not the exclusive purview of guys in white suits who somehow make the word heal have three syllables, rather the Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity who gets us off the sofa to do the will of God. Just look at what it did in the life of Philip. In today’s passage from the Gospel, Philip is offering excuses for why he cannot really do anything, but when the Holy Spirit comes today on Pentecost, he is one of those who rushes out into the street. And while I am sure that he did it in the most tasteful way possible the fact of the matter is that he moved into action. The Holy Spirit took away whatever was holding him back. Similarly, the Holy Spirit can do the same for us. It can take away our self-imposed impediments.

In concluding collect number four in the Book of Common Prayer we pray, “Almighty God, to whom our needs are known before we ask: Help us to ask only what accords with your will; and those good things which we dare not, or in our blindness cannot ask, grant us for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” It is basically a prayer which acknowledges that we are unreliable when it comes to knowing what we should be doing and asks God to fill in that space. All of us have things that we know we should do but don’t and all of us have things that we should do but do not even know that we should be doing them. That is what Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit comes along to assist us, to get us moving towards what God has called us to be. God realizes that of our own volition we can only do so much. No matter how hard we try and no matter how much knowledge we have, we will come up short and that is why God sends his Holy Spirit.

Pentecost reminds us that knowledge is not enough. We can memorize the whole Bible or *Summa Theologica* but without the Holy Spirit we can still miss the mark as our lessons demonstrate. After Philip demands to see the Father, Jesus reminds him of the knowledge he has. He tells him what he has seen and the meaning of the things that he has seen. What this reminds us is that what we humans have before the coming of the Holy Spirit is simply not enough. Philip is among the disciples who were sitting around doing, as best we can tell, not a whole lot. He has the knowledge. And not just any knowledge, he has knowledge given to him by the second person of the Trinity, but what we learn today is that it will require something more. It will require the third person of the Trinity to make the move from knowledge to action. Some theologians in describing the Trinity use the story of creation when God spoke the world into existence. The explanation is that God the Father speaks, the word spoken is Jesus the Son and the breath is the Holy Spirit. And breath is of course what gives life. So, on this day where the Holy Spirit comes, it comes to give us life, to animate us to do God’s will in the world so that we may be his this day and forevermore.