

Introduction:

- Today is Pentecost Sunday!
- How fitting since we have been talking about the God building the church for the last five weeks. Jesus said in Mt 16:18, *"I will build my church (ekklesia) and the gates of hell will not prevail against it!"* Peter stated that God is building a spiritual temple, (house).
 - I want to ask this question this morning, "When was the church born?"
 - It surely appears to be in Acts 2! In Acts 2 we have a picture of a "God explosion!" that results in 3k saved and for the next 28 chapters we watch Christians go to the utter most parts of the earth!
 - If the church was born on Pentecost, I would assume that He wanted it to always remain Pentecostal!
- Let look at this deeper this morning. *"On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem."* (Acts 2:1-5, NLT) One the day of Pentecost...Why Pentecost? What is significant about that day? And why is that meaningful to us that the Holy Spirit would be given on the day of Pentecost? Why were there so many people from out of town in Jerusalem on that day.
- Two loaves of fresh baked bread, butter, honey, strawberry jelly.

I. Where Did Pentecost Begin?

- A. Pentecost means 50. It is the Greek word for fifty. Why 50? and not 49? or 28? or 13?
 1. When Luke writes about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit he is referencing that it was 50 days after the Passover feast. (Jesus was crucified at Passover. That is why He is called the Passover Lamb)
 2. Luke was also aware that there was another Jewish feast that followed Passover and it was to be celebrated 50 days after Passover. Isn't it fun that God created all these feasts to bring people together to celebrate Him?!
- B. The 50 day feast. *"From the day after the Sabbath—the day you bring the bundle of grain to be lifted up as a special offering—count off seven full weeks. ¹⁶Keep counting until the day after the seventh Sabbath, fifty days later. Then present an offering of new grain to the Lord. ¹⁷From wherever you live, bring two loaves of bread to be lifted up before the Lord as a special offering. Make these loaves from four quarts of choice flour, and bake them with yeast. They will be an offering to the Lord from the first of your crops.* NLT (Le 23:15-17). see also Dt 16:9-17
 1. This feast was called by many names: 1. Shavuot (is the Hebrew word for 'weeks') 2. Feast of Weeks 3. Feast of Harvest. 4. Feast of First Fruits (second type of first fruits...great joy, greater celebration, freewill offerings.
 2. Feast of Firstfruits was also a part of the Passover celebration. At that celebration the priest would raise to God a sheave of Barely that had been brought by the people. The people were no allowed to eat of the harvest until they had brought first fruits to the priest. What is a sheave? It is a bundle of grain tied together. Ie. Bundle of barley (see picture). It was a celebration of the beginning of harvest season and it spoke of things to come. It also spoke of God's favor and goodness in that He had brought the rains. There, praise is appropriate to

God! This is why we read in the OT, "When you have eaten remember me!" Jesus, "Do this in remembrance of me."

3. What does this Feast of Weeks, Shavuot, Feast of Harvest Mean? What is it about?
 - a) We know that feast is 50 days after Passover. Seven weeks and on the 50th day Shavuot!
 - b) On Shavuot Jews were required to go to Jerusalem (second pilgrimage) to party with God. They could not appear before God with an empty hand. (Dt 16:16) This explains why there were so many Jews in Acts 2 who heard them speaking in their own languages. Men would come from everywhere, not just Israel.
 - c) Three reasons for the feast.
 - (1) First Fruits (second type: greater joy, greater celebration)
 - (a) The people at this time brought sheaves of wheat. (see picture)
 - (b) The priest would wave this before the Lord as an act of worship and thanksgiving to God for sending the rains and bringing good harvests. (sign of God's blessing). These offerings were also what the Levites used to live from for they were not allowed to grow crops.
 - (c) The people also brought two loaves of bread made with fine flour (wheat) yeast that were raised up to the Lord in thanks giving for his provision. IE Bring out the bread.
 - (d) Why bread made with yeast?
 - i) Some scholars say that it represents the partnering of two people groups Jews and Gentiles. This could not be seen until the out pouring of the Holy Spirit and Paul called this entity...One new man!
 - ii) A second understanding of this is that God wanted His people to enjoy a delicious celebration with better bread.
 - iii) Third, yeast is a living organism that raised up the bread.
 - (2) It was also to commemorate the giving of the law (Torah) the scriptures. Torah itself means instruction. Shavuot over time became known as the giving God's instruction on how the people of God were to live free. Tradition holds that Moses on the 50th day after coming out of Egypt ascended Mt Sinai to receive the Torah. ***Israel traces its birth as a nation to Mt Sinai. "When Israel left Egypt, they were not yet truly free. A nation without God's law is not a free nation." Jill Shannon, *A Prophetic Calendar*. p. 126
 - (3) Freewill Offering - this offering was totally up to the giver, usually based on how the Lord has blessed. It is one of the ways the Lord examines our hearts.

II. The Day of Pentecost Acts 2

- A. "Just as an earthly nation cannot function properly without God's instruction, so a 'holy nation' of His New Covenant representatives on earth cannot function without His power living in them." Shannon p. 126
- B. Like Shavuot, Pentecost has come to mean three distinct things.
 1. God's abundant provision! He gives us all of Himself! We are immersed by faith into the Presence by the Holy Spirit.
 - a) We get all of God.

- b) Like the Shavuot, the sheave of wheat was offered in response to the favor of the harvest now we see 3,000 people get saved the first day of the church!
 - (1) the word for church is "to set out before them, to collect and present."
 - (2) Ex 32:28 3,000 died after the golden calf incident.
 - c) Like the first fruits feast after Passover Jesus became the first fruits from the dead. So now, 3,000 become the Second First First fruits Feast—greater joy, greater celebration, freewill offering...the people had all things in common and gave to each willingly.
2. The first Shavuot was a celebration of the Giving of God's instruction-revelation. Supernatural revelation by the Holy Spirit. Pentecost is a giving of the Spirit empowering people to live the instruction from the heart out.
- a) The Teacher now lives in us!
 - (1) *"But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you."* (John 14:26, NLT)
 - (2) *"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you."* (John 14:16-18, NLT)
 - b) Some number fun.
 - (1) 120 means the end of flesh. Man is given 120 years. 120 in the upper room
 - (2) Jesus was here 40 days after the resurrection. 40 means generational/complete rule. So for 40 days Jesus appeared to them, gave them further instruction, and taught them about the Kingdom. At 40 days Jesus ascended having completed the mission.
 - (3) 10 means journey, wilderness, nurture. So the next 10 days as the disciples waited they were on a journey. Anticipating receiving the gift not knowing what it would be like. Tradition says on the 49 day the people stayed up all night studying the Torah in preparation of the feast. The 120 would have been in the Torah those 10 trying re-viewing all that scriptures had to say of the Holy Spirit. (Faith comes by hearing.)
 - (4) On day 50! 50 means Freedom!!! Jubilee was 50 years celebration. Debts were canceled that meant Freedom! Inheritances were returned. Slaves were freed. On Pentecost the Holy Spirit sets us Free!!!
 - (a) *"For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."* (2 Corinthians 3:17, NLT)
 - (b) *"And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death."* (Romans 8:2, NLT)
3. Freewill offering. They gave themselves to God....with no more fear!
- a) *"And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need."* (Acts 2:44-45, NLT)

b) The freewill offering was in response to how the Lord had blessed. Those in Acts 2 had been blessed beyond measure and they gave without measure.

III. **What Does Pentecost Mean to Me?**

- A. I am reminded that God teaches and imparts/gives us things in response to His given feasts.
- B. The Feast of Harvest is Just THAT: It is about the the harvest! Jesus was the First Fruits!!!
 - 1. 3000 saved the first day.
 - 2. *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* (Acts 1:8, NLT) To the ends of the earth!
 - 3. The Holy Spirit is given for the harvest! The better harvest!!! The bigger harvest.
- C. The Holy Spirit is given to us so that God would live in us. Revelation. God empowers His people to live free, walk free, and be led free. Live in the Spirit-Freedom; walk in the Spirit-Freedom; be led of the Spirit - Freedom!; Pray in the Spirit - Freedom!; Manifest the Spirit! - Freedom!
 - 1. We have both the Word and the Spirit!
 - 2. We have been given the Holy Spirit so we would be empowered to live the Word, not as law but out of the Spirit of God at work in us. FREEDOM!!!
- D. It means when I get filled I become that freewill offering! Whatever you want me to Lord! I will do it! Not my life but yours!

Conclusion:

- God wants us to have Him! The Holy Spirit
- Receive by faith. (Invitation)