



Feast on Jesus (Part 4) – Weeks

Pastor Jerry Gillis – May 14, 2017

So, I don't know if you guys read about this. A handful of years ago there was a guy named Mickey Straub and he went around in fifty days he went to all fifty state capitals. Anybody remember that, it was national news? Fifty days, fifty straight state capitals. Pretty incredible. And he was inspired by Abraham Lincoln. And so that's who kind of inspired him to do this. He read some thoughts in the Gettysburg Address that really inspired him about our nation itself. And in fact, he was so inspired by Lincoln, that he started at Gettysburg in his journey. That wasn't a state capital, but that's where he began. And then he finished in Springfield, Illinois, which is where Lincoln is buried. And in fact, when he drove around, he drove around in a Lincoln. That's how serious he was about all of this, right? So fifty state capitals in fifty days.

And one of the things that he did when he was at each state capital is he read the Gettysburg Address there, with sometimes a bunch of people that he had gathered there, and he read that. They were interviewing him and asking him why he did this. And he just said he was inspired he said because kind of at the tail end of the Civil War, he said that he felt like

Lincoln kind of gave the United States a new birthday. It was like there was a birthday, you know, Independence Day that we celebrated in the formation of a nation, but this could have been the end of the Union or the nation as we knew it. And so it was almost like a second birthday, so to speak. And he felt like he wanted to celebrate this second birthday. And he was inspired to do that. And he concluded his thoughts by saying generally speaking, what he learned in all of his travels was that the American people, generally speaking, are a patriotic people. And he was grateful that we live in one nation and that we can celebrate that.

Well, today as we study the Feasts of the Lord, the one that we're coming to now, we've been in a series in case you're here for the first time, maybe you brought Mom or Mom brought you or whatever, and you're here for the first time we're really glad that you're here, thanks. But we're in a series where we are looking at in the Old Testament, the Jewish feasts that God instituted for His people. And we've looked at Passover and Unleavened Bread and First Fruits. And today we're looking at a feast called the Feast of Weeks. And within it, kind of bound up in it is the idea of fifty days, and also the idea of kind of the birth of a new nation. That both of those things are kind of embedded in this idea of the Feast of Weeks.

Now, to call your attention to it I'm going to point out a couple of places, but if you want to camp in the book of Leviticus chapter number 23, for those of you that brought Bibles that's wonderful or if you've got it on your phone that's great. If you don't know where Leviticus is you can look it up in a table of contents, or you can just go Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus. It's the third book from the left if you're new to the Bible, alright? Leviticus

chapter 23. Notice what it says: It says, "From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering", remember that was the First Fruits offering, right? It says after that day, "Count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord. From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of First Fruits to the Lord."

And then we kind of got a corresponding passage in the book of Deuteronomy chapter 16 that tells us a little bit more information. Here's what it says: "Count off seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain." Again, that was talking about the Feast of First Fruits that we spoke about last week. "Then celebrate the Festival of Weeks to the Lord your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the Lord your God has given you. And rejoice before the Lord your God at the place He will choose as a dwelling for His Name - you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, the Levites in your towns, and the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows living among you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and follow carefully these decrees."

Now, when we talk about the Feast of Weeks, there's a number of things for us to pick up kind of historically. Because what I'm going to do is I'm going to give you a little bit of background on this so that you understand how this feast was celebrated and why. And then we're going to look for Jesus in the midst of this. And then we're going to kind of land by going what is this mean for me now? Like what do I take away from this? What

am I walking away being challenged or encouraged to do? That's kind of where we're going in our time together.

This particular festival is called by a number of names. We read the Feast of Weeks when we see it in Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16, but it's also called in some places the Feast of Harvest because it's about kind of the harvest itself. It's called the Day of First Fruits, not the Festival of First Fruits like the one during the Passover season. It's different than that, it's just called the Day of First Fruits. And in some places it's called the Closing Feast because it's the last feast in the spring feasts, alright? And I know that's a lot of stuff that you're probably going "whoa, I don't really know what that means," but I understand. But in Hebrew it's also called Shavuot, which simply means "weeks", alright? So sometimes it's referred to that way.

Now this was a grain harvest. If you remember when we talked all the way back, do you remember all the way back to last week when we talked about the Festival of First Fruits, those of you that were here. If you haven't been here you can go to thechapel.com, and you can catch up on all of those. But if you weren't here generally here's what we do. If this is like your first time here and you haven't caught up on our series, you have to stay after for church detention and that means you're going to have to listen to me for four hours. I'm going to go over the whole thing all over again, and you're going to have to sit through that, okay? So if you want to go to thechapel.com you can find the series and catch up.

But last week when we talked about the Feast of First Fruits we realized that that was a grain offering, so when the field was growing grain, then one piece of that field was sectioned off and they used that and they kind of milled it and they used it as a wave offering, remember how we talked about that last week? Well, in the Feast of First Fruits we're generally talking about a barley offering in terms of grain, which they called the poor man's grain, and in the Feast of Weeks that we're talking about today, that was a wheat offering which they call the rich man's grain, alright? So, you've got kind of rich and poor. Basically it's a picture, it kind of encompasses everything when we talk about this particular feast.

Now, what you also notice about this feast is that it's different from the Feast of Unleavened Bread, you remember the Unleavened Bread you have to go all the way back two weeks to remember that, alright? Some of us, I know, we struggle just like I can't remember where my keys are today you know, so asking me to remember things from two weeks is challenging. Remember when we talked about the Feast of Unleavened Bread and we talked about the picture of no leaven in the bread? When we say unleavened it means we don't use the word leaven, we use the word yeast, right! Impressive. Some of you were here, and listening! It's like a double bonus for me today. So there's no yeast in the bread, right? That was the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And it was a picture, as we realized later on about the Lord Jesus Christ. But in this particular context in the Feast of Weeks there are two loaves that are offered, and it says they are to be baked with yeast. Some of you, when we were reading that you were going "No, no! No yeast allowed!" We already learned that earlier, right? Well, it's

not so much that, that was for that particular feast back then, it was pointing to something. This is pointing to something else that we'll look at in just a few moments.

But what we also notice about this particular feast is that it doesn't have a calendar date. You know, most of the things that we do, we like to have a particular date that we do them, right? We celebrate these things on this particular day, but this doesn't, look again at Leviticus chapter 23 it says: "From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering," that's referring to First Fruits, right? "After that, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath." So basically, you've got this numbering that goes on after the time of First Fruits which they called in kind of Jewish history, the Counting of the Omer. Now the omer was just kind of a measurement tool for how much was offered in that First Fruits offering that would be a wave offering. And so they talk about the Counting of the Omer. After that offering, now there's a countdown that starts for fifty days and then it will be the Feast of Weeks, Okay, does that make sense? I know you're probably going, I don't really know what that has anything to do with, but we'll see it in just a minute.

That period of time, that fifty days that we're talking about is an interesting period of time because it was the time for Israel of consecration and of waiting. Because what they were doing is they were waiting on the kind of they were trusting God in that fifty days before they could actually take from the harvest. Because they trusted God for the sun to be able to kind of rain down on the field, they trusted God for the rain that made things

grow, for the fertilization of the soil, everything that happened, they were just trusting God and they were waiting on God and they were consecrating themselves before God during that season of fifty days. They called it the Counting of the Omer.

Now, this was the primary observance that we just, that I just gave to you, that's the primary observance of the Feast of Weeks. It was a harvest type of festival that trusted God for that which He was providing for His people. That's the primary observance. But there's a secondary observance that we need to note as well. The reason that I call it a secondary observance is because it wasn't commanded in the Scripture to the people of Israel. It's something that the people of Israel eventually adopted in the celebration of the Feast of Weeks. The primary observance, we call it that because this was commanded by the Lord, this was part of the feast. But the secondary observance for Israel was about the giving and receiving of the Law, because the ancient Rabbis taught that the giving and the receiving of the Law at Mount Sinai with Moses, you remember that, right, the tablets, all of that? They taught that that happened during the Feast of Weeks. That that's when that occurred.

Now, they didn't just make that up out of nowhere, they have some Biblical warrant to actually talk about that idea and you can see it in Exodus chapter 19. It says: "On the first day of the third month", now let's pause there for a second, listen carefully. You remember what God did when He led the people of Israel out of Egypt. He changed the calendar. Remember how we talked about that? And that became for them the first month. And it was in that month that there was the celebration of Passover, and the

celebration of Unleavened Bread and all of that, right? That's in the first month. Here in Exodus chapter 19 it says: "On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt - on that very day - they came to the Desert of Sinai. And after they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain."

You see, the Rabbis weren't just making things up, they were actually had Biblical warrant for what they were talking about. And so what they suggested and what they said was this. Is that Israel came out the land, and then they made their way over to Sinai, they came through the Red Sea out of Egypt and they made their way to Sinai. And it talks about the third month here, right? So you go from kind of after you know, maybe the fourteenth day of the first month and then you get into the third month, and so you're somewhere in the neighborhood of forty-something days that have transpired at this point. And then they camped right around Sinai and then there was like a three day time of purification. So they basically reasoned that the fiftieth day was an extraordinarily reasonable time frame to say that's when Moses appeared before the Lord on Mount Sinai. That makes sense. In fact, scholars as renowned as F.F. Bruce, who is now with the Lord, said this makes really, really good sense in terms of what they talked about and why they celebrate it.

And so what happened was was that Israel started celebrating this particular day like it was a national birthday celebration. So at the Feast of Weeks they would not only celebrate the harvest that God had given and kind of the First Fruits of that harvest, but they would also celebrate kind

of the national, what they considered the national birthday of Israel, because this was the time that the Law was given and it was like Israel was constituted as a nation at this point. The twelve tribes were now all together as one in one new nation as the People of God.

The Rabbis also say, and again this is not stuff that's communicated in the Scripture itself so make sure that you understand the difference. But the Rabbis also said that when God gave the Law, they believed that God gave the Law in seventy languages. And the reason that they believed that is because they believed that Genesis 10 talks about the seventy nations of the earth, when it kind of gives that genealogy there after Noah. And it talks about this idea of the seventy nations of the earth. So they took that to mean that what God was doing is He was providing the Law for the whole world, basically. It was entrusted to His people, but this was God providing His word to the whole world on how people should live. So, that was kind of a secondary occurrence for how Israel celebrated the Feast of Weeks. Does that make sense, everybody with me so far? Say uh-huh. Alright, thank you for those of you who are with me and those who are not.

Now, when we look for Jesus in the midst of this, we already know that we've seen Jesus very clearly in the Passover, that He is the Passover Lamb, right? We already see Jesus as the Unleavened Bread, that picture of no decay, that He was buried in the grave but would see no decay. And we see Jesus as the picture of First Fruits who got up on that day, on First Fruits and was resurrected from the dead. Such that He could wave kind of the offering of new creation before the Lord. This was the picture that we see. And in all of those pictures it's interesting because when we've studied

them, we've actually seen people like John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus speaking prophetically about what Jesus would do in fulfilling those things. And this is actually no different. Because John the Baptist says something about the mystery of Jesus very early on that we need to pay attention to, even if we don't know what it means quite yet in our kind of teaching time today.

Here's what John the Baptist said in Luke chapter 3: "The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John the Baptist might possibly be the Messiah. But John answered them all, 'I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'" So this is John the Baptist speaking prophetically about the ministry of Jesus, and saying He'll baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. And whether we knew it or not, actually what John was referring to was referring to this fulfillment of the Feast of Weeks.

In fact, Jesus hinted at this as well, He didn't hint at it, He actually said it very plainly. When He was toward the end of His ministry and He was talking to His disciples in John chapter 14, very shortly before He was going to go to a cross and die and be resurrected from the dead, notice what Jesus said in John 14: "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever - the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." This is Jesus saying these things.

And you're kind of thinking to yourself, okay, what's actually happening here. Let me pause, let me just push pause for a second and let's back up, right? The idea here is we want to put the cookies on the bottom shelf so we can all eat. Right? It's not just, we're not trying to just fly over, right? We all want to eat. Here's what that means. On that particular week, Jesus went to a cross, and He died on a cross as our Passover Lamb. He sacrificed Himself on our behalf so that through faith in Him, the judgment of God might pass over us because it rested on Him. God judged our sin on Jesus as the Passover Lamb at the cross. Jesus was then buried in a tomb, a picture of unleavened bread where He is buried in a tomb but is not going to decay in the tomb. Because there is no sin in Him, He is perfect and undefiled, the pure bread of God. And then, we see on that particular day of First Fruits, Jesus gets up from the dead, and has a First Fruits of witness where He ascends back to the Father and waves an offering before Him, demonstrating the new creation of His resurrection and the First Fruits of Him as the new creation and resurrection. We see all of that, right? Everybody clear so far?

Now, when Jesus resurrects from the dead, how long did Jesus stay walking around and showing Himself to some of the people that had an opportunity to see Him? Forty days. For forty days, this is during the time by the way, after First Fruits where after Jesus resurrected from the dead a countdown started. You started counting off for fifty days before the Feast of Weeks, right? That was exactly what you were told to do. And it is during this time they called the Counting of the Omer that Jesus is

appearing to some of His disciples. He appeared to more than 500 people at one time the Scripture says. And over forty days He does that.

And then on day forty, Jesus is going to ascend back to the Father. And notice what Jesus says in Acts chapter 1: "After His suffering, Jesus presented Himself to them and He gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. And He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the Kingdom of God. On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but' what? "wait, wait" What were they doing during the Counting of the Omer during the First Fruits time frame? Waiting. 'Wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

You see, this is exactly what Jesus had promised would occur, and now we're seeing it come to pass on this time that we call First Fruits. Now after Jesus says this and He ascends to His Father, that was forty days after His resurrection. Ten days later, on the fiftieth day, Jerusalem begins to swell with people. Why? Because this is the celebration of the Feast of Weeks. And by the way, the Feast of Weeks was one of those celebrations that was a pilgrim feast or a pilgrim festival. There were only three of those in all of the Feasts of the Lord, both the spring and fall. There were three that were pilgrim festivals, and that meant that all of the people had to come to the Temple and appear at the Temple. Which meant that for the Feast of Weeks, there were people from all over the middle east, northern Africa, Europe and Asia that had showed up in Jerusalem, both Jews and those who maybe were not Jews but were interested in that, sometimes they're

called proselytes or God fearers in the Scripture. Jews and non-Jews are showing up in the Feast of Weeks.

Now, if you and I would have been there on that day, on the day of the Feast of Weeks in the time fifty days after Jesus' resurrection, we would have heard the reader in the Temple begin to read from the Scripture. Because we know historically that there are some readings that the Jews did in the morning worship on the Feast of Weeks that go all the way back to the time of the Temple even in the time of Jesus. And some of those readings would have been about the glory of God and the majesty of God. And in fact, there were two of those readings, one from Ezekiel and one from Habakkuk where they would read those passages of Scripture something like this, like in Ezekiel chapter 1 and chapter 3. He says "I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north" wind "an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. And the center of the fire looked like glowing metal...Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a loud rumbling sound as the glory of the Lord rose from the place where it was standing." This is being read in the Temple that morning in the Feast of Weeks talking about wind and fire and sound.

And then they would read out of the book of Habakkuk as well: "God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens and His praise filled the earth. His splendor was like the sunrise; rays flashed from His hand, where His power was hidden. And Plague went before Him; and pestilence followed His steps."

Later on when Israel would ultimately adopt the idea that this was kind of a national birthday celebration because of the giving and receiving of the Law, they would also read the book of Ruth, because Ruth occurred during the springtime harvest and was a picture of her receiving the Law of the Lord. And they would read the story of the giving and receiving of the Law in Exodus chapter 19. And if you recall what that says, I'll give you a little piece of it. It says: "On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. And everyone in the camp trembled. And then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. And Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire. And the smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently."

See on this Feast of Weeks, the people of God, Israel, were reading in the Temple these stories about the glory of God that were communicating things about wind and trembling and fire and smoke and all of these things related to the Lord God and His power descending upon a people. That's what was being read.

And then guess what happened on this day, the Feast of Weeks, the day that the Greeks called Pentecost because it meant fiftieth. Here's what Acts 2 says happened on that day, fifty days after Jesus' resurrection: "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place and suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. And they saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. And all of

them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues or languages as the Spirit enabled them."

Can you imagine that they are hearing in the Temple stories about the glory of God, about wind and fire and sound, and they're thinking about the teaching of the Rabbis who said with the giving of the Law that God spoke in many languages to communicate this truth. And right here, the Spirit of God descends upon His people, His disciples. And in so doing there is a mighty, violent wind that surrounds the place, there is noise that people can hear, there are people speaking in languages such that all of the visitors there can now hear in their own language the story of the glory of God in the pouring out of the Spirit of God as tongues of fire began to rest on these disciples.

Do you see the parallels here? These are the parallels. Jesus promised that He was the fulfillment, that He was going to bring these things to pass and here on the Feast of Weeks what we see is we see God give us a First Fruits of the second birth of a people of God. Fifty days after the resurrection, it's almost like a second birthday for the people of God. Israel's birthday was celebrated back here, and now there's a new birth of a people called the church, by the power of the Spirit of God.

Now, when you look at the contrasts of these two events, where the giving and receiving of the law that you have, and then the the receiving of the Spirit that you have. Do you know what happened at the giving and receiving of the law? When Moses came down from there, do you know what was going on in the people of God? It was bad. It was bad. Bad. Right?

They had taken all of the gold and all of the valuables out of Egypt. And what did they do while Moses was gone? They made for themselves an idol. What was it? It was a golden calf, right? Because they they wanted to be able to see something tangible. Not a God that they can't see. Even though this is the God who actually parted the sea and led them out, and all of those things. And now all of the sudden they're creating something. And it's crazy and when you read in context even in the original language that it's written in you see that they were doing awful things like sexual orgies and those kinds of things that were going on. They just reverted back to the time of kind of Egyptian pagan idolatry at this point.

And Moses comes down and says Aaron, bro, literally bro, like what is happening? And Aaron's trying to shuffle around and you know, he's hemming and hawing, you know. And Moses is like this is not good, and God is going to deal with this unholiness and this sin. Because this cannot lead Israel astray. This cannot lead the people of God back into this.

And so what does God do? He turns loose the Levites. And normally you think of the Levites, like we'd like to sing. But he gave the Levites some swords, and it got serious. Notice what it says Exodus 32. Then he said to them, "This is what the Lord the God of Israel says: 'Each man each Levite straps a sword to his side. And go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.'" The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about how many? 3,000 of the people died. This was serious.

Now you look at that and you, go man, that's just mean. No, no, no. It was merciful. And the reason it was merciful is because what God was doing is he was taking his people and not allowing that sin to lead them back into a paganous, idolatrous, deathly life-sucking kind of thing, to gods that are not even gods. God is rescuing his people through this act. But we're reminded that God takes this very very seriously.

But isn't it interesting that with the giving of the law, 3,000 people died and what happened at the giving of the Spirit? After Peter preaches a message about the glory of Jesus the Messiah by the power of the Spirit, listen to Acts 2 verse 41. Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about how many 3,000 were added to their number that day. The Spirit gives life. The law, the letter, kills. And the spirit gives life. It was almost a restoration of the people of God in that moment by the power of the Spirit.

You see, here's what we can surmise. Just as the the man, you know, Mr. Straub went to fifty state capitals over fifty days. And he surmised that generally speaking, the American people are a patriotic people. Here's what we can surmise looking at our text. Jesus' people are a Pentecost people. Jesus' people are a Pentecost people. Don't mishear me. I didn't say Pentecostal. I'm not referring to one specific denomination. I have a bunch of friends that are a part of a Pentecostal denomination. That's wonderful. That's not what I'm saying. What I'm saying is Jesus people are a Pentecost people.

So we'd have to ask this question. If that's the case, what do Pentecost people do? If Jesus people are a Pentecost people, what do Pentecost people do? Let me give you just a couple of things as a matter of application, alright? You need to pay close attention here, because this is kind of how we apply these things. The first thing that a Pentecost people does is Pentecost people wait for the empowering and leading of the Spirit. That's what Pentecost people do. They wait for the empowering and leading of the Spirit. Remember, after First Fruits, start to countdown, 50 days. Fifty days of what? Waiting. What did Jesus say 40 days in? Wait. Wait until I give you the promise. And then he pours out his Spirit just as he had promised, just as John the Baptist had prophesied about Jesus. He comes through, doesn't leave us alone. Gives us an advocate. Empowers us by the Spirit. So what we have to remember is that the people were waiting for the empowering and leading of the Spirit.

Now, we live in a time where the Spirit's already been poured out. Right? we're not waiting on the Spirit to be poured out. Everyone of us that has put our faith in Jesus Christ has been baptized into the family of God by the Spirit of God. That's what the Scripture teaches us. So we're not waiting on that, but we still need to be a people who wait on the empowering and leadership of the Spirit in our decision making in our lives.

In fact, after the pouring out of the Spirit, there are New Testament writers like Jude and James who talked to us about patience and waiting, because we're waiting on the return of the Lord. Right? Listen to what Jude says in verses 20 and 21. There's only one chapter. That's why it says that. It says, but you dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and

praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. In other words, pray in the Spirit, so that you have the capacity to wait on the return of Jesus.

Here's what James says. James says, "Be patient, then brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains." He's talking about the harvest. "You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!"

You see, we're reminded to be, listen, we're reminded to wait. Wait at times on the empowering and the leadership of the Spirit of God. Let me just speak in very plain English for you. Before you decide to take that job, wait on the empowering and the leadership of the Spirit of God. Before you fire off that angry email or text or post, wait on the empowering and leadership of the Spirit of God. Before you make that huge purchase, wait on the empowering and the leadership of the Spirit of God.

And here's why. Because we have a tendency to default into making snap decisions that are based in fleshly desires instead of waiting and yielding to the Spirit of God in our lives. We would be so much better served in our relationships, with people, with stuff, with decisions, if we would simply yield ourselves to the empowering and the leadership of the Spirit of God. Pentecost people will wait for the empowering and the leading of the Spirit.

Here's a second thing though. Pentecost people will receive the Spirit in community. Let me explain what I mean. When we read stories like we read in Acts chapter 2 at Pentecost where the Spirit is poured out on people, we have a tendency to think very individual about that. In other words, man I'm so glad that I can be filled with God's Spirit and empowered to do the ministry of bragging on Jesus in my life. And by the way, you are. If you put your faith in Christ, you have that. That's a wonderful thing. It is individual. It does matter for us individually.

And by the way, when Paul at times talks about our bodily temple being filled with the Spirit, he speaks in the singular sometimes, but not all the time. Sometimes like in Ephesians he talks about the idea of we are the temple of God's Spirit. That just as our bodies are a temple of God's Spirit, so to the body is a temple of God's Spirit. That it is meant to be received in community. Don't mistake this. In Acts chapter 2, the Spirit was poured out when they were all gathered together in one place in one accord. That's when it happened. So I don't want you to miss that. There is an individual application, absolutely. The New Testament affirms that a hundred times over. But there's also a communal side, and we don't need to miss that. The Spirit of God actually reveals himself in community as the people of God gather together.

So there's a few things that that I want you to note. The first one is this: since that's true, you shouldn't come empty-handed. If the Spirit of God is going to reveal himself in community, you shouldn't come empty-handed. In fact, there's the feast of weeks was very specific about not showing. They wouldn't know what to do. They would never show up in the

celebration of the Feast of Weeks empty-handed. They'd never do that. Because listen to what the Scripture says back in the book of Deuteronomy. Count off seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. Then celebrate the Festival of Weeks to the Lord your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the Lord your God has given you.

Now, what they would do is they would bring grain, right? That was their currency, you know. Kind of grain and stuff they harvested, vegetation. That was their currency. I don't know why we show up as a Pentecost people, people who have the Spirit poured out on us and in us, why we would ever want to show up empty-handed.

In fact, the New Testament church started gathering on the first day of the week in their mind, the Resurrection Day, they started gathering on Sunday, and would set aside giving for the week for that day so that they could give. Why? Because they were a Pentecost people. they weren't coming empty-handed. It's not what they would do.

But you know, it's bigger than just financial giving by the way. Bigger than that. Because you need to be a person that actually comes to worship with something in your hand. Maybe what's in your hand is a word of encouragement for somebody around you. Maybe what's in your hand is you are bringing a praise to God in worship. Maybe what's in your hand is you are bringing service to the Lord when you serve here among this body of believers. Maybe it's your prayers for another brother or sister that you're helping to encourage. Do not come empty-handed.

You see, what happens in a largest church, and I love our large church. But you know what happens in a large church? Is that people can come and sit in the shadows, empty-handed like a consumer. And just say, well let's see what you got today, Jerry. Right? It's one of those numbers. Kind of have your arms crossed like, bless me if you can. You hear things like this: I hope you brought your A-game today. Hope you're on it today. In my mind I'm just going, what are we talking about? The reason you're saying things like that's because you got nothing in your hand. You're a consumer! Instead of having something to bring. You know, you pull up late, you walk in. Bless me if you can. You're out the door. Empty-handed. Maybe you receive something, but maybe not. If that's what you're doing, you're not hearing.

I know I'm getting close to home here, but. Listen, I love you. I love you. That's why I'm telling you these things. I love you. I don't want to see you wallow with being so empty-handed. Here's why. Because in empty handedness, we just live life like a consumer, and you'll be shocked at how empty your hands remain! But when you have something in your hand that you want to bring, like they brought firstfruits offerings to the Lord, you'll be shocked at what God fills you with!

Those of you who are watching online. I want to talk to you for just a second. If you're watching online because you're sick or because you write you're traveling, which is awesome. Or because you're physically unable to make it fantastic. Or maybe you're stationed overseas, or maybe you're a missionary somewhere who just checks in with us, you know kind of as a supplement, or whatever. All of those reasons are wonderful reasons. And that's why we do what we do. But if you're just thinking you know what. I

just like sitting here in my pajamas. I don't have to mess with people. I can listen to some Jerry. Do my thing. You're missing it. Empty-handed.

What might God want to do if you show up, and he wants to use you as an encourager the people around you. Maybe he gives you some some wisdom around the people that are sitting with, and they just need you to be there for them today, man. That when you finish, maybe they just they just need you to buy them a cup of coffee, or they need you to say a word of encouragement, or they need you to pray for them. Don't come empty-handed, because a Pentecost people sees the Spirit of God active in community. That's why it ought to be.

That's why Hebrews says, man.. I've got a lot here. I got to move. That's why Hebrews talks about, don't forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as some we're in the habit of doing. Don't do that. Why? Because the Spirit reveals himself in the context of community. He does that in a number of ways. So don't come empty-handed.

Let me give you a couple of other things here in that idea. It'll also help you realize that we're one people. Are you guys willing to hang with me for a few moments? I know some of you are getting up because you just can't stand me. But if the rest of you will stay seated, that would be helpful. We're one people. We need to know that.

Do you remember, ladies and gentlemen, with it with the offering that was given? Two loaves. Remember that? Two loaves in this Feast of Weeks offering. You were to bring two loaves. You know that was indicative of? Jew and Gentile. Fulfilled then in the time of Pentecost, fifty days after

Jesus, where there are those who are Jewish and those who are non-Jewish who are there, who now have the opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel. And it is going to be set fire in the world. Two becoming one.

Listen to how Paul phrases it in the book of Ephesians. For Jesus himself is our peace who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

See, ladies and gentlemen, when we have the Spirit of God working in community, we begin to realize we are one people. That we have from whatever our backgrounds are, by the blood of Jesus Christ we've been brought into one body. And we are different racially, and we're different from a socio and economic status standpoint, and we're different educationally, and we're different culturally. Who cares? We're one body in Jesus Christ. And you can only understand that in community. You cannot understand that in isolation.

Man, that is so good for us to remember. That's how it's all going to be at the end anyway! Have you read Revelation? Look at chapter 7. Just in case you haven't. After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. This is where it's headed, ladies and gentlemen. We have to live in community. The Spirit of God

reveals himself in the context of community and shows us that we're one people.

But you know what else he shows us about being one people? We are an imperfect people. He shows us that we are imperfect. Let me see if I can be even clearer here. You remember those two loaves? What did they have in them? Oh yeah. There is yeast in these. There wasn't in unleavened bread because it was pointing to Jesus, but there's yeast in these. Which is why we need one another and the Spirit's leadership in community. Because those of us who are almost on the ledge about to fall off into sin need a brother or a sister to grab them by the back of the shirt and say, I love you, and I don't want to see you go that direction. And you can't do that by yourself. We need to be able to be there for one another to speak words of comfort, words of encouragement, sometimes words of rebuke and love. Words of correction, words of help, words of strength, words of faith when people's faith seems to be frail. This is why we need one another, because we are an imperfect people. And we need the Spirit of God to empower us to help one another.

So Pentecost people are, they wait on the empowering and leading of the Spirit. And they realize that they see the Spirit in community. But let me give you a last thing. I'm almost done. Stay with me. I've just got a couple more minutes. You good? All right. If not, you've been shamed into staying, so. You know I love you right? Genuinely I do, I love you.

What a Pentecost people do? Pentecost people remember their birthday. Let me explain this real quick. I want to go back to the verses that we

started with at the very beginning. Kind of our focal verses where we learned about the Feast of Weeks. Notice again what it says in Leviticus 23. From the day after the Sabbath, the day you were brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord. No calendar date, right?

And then remember what Deuteronomy says. Count off seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. Celebrate the Festival of Weeks to the Lord your God by giving a freewill offering. And then he says rejoice before the Lord your God at the place, you will choose a dwelling place for his name. You, your sons daughters, and everybody that's located in there. Fatherless and widows living among you. And then he says this. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. And follow carefully these decrees.

You see, I always find it odd there was no date for their national birthday celebration. Right? It kind of bothered me for a little while. There's no date. Maybe that's because I'm accustomed to in the United States, right? Fourth of July. When we say Fourth of July, we all know what we're talking about. Fourth of July, man. Birthday of the nation. Fourth of July.

What is it for you, Israel? Well, when the sickle hits the grain, after the Sabbath of Passover, we start counting down fifty days. And then fifty days later, this is the time. And you just start going what?

Imagine if you were a little kid, and that's how you had to reckon your birthday. Right? You're four. Mom, when's my birthday? Your birthday is

fifty days after Uncle Josh died. You'd be like, okay. If you're four, right? You'd be like okay. But then you go to school, and other kids start having birthday parties. And then as a kid you're like, hey Jimmy how do you know your birthday? My birthday is October 7th. It's real simple. When's your birthday? Hold on a second. Mom, when's my birthday? I told you son. Your birthday is fifty days after Uncle Josh died. Well what? I want a regular birthday! One with a number! Why can't my birthday be a regular day? Because your birthday is fifty days after your Uncle Josh died. Well, why is it that? Here's why. Because Uncle Josh left you a fortune, and I don't want you to ever forget it.

You see, that's what God is doing with Israel. When he says to them, I want you to count off after the firstfruits, I want you to count off 50 days, because that's when you're going to celebrate. But here's what I want you not to forget. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. And there was only one way you got out. A spotless lamb was sacrificed for you. You want to remember your birthday? Remember how you got out.

I'm here to tell you ladies and gentlemen, if you want to remember your birthday spiritually, just remember how you got one in the first place. It is the Lamb of God who is slain for you. It is all about Jesus, and here's the good news. The reason that we date it that way in our own spiritual understanding, where we can go this is kind of where the birth of the Church occurred. It occurred because of everything that Jesus did to make it possible. And Jesus left us a fortune. He left us an inheritance. He left us new birth. He left us the Church. He left us power and wisdom and strength and grace and hope. He has left us a fortune. So always mark the birth of

the Church, always mark the birth of the people of God by what Jesus has done on our behalf. Remember, you used to be slaves, and you're not anymore.

You see, when the Spirit was poured out on all of them at Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, ladies and gentlemen. When the Spirit was poured out, they did not put all of their focus on all of the signs. They did not put all of their focus on all of the languages that were spoken. Those were leveraged to put the focus on Jesus so that he could transform people's lives. That's why it happened. Because it's all about Jesus. The reason that we have a church is because Jesus is the head. The reason that we have eternal life is because of Jesus. The reason that we have hope is because of Jesus. The reason that we have strength in the midst of sadness is because of Jesus. The reason that we have anything that we have is because of Jesus. Always mark your birth from Jesus and what he has done. This is the picture of the gospel.

Now, I'm not finished, but I'm quitting. So let me just ask you a few questions before we leave. First, are you waiting for the leading and empowering of the Spirit in your life in all your decision making and relationships? Second, are you actually living in community and considering it a priority, so that the Spirit of God can continue to reveal himself to you? And third, do you have a deep gratitude for the gospel of Jesus Christ that will set you free and will set other people free? Because Jesus people are a Pentecost people. And that's what Pentecost people in part look like. Let's bow our heads together.

You guys have been so patient and gracious. Thank you. Before we leave, if you're here, and you've never before received Jesus, I hope that you will. More than that, God desires for you to know him. It's why He sent his son. So that you could be forgiven and made whole. Outside of God, outside of Christ, we're helpless. We're apart. We're headed to destruction. But in him, were forgiven and whole and have hope and eternal life.

And if you want to know what it looks like to begin the journey of faith with Jesus, when we dismiss in just a moment, I'd encourage you to come by the Fireside Room in the atrium. Speak to one of our pastors or prayer partners. And just say I want to begin a relationship with Jesus. We'd love to take a few moments to help you with that.

For the remainder of us, I don't know what the Spirit of God is saying to you or have said to you through this, but I pray you'll listen and you'll obey. Because he knows what he's doing in your world. He knows what he's doing in your world, and what kind of fruit he wants to bear in your world.

So Father, I pray by the power of your own Spirit, you would do your good pleasure in each of our lives as we surrender ourselves to you. Because we know that when you're Spirit is active in our lives, it is active in shaping us more into the image of Jesus. Because Holy Spirit, that's what you do. You magnify the Son of God. You point attention to Jesus. And so I pray that our lives would do the same because of your activity in them. May we respond to you in obedience and whatever you've called us to do in Jesus', name. Amen.

God bless you. And again, mothers, Happy Mother's Day.