

FIRST FRUITS SERMON NOTES 3.13.22 // Pastor Jen Swift

We are moving from a season of EPIPHANY to a season of LENT.

We start lent with remembering God's **FAITHFULNESS**.

The act of giving our firstfruits is rooted in the faithfulness and generosity of God.

26 "When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance and have taken possession of it and live in it, ² you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there. ³ And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, 'I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.' ⁴ Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God.

⁵ "And you shall make response before the LORD your God, 'A wandering Aramean was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. ⁶ And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor. ⁷ Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. ⁸ And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror, with signs and wonders. ⁹ And he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O LORD, have given me.' And you shall set it down before the LORD your God and worship before the LORD your God. ¹¹ And you shall rejoice in all the good that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you.

DEUT 26:1-11

The act of giving our "firstfruits" is a practice of:

- Remembrance
- Returning
- Resistance
- Rejoicing

1. REMEMBERING OUR RESCUE

- o v.5-10
 - God's faithfulness always beckons for our faithfulness.
 - *What are the patterns of remembrance in your life?*

2. RETURNING TO FIRST LOVE

- v.5-10
- Thanksgiving produces affection
- The reward isn't the fruit, it's the relationship
- "You have made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in You" – Saint Augustine
- *How and when are you cultivating a love-relationship with the Lord?*

3. RESISTANCE TO SLAVERY

- V.5-8
- Resistance to being the slave
 - *Slaves don't have something to give*
- Resistance to being the slave driver
 - *Slave drivers always demand more...they are never satisfied*

Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹²I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³I can do all things through him who strengthens me. (Phil 4:11-14)

How are you actively building up resistance to being a slave or a slave driver?

4. REJOICING IN WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN

- V. 11
- *⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness^[e] be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹What you have learned^[e] and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (Phil 4:4-9)*

What have you been given that you can rejoice in?

Give the Lord the FIRST and the BEST of what you have...

- Time
- Talent
- Resource
- Relationship

REFLECTION:

What are the patterns of remembrance in your life?

How and when are you cultivating a love-relationship with the Lord?

How are you actively building up resistance to being a slave or a slave driver?

What have you been given that you can rejoice in?

How is the Lord leading you to adjust your giving your firstfruits in the area of time, talent, resource, and relationship?