

Sermon Title: **“Pentecost: *Out with the Old, in with the New*”**

Series: *Learn, Live, Lead*

Speaker: Pastor Damian Mericka

Text: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Acts 2:37-41

Introduction

“Stand firm, and you will win life.” -[Luke 21:19](#)

We began this year with a look at what Kingdom endurance is. ***Standing Firm*** here means *Endurance* and is a very rich word embodying an ***upward, consistent, contagious, and outward*** motion that goes against the current. *It is swimming upstream after Jesus.* We saw this is the work the Spirit of God does in our lives, just as He did in Jesus’ - He leads us upward to higher ground and a higher life in Him.

We also looked at some of the outward challenges we face when going upward with the Spirit, including the spiritual forces of darkness which our on their way downward. As they are being cast out of God’s Kingdom, we are being brought in. This is the nature of our Spiritual Battle. Unlike the generations that came before Jesus since His Ascension the Spirit has now come upon us to take the battle to where it truly is at.

What does this look like lived out in or lives? Following Jesus as His Disciples.



“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”

-Matthew 4:19

This series is set to be a journey answering this question- *what does it mean to follow Jesus?* How do we today answer His invitation and see this journey with Him unfold as it did for the first-generation followers of Jesus? Together we will discover anew what it means to follow Jesus- *to be a disciple making disciples culture that **learns, lives, and leads!***

I. Firstfruit: The Promise of Acceptance; Goodwill between God and us.

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” -[Matthew 5:17](#)

Jesus is reminding everyone that the Mission has not changed; in fact, He is here to fulfill God’s unchanging plans by overcoming sin and seeing to its removal from us. To help keep Israel going in the right direction was Scripture, God’s Word (Law & Prophets). More faithful than the stars in the sky to chart our course after are the promises of God. Within His Word were feasts that were set up to show how God’s faithfulness would richly supply all that we need to keep

our hand in His and do life with Him. *Remember, God desires to do a work within us before He does a work through us!*

After the Feast of Passover, when Jesus was Crucified comes the Feast of **Firstfruits**. It is here we see how Jesus, after crying out *It is finished!* On the Cross, died to atone for our sins. His Resurrection was the **firstfruit** of what His death means for us, because of how it pleased God the Father.

*“And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘When you come into the land that I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest, and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, so that you may be accepted. On the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.’ -**Leviticus 23:9-11***

Jesus’s Resurrection was the **firstfruits** that would be offered as a wave offering to the Father,

*“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.” -**1 Corinthians 15:20-23***

This, I believe, is part of the reason why Jesus said to Mary Magdalene,

*“Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ -**John 20:17***

***Note** the flow of Jesus’ words, *from mine to ours*, and the result of waving the sheaf of firstfruits, *so that you may be accepted*. **Accepted in the Hebrew here means, to take pleasure in, extend goodwill** (Remember and note: **Luke 2:14** This was God’s intention; His desire toward us)

****Bonus Note:** [Leviticus 23:14 -> Philippians 2:17-18](#)

*No matter how lost Israel may have gotten, this feast of the **Firstfruits** was meant to be a beacon reminding them that God is faithful, and greater has yet to come because of His faithfulness!*

Understand then clearly, that Jesus’ Death for our sin was received by God the Father. The veil separating us because of sin was torn now that sin is defeated through Jesus. The Resurrection of Jesus was the **Firstfruit** of the new life for all in Jesus. Jesus, as the **Firstfruit** was our sheaf offering waved before God and this please Him. Now nothing stands between God and those who place faith in Jesus. *And because of this, greater still has yet to come!*

II. Pentecost: The Promise of New

From the day after the Sabbath when the Priest waves the Sheaf of **Firstfruits**, Israel was to count 50 days until the time of the Feast of Harvest / Weeks (Herein referred to by Greek translation of **Pentecost**).

*“You shall count seven full weeks from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering. You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. Then you shall present a grain offering of new grain to the Lord.” **-Leviticus 23:15-16***

Before we can have the new, however, the present needs to become the old or former. Jesus said,

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.” **-John 12:24-26***

As Jesus was this grain of wheat that faithfully falls into the earth and dies, much fruit is promised to come. Believers are this fruit- you and me are the continuing fruit born on the vine of Christ! But, what does it mean to lose our life and how does this tie in to Pentecost?

III. Pentecost: Out with the old

The first Pentecost occurred at the foot of Mount Sinai. From the *Passover* and *Firstfruits* delivered from Egyptian bondage, the newly liberated Nation of Israel awaits the return of Moses who has been in the mountain receiving the Word, or Law, from God. Forty days with God draw to a conclusion, however it is during this waiting period Israel is drawn back into the practices of their former taskmasters and engage in sin.

*“When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, ‘Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’” **-Exodus 32:1***

In the absence of Moses, the Nation begins to drift with only the knowledge of *how to go backwards, not forward*. In this they craft gods to bring out their brokenness from within.

*“And he (Aaron) received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt! When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, ‘Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord.’ And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” **-Exodus 32:4-6***

Their impatience led them into this gross act of defiance to God on the day He intended to bless them. God had led them to the place to receive His Word, however they did not submit to Him and would miss receiving it, ***if not for God!***

I wonder how many of us may be at the point of giving up and going back into yesterday just as God is about to bring breakthrough leading us into tomorrow!

This first Pentecost would see the transition of the old we bring with us into this relationship with God, with the new he transforms us into in this relationship with Him. However, we must understand how great our sin is as an offense to God and the cost He paid to remove it and make all things new.

Is this act of sin with the calf really that bad? Stephen invites us to see more of the inward heart this act fruited out from.

“Our fathers refused to obey him (Moses), but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt, saying to Aaron, ‘Make for us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets: ‘Did you bring to me slain beasts and sacrifices, during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? You took up the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan, the images that you made to worship; and I will send you into exile beyond Babylon.’”

-Acts 7:39-43

God allowed Israel to descend into this, for them (and Moses) to see what He sees and thus the need for what He is doing. ***If not for God*** making things new, this is the natural direction we all flow in to. Worshipping ourselves and the creation, doing what is right in our own eyes, beneficially living selfishly to ourselves unto death. *In this our sin is an offense to God.*

This is what Jesus meant when He said we must lose our life (let go of our old lives in sin). Consider further Paul’s words,

*“For to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, **for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.** Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”* **-Romans 8:6-8**

As the Law of God prepares to descend, sin shows its true ugliness with intention. Instead of eager hands outstretched to receive, sin bears fists that cry out NO! This sin and calf worship *sabotaged their course trajectory* and would continue as idolatry with Israel all through their history into Babylonian Captivity. Again, if not for God, all of humanity would be lost.

Moses, as an example of Jesus who stands between us and God, intercedes for God’s continued favor through atonement.

“And the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people...As soon as he (Moses) came near to the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses’ anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain...Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, “who is on the Lord’s side? Come to me. And all the sons of Levi gathered around him. And he said to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.’ And the sons of

Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell.” The next day Moses said to the people, ‘You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.’ -Exodus 32:18-35 (selected)

The Law can only bring judgment and death against sin. The Law cannot show mercy, for it is God’s standard of Holiness and He is unchanging. However, if His Will is for us to be with Him, then something must change. *If He cannot change, then He must change us!*

IV. Pentecost: In with the New!

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” -Jeremiah 31:31-34

A Pentecost is coming that would fulfill God’s intention- to bring His presence into us and overflow that reality outward in an appeal for others to know the Good News of Mercy and Grace. Where the first Pentecost saw the merciless judgment of the Law with death, The Pentecost of Christ brought Grace and with it the gift of Eternal Life!

“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.’ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this crooked generation.’ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.” -Acts 2:38-41

In other words, to turn to Jesus is to answer Moses’ question of who is on the Lord’s side! Where the first Pentecost saw the death of 3000 in judgment, this Pentecost saw eternal life come to 3000 in Grace!

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” -2 Corinthians 5:17

This Pentecost brings the fulfillment of what God had promised through this feast; the exchange of the sin we bring to the relationship to receive the life He gives. *In this exchange we let go of old / worldly value systems, priorities, beliefs, loves (Plans, behaviors, pride, selfishness), any plans that do not lead toward His Will and His Glory.* Evil and sin still bring guerrilla warfare in our lives; yet we see them now and understand them differently because of God’s Word. We bring the victory that is ours in Christ to face those remaining giants in our hearts.

As Christ is the Firstfruits of Resurrection Life for each of us, we in turn are the Firstfruits laboring into the lives of others for that same Divine favor to reach in and save them. As we continue to see the old pass outward as the new comes inward, we encourage each other to stay the course in Christ. His Victory within our life challenges, inspires, and encourages others to continue to trust what may be the unseen work His Promise guarantees is going on in theirs.

No matter where you are at, we have ministries and resources to come alongside of you in very real, practical ways to help you keep the focus on Christ and eternity, and to continually know His Saving, Healing, Sanctifying, and Kingly reality in your life.

Because of Jesus, Pentecost is out with the old, and in with the new for each of us who place faith in Him!

Going Deeper Questions for Reflection and Application

- 1) What stood out about this message to you and why?
- 2) What was the Feast of Firstfruits and how does this lead into Jesus?
- 3) What was the Promise that the Feast of Pentecost made for each generation up through Jesus' time?
- 4) What is the OLD that is out because of Pentecost? What is the NEW that is in because of Pentecost?
- 5) What are the old ways struggling to be transitioned out in your life? How are you combating the guerilla warfare within that remains from our old nature?

If you would like resources specific to questions you have or circumstances you are in, please download our Cornerstone Chapel APP and / or reach out to Pastor Damian. Blessings