Pentecost 1: Importance of Pentecost sermon for 5-21-17

We are in an exciting part of the year as we approach one of the most important dates on God’s yearly calendar—Pentecost Sunday.

Before I dive into what the Bible says we should do on Pentecost, I first want to speak on the reasons why we should do Pentecost at all.

1. Pentecost is important because it is one of the three rehearsals that God set up for us to perform each year.

# Exodus 23:14-17 (NLT)

**14**“Each year you must celebrate three festivals in my honor.**15**First, celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread. For seven days the bread you eat must be made without yeast, just as I commanded you. Celebrate this festival annually at the appointed time in early spring, in the month of Abib,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ex+23%3A14-17&version=NKJV;NLT#fen-NLT-2160a)] for that is the anniversary of your departure from Egypt. No one may appear before me without an offering.

**16**“Second, celebrate the Festival of Harvest,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ex+23%3A14-17&version=NKJV;NLT#fen-NLT-2161b)] when you bring me the first crops of your harvest.

“Finally, celebrate the Festival of the Final Harvest[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ex+23%3A14-17&version=NKJV;NLT#fen-NLT-2161c)] at the end of the harvest season, when you have harvested all the crops from your fields. **17**At these three times each year, every man in Israel must appear before the Sovereign, the Lord.

Three Appointed Times

1. Feast of Unleavened Bread
   * The Feast of Unleavened Bread is the week in the early spring that includes Passover and Firstfruits (Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday) which allows us to rehearse with God the past redemption of God’s people to Himself by reviewing the story of the Israelites being rescued from their slavery to Egypt.
2. Pentecost
   * Pentecost is the day where we rehearse with God the present redemption that all of us believers enjoy today by recommitting our lives to Him and welcoming the Holy Spirit.
3. Feast of Tabernacles

* The Feast of Tabernacles is the week in the fall when we rehearse with God the future redemption believers will enjoy when He comes back for us by remembering that we are just pilgrims here on our way to an eternal home with Jesus.

**Every year God has three appointed times full of instruction to do and say things in our homes and churches to rehearse with Him the story of His past, present, and future redemption of us.**

Rehearsing is walking out the steps of an event as a symbol of what has happened, is happening, or will happen.

It’s studying something invisible by doing something visible and understandable.

Like a visual aid in the middle of a complex lecture.

Think of Communion. We eat the bread and drink the grape juice as a symbolic act to participate physically in a spiritual activity that had taken place, is taking place, and will take place in the future.

Communion is a rehearsal.

**Just like Communion illuminates Jesus’ salvation, these appointed times—these rehearsals—make the complex workings of God simple and the mysterious relationship between us and Him knowable.**

**And the yearly repetition of these rehearsals reminds us of the main thing in the midst of all the good things.**

1. Pentecost is important because it shows us how to be deeply grateful to God in word *and* deed.

**Deuteronomy 16:10-12** (NLT)

**10**Then celebrate the Festival of Harvest[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=deut%2016%3A10-12&version=NKJV;NLT#fen-NLT-5329a)] to honor the Lord your God. Bring him a voluntary offering in proportion to the blessings you have received from him. **11**This is a time to celebrate before the Lord your God at the designated place of worship he will choose for his name to be honored. Celebrate with your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, the Levites from your towns, and the foreigners, orphans, and widows who live among you. **12**Remember that you were once slaves in Egypt, so be careful to obey all these decrees.

We show God that we are grateful to Him by

1. Giving to Him in proportion to what He has given to you.
2. Celebrating in church.
3. Remembering what God has done for us.
4. Pentecost is important because God has commanded us to proclaim on that very day.

# Leviticus 23:15-22 (NLT)

**15**“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. **16**Keep counting until the day after the seventh Sabbath, fifty days later. Then present an offering of new grain to the Lord.**17**From 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. **18**Along with the bread, present seven one-year-old male lambs with no defects, one young bull, and two rams as burnt offerings to the Lord. These burnt offerings, together with the grain offerings and liquid offerings, will be a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the Lord.**19**Then you must offer one male goat as a sin offering and two one-year-old male lambs as a peace offering.

**20**“The priest will lift up the two lambs as a special offering to the Lord, together with the loaves representing the first of your crops. These offerings, which are holy to the Lord, belong to the priests.**21**That same day will be proclaimed an official day for holy assembly, a day on which you do no ordinary work. This is a permanent law for you, and it must be observed from generation to generation wherever you live.

*KJV is the most accurate for verse 21*

**21**And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

# This word “proclaim” doesn’t mean that the priests were to send a memo to all the people that we are supposed to have church on Pentecost. To see it’s meaning, we must look at the three other uses of it in the Old Testament.

# Leviticus 25:10 (NKJV)

**10**And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family.

# 1 Kings 18:24 (NLT)

**24**Then call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by setting fire to the wood is the true God!” And all the people agreed.

# Jeremiah 29:11-12 (NKJV)

**11**For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. **12**Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

* + These three verses tell us how to proclaim on Pentecost.
    - 1. Proclaim liberty from all debts to sin and a return to the family of God
         * **Leviticus 25:8-13** (NLT)

Every 50 years, God instructed the people of Israel to rest, release their brothers from their debts, and return to the land of their families. It was the Year of Jubilee—the Year of the Lord.

Pentecost is a microcosm of the Year of Jubilee and a strong reminder that the Day of the Lord is coming!

* + - 1. Call on God to show Himself strong as the One True God
      2. Call on God to show us mercy for our sins as individuals, families, and nations.

1. Pentecost is important because the poor and the strangers among us need a portion of our blessings.

**22**“When you harvest the crops of your land, do not harvest the grain along the edges of your fields, and do not pick up what the harvesters drop. Leave it for the poor and the foreigners living among you. I am the Lord your God.”

What are the things that God has blessed you with?

What has He increased in your life that others need?

Money? Time? Concern? Compassion? Mercy? Identity? Fathering?

Mothering? Friendship? Purpose? Forgiveness? Passion? Instruction?

**Pentecost and everything that happened on Pentecost in the Bible instructs us and enables us to bless others with a portion of the blessings that we have been given.**

Although you may have worked more diligently than the ones that need your overflow, remember that even your work is a gift that God gave to you; God gave you the opportunity to be diligent.

God gave you your work as well as your increase.

**So, let a portion of what God has blessed you with be available for others in need of that very blessing.**