

**Happy Birthday, Church!**

**030604-3**

*Hello! This is Dorothy -*

I want to talk to you about Happy Birthday! Happy Birthday? You say, “This isn’t my birthday!” No, but I want to talk to you about the day that we could say, *Happy Birthday, Church!* Pentecost is the day that we could say, Happy Birthday, Church, because that is the day that the Church was born. I love it! You know, it was said by Oswald Chambers – I do not know if you have ever read any of his material - “Pentecost did not teach the disciples any new thing; it simply made them a living incarnation of what they knew already.” In other words, they were free, free to be the life of Jesus Christ being allowed to live through them. It was as if here was this total abandoning to what the Lord wanted to do through them.

In **Acts chapter 2**, we are at the beginning of what is called *the dispensation of the Church* . Oh, it sounds so formal, but when you realize that it absolutely replaces *the dispensation of the Law*, you see it is another example of God’s perfect timing. Forty days between the resurrection and ascension of Jesus had passed. You remember they were being told by our Lord as He went up in His ascension that there would be another ten days. They were to go and pray and wait for the work of the Holy Spirit to be poured out. So they did this. So that is

forty plus ten. Now I do not know how good you are at math, but I think it comes to fifty! Actually, it was exactly fifty days. There is something about this day, this day we call Pentecost. It was the day when the two wave offerings of the Feast of the Firstfruits took place. You see, we celebrate the resurrection on the Sunday after Good Friday, the ascension forty days later on a Thursday, and then Pentecost ten days later again on a Sunday. Pentecost is not celebrated in isolation. It is not out there as something we have to remember, but it forms part of a whole of feasts; feasts that we read that were kept and given by God that should be kept for the children of Israel. Actually, there were seven of them, but this is all tied up with those first early ones. They are all intimately linked to the Passover Festival — fifty days earlier. For this reason, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit must always be seen in its close association with the whole series of events that include the death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In **Leviticus 23** - and this is an excellent part to read, if you have a Bible, for it shows you all about what goes on at these different feasts, we read -

**15 And you shall count** – *for yourselves* - **from the morrow** - *day* - **after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf** - *notice the singular* - **of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete:**

**16 Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall bring a new grain (offering) to the Lord.** Now listen what happens from what was before one sheaf.

**17 You shall bring from your habitations** - *from your house* - **two wave loaves of two tenths of an ephah;** - *that was just a weight at that time - that was the size they were to be, so people didn't bring tiny things or huge things* - . . . **they are the firstfruits to the Lord.** This is a very unusual feast, this feast of Pentecost, because the first was a sheaf: you can imagine that as just pieces of corn. That was a very different story from now bringing two loaves, which represented what had happened when the corn was made into bread. The idea of this Scripture is speaking of the descent of the Holy Spirit to form the Church. Observe, **loaves;** not just one, not a sheaf, not a separate growth loosely bound together. It is a real union of particles, making one homogenous body; bringing one thing together. That is what happens when you make bread. The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost united the separate disciples into one organism, the Church.

How do you think the Church survives in difficult places of persecution? They understand the unity of the Church. This is not giving up what is doctrinally correct from man's point of view to all look as if we believe everything at this common level of all religions being the same. No, but in Jesus Christ, for those who have indeed been born of His Spirit, we see one another as part of the Church.

Happy Birthday, Church! The Church of Jesus Christ. It is interesting that perhaps we have seen ourselves always as our church against some other church or better than another church. Will you start to ask the Lord to let you have heart discernment as to those who really love and know the Lord Jesus Christ, because they are part of that same loaf that you are part of? They are part of those two loaves, the Church. They are part of what the Lord is doing. That means you can be Jew or Gentile, but you need to be born again by the Spirit of God and to be made as just what was described in this Scripture - part of that wonderful Body, the Church.

*For His glory. Amen.*