

January 15, 2023

Pentecost and the Early Church – Lived Christianity

Review

All last semester we covered the Old Testament. We learned about the Patriarch's: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We learned about God's promises: God would make a great kingdom from Abraham. We learned how the Israelites journeyed from Canaan to Egypt and back to Canaan. How they had JUDGES who led them after Joshua died. Then they had kings. We learned that the kingdom divided (north and south) and was conquered by various world leaders. They were exiled and then brought back into Canaan but under someone else's rule. We learned about the prophets who God spoke to and used to help get Israel back on track. The Old Testament ends with the Jewish people impatiently awaiting a savior- someone to come to their rescue and conquer their enemies, to reunite the kingdom and fulfill those promises. What they got was Jesus- unexpected yet more than they could have imagined. Recently we talked about Jesus- his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension into Heaven. We learned that Jesus fulfilled all the Old Testament prophecies and the covenants. He not only is our example of how to live our lives, but he saved us from our sins. He paid the price for our sins and gave up his life so that we can spend eternity w/ God.

Pentecost Lesson

What happened after Jesus ascended into Heaven? Imagine that you are one of the Apostles. The person you have given your life to was murdered because he was so controversial. Miraculously, after he died, he ROSE from the dead and spent another 40days with you and your friends. You came to know that he was GOD. After 40days he headed up to Heaven and now, once again you are left here. You don't know what to do. You are scared. The people that killed Jesus are still around and you and your friends could be next. So what do you do? They hid. Back in the upper room they hid, hoping for a miracle.

READ ACTS2:1-14

WATCH - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xvy- Dayaocm>

Pentecost, or the descent of the Holy Spirit changes EVERYTHING. It's the Holy Spirit that gives the apostles the gifts they need to complete the mission that God has given them. Once they were filled w/t the Holy Spirit, they did what? They went out into the world and preached about Jesus. They told people the good news! What did they tell people? That God became man, that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah who came to free us, not from oppressive rule on earth but moreover free us from sin so that we could go to Heaven to be w/ God forever. They told people how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament and made the connection that we made. They told people about the Eucharist and they shared w/ people by word and example

how we are called to live- to live and love like Jesus. And it spread. This started w/ 12 dudes and Mary. If 13 did it then, think of what our group at Edge could do.

From the day of Pentecost, people started to follow “the Way”. They began to live in community together, taking care of each other. Their whole mission and purpose was to tell others- because salvation is not limited to the Jews, salvation was open to EVERYONE who would hear and believe. The Apostles became missionaries and traveled all over- which led to most of their deaths.

This Holy Spirit they received at Pentecost is the same Holy Spirit that YOU will receive at Confirmation and that you did receive at Baptism. It’s the Holy Spirit who will do the same or even greater things in you for the Lord, if you allow it.

Early church

Jesus sent the apostles the Holy Spirit on the feast of Pentecost. **This was the birth of the Church.** Our HS teens did a reenactment of Pentecost.

After the apostles received the Holy Spirit and went to the Temple, Peter gave a compelling speech that converted 3000 people that day.

With their conversions, they devoted themselves to the **teachings of the apostles and to communal life**, to **breaking of bread** (what we know as the Mass) and to **prayers**. Many signs and wonders were done through the Apostles. All the believers (later called Christians) were together, living near each other and sharing everything. **They would sell their property and possessions and divide it among themselves according to each one’s needs.** There was no needy person among them. Each day they would meet in the temple and then break bread in their homes. They ate together and every day more believers were added to their group.

Peter and John healed a crippled man in the name of Jesus. (acts 3:1-9) People would carry their sick friends and family into the streets where the apostles were with the hope that at least Peter’s shadow would fall upon them and heal them. People from all over gathered, bringing the sick and those w/ unclean spirits- all were cured in the name of Jesus.

The same people who killed Jesus did not like what his Apostles were doing and the fact that his followers were growing daily in number. They arrested the apostles more than once- but miraculously they were freed. It wasn’t too long after Pentecost that a devoted follower of Jesus, **named Steven, was killed for professing his belief in Christ.** Acts 7 he was the first martyr.

However, just like the people who killed Jesus, the Jewish authorities and Romans, did not like the message Jesus proclaimed, they certainly did not like the message the apostles and disciples were continuing to proclaim. So basically right from the beginning there were **persecutions of Christians-** beginning w/ St. Steven who was stoned to death.

Present at his stoning was St. Paul, who at that time was also persecuting Christians. However he had a conversion and soon became the best missionaries known to the church.

WATCH: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtTKO7iQS2M> history of the church

From the year 33AD (when Jesus died) until 312AD, Christians were persecuted by the Roman Empire. Yet they kept growing and kept preaching. Yet many of them lived in what is known as the catacombs. You can still go and see them today. Later and more notably the catacombs in Rome were used as burial grounds for Christians. 312 the emperor Constantine outlawed persecution of Christians and soon it was the religious of the Roman Empire.

Paul and many of the other Apostles evangelized the East- Greece, turkey. The New Testament consists of many of Paul's writings. He wrote to the places he preached to help them on their journeys. Paul's letter to the Corinthians is Paul writing to the people of Corinth in Greece. Thessalonians are Paul's letters to the people of Thessalonica; Galatians is to people of Galatia and so on.

So the church was growing. Spreading to Asia and all over Europe. Countless people were martyred but in a sense, glad to do it because they knew they were dying for a cause much bigger than themselves.

LESSON PAPACY

We just talked about how the Good News of Jesus spread throughout much of the world and soon throughout almost all of the world. But when you have something as big as this spreading all over how would you make sure that Paul over in Turkey wasn't teaching something that Peter in Rome wasn't? Or that in the year 400 or 800AD that they weren't communicating some false teaching like that Jesus was actually just a man and not God?

Well the church stands on what we know as a **3 legged stool**- which we talked about briefly at the beginning of our series on the bible. The earliest that we have is known as **TRADITION**. We follow as closely as we can to the way the Apostles and the early Christians lived- how they celebrated, broke bread (mass), tithed, worshipped etc. That is the oldest leg we have.

The 3rd leg of our stool is the **bible**. The first Gospel was not written until 70AD, that's almost 40yrs after Jesus died. And that's the oldest book of the old testament. The bible was not completely compiled until about 400AD. So that was a lot of years for people to carry on the traditions and teachings of the church w/o a bible as we know it.

The 2nd leg of our stool is the **magisterium**. What is the magisterium? Is the teaching of the Pope. The Pope is the one elected by the Holy Spirit to make sure that what is taught and done is in line w/ Christ and in line w/ what the Lord wants for our church. Peter was our first pope who was given this authority by Christ himself. From there, there has been an unbroken line of Pope's since the Apostle Peter.

Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kF8l_r9XT7A

The catholic church's home or capital is in Rome. That is where the Pope resides in Vatican City. Now Vatican City is kinda like DC in the sense that DC is not in a state, it is a city on its own. The Vatican is a country on its own, inside of Rome. Rome because the home of the Catholic church because that is where St. Peter preached and eventually was martyred. He was crucified upside in St. Peter's square. At that time there was no church there but years later it was built in honor of him. Underneath the altar at St. Peter's is a catacomb, where early Christians are buried- along w many popes. St. Peter and St. Paul's bones are believed to be concealed direction under the altar.

When Pope Francis dies, they will bring all the cardinals again to Rome and they will, by the same holy spirit that the Apostles had and that guided the authors of the bible, they will elect the next Pope to lead our church. We don't believe that the Pope is sinless or perfect. We know he is human but we also know that it is God's hand who put him in that role and trust that he will guide him. That is why we pray for him at every Mass. Leading the church is no small matter.

What does it mean to be Christian?

When I interview people for leadership, this is always a question I ask- what does it mean to you to be a Christian or how do you know someone is Christian. What does this look like?

Today we talked about the beginning of the Church- Pentecost. 2000yrs ago. 2000yrs later people are still following Jesus' way. What was so unique about the way that Jesus lived? What stood out so much about his life that we are not only still talking about it but modeling our own lives after? A Christian is someone who believes in Jesus, that he is **God**, and because of him we have the opportunity to go to Heaven. We can tell that someone is a Christian by the way he/she lives their life. Do they follow Jesus' example (as best they can) to live like Jesus? Are they kind? Loving? Caring? Do they prioritize God and their faith? No one is perfect but do I profess this belief and try to live it out? And when I fall, do I ask for forgiveness and allow Jesus to help me back up?

Jesus calls us to follow his example. That's what it means to be a Christian. If we believe that Jesus is God and our savior, but if that doesn't change how we live our lives, then are we really Christian? Or if we live good lives, being kind to people, but don't attest to Jesus being our savior, is that a Christian? No. Being a Christian is not **just** attending Mass on Sunday, knowing all your prayers or simply being nice to people. Being a Christian **should affect every single aspect of your life**. And it's a journey and a lifelong, eternal process- and the more we invest in it- the greater our relationship with Jesus will be.

Common question- are Catholics Christians? The answer: YES we are the original Christians and the church that Jesus himself "founded". Protestants are Christians. Catholics are Christians.

WATCH: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QYeST_9FUg