

The Way And The Power

Pentecost
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This is a pivotal holy day. It is right in the middle and it falls between what has happened in the past and what is going to happen in the future. It's a transition between memorializing Christ's sacrifice and coming out of Egypt and putting away sin and then looking forward—it's right in the middle between that and looking forward—to Christ's return and Satan being put away and the Millennium and the Last Great Day.

And, as we're going to see, a lot happened on this day. I think more happened on this day than any other holy day. Different things happened on this day than any other holy day. The time between the wave sheaf offering during the Days of Unleavened Bread and this very day, the Feast of Firstfruits or Pentecost, represents the time between Christ's first coming and then the firstfruits being presented to the Father and, when you think about that, that's a couple of thousand years.

Now, let's look, by way of introduction; let's go back and look at the wave sheaf offering in Leviticus 23. We'll just read verses 10 through 12, just as a reminder to bring us up to this very day. Leviticus 23 verses 10 through 12, it says:

Leviticus 23:10. *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When [you] ... come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then [you] shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest:*

11) And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

12) And [you] shall offer that day when [you] wave the sheaf [a] he lamb without blemish ... (KJV)

We understand that this represents Jesus Christ being accepted of the Father after His resurrection.

Then, look at verse 15 talking about today.

15) And [you] shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that [you] brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete:

16) Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath [you] shall number fifty days; and [you] shall offer a new meat offering unto the [Eternal].

17) [You] shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be [baked] with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the [Eternal]. (KJV)

And, of course, all of us are human; all of us have leaven. And he says in verse 20:

20) And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave offering before the [Eternal] with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the Lord for the priest. (KJV)

This represents the firstfruits being presented to the Father. Now we don't know the exact time when that is going to happen. It could be just before the second coming of Jesus Christ. God only knows the exact time, but that symbolizes the time when all of the firstfruits who have overcome are presented to God Almighty. What a day! What a time!

And that covers—this time between the wave sheaf and today—covers roughly 2,000 years of human history.

And today what we're going to do in the sermon is we're going to look at two things. We're going to look at what actually happened on this day and, then, we're going to see what these events that happened on this day mean for each one of us right here and right now on this day. The title of the sermon, which may seem strange, the title is:

The Way And The Power

We're going to see why we talk about "The Way and the Power" toward the end of the sermon.

So, let's talk about one of the things that happened on this day.

1. The Ten Commandments were given on Pentecost.

Let's go to Exodus 19 and look at verse 1, Exodus 19:1. Ancient Israel was walking, walking, walking and arrived at the base of Mount Sinai. Exodus 19:1.

***Exodus 19:1.** In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.*

2) For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and [they] pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the [mountain].

3) And Moses went up unto God, ... (KJV)

So this was his first trip up the mountain.

3) And Moses went up unto God, and the [Eternal] called unto him out of the mountain, saying, ... (KJV)

Can you imagine?

3b) ... saying, [This you shall] say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; (KJV)

Now this is what God is saying to him up on the mountain. “I want you to go back down and this is what I want you to tell the children of Israel.”

4) [You] have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I [bore] you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. (KJV)

Meaning: Right here, right now. Verse 5:

5) Now therefore, if [you] will obey my voice indeed, and [if you will] keep my covenant, then [you] shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

6) And [you] shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and [a] holy nation.... (KJV)

What an offer! What a promise!

6b) ... These are the words [God is saying to Moses.] which [you shall] speak unto the children of Israel. (KJV)

“I’m offering you a deal, if you will just obey and you’ll just love Me.” Verse 7:

7) And Moses came [down from the mountain] and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all [the] words which the [Eternal] commanded him.

8) And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord [has] spoken we will do.... (KJV)

And, I’m sure, at that time, they intended it and they meant it. As we know, it didn’t last all that long because in Deuteronomy 5 they did not have the heart as we know. Going on:

8b) ... And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord. (KJV)

Now he’s making his second trip up the mountain. Verse 9:

9) And the Lord said unto Moses, [He says] Lo, I come unto [you] in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak [to you], and believe [you] for ever.... (KJV)

He says, “I’m going to do something now where they can hear My voice.” Moses was hearing His voice at that moment, but He said, “I want to do something where the whole nation can hear me.”

9b) ... And Moses told the words of the people unto the [Eternal].

10) And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes,

11) And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. (KJV)

God was going to come down and talk to the people. What an opportunity! Verse 16:

16) And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the [mountain], and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that [were] in the camp trembled.

17) And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood [in] the [near] part of the [mountain].

18) And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole [mountain] quaked greatly. (KJV)

Now, can you imagine standing at the base of this mountain? Depending upon which mountain is really Mount Sinai of the Old Testament, it was somewhere between 6,000 and 8,000 feet high of solid rock. And the cloud was down over the top of it. And there was lightening and fire and all of that. You could see it, the glow of it through the clouds. And the earth was shaking and this trumpet was sounding. And these millions of people are standing at the bottom just absolutely in awe, probably most of them scared to death. Verse 19:

19) And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses [spoke], and God answered him by a voice. (KJV)

They actually heard God.

20) And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the [mountain]: and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the [mountain]; and Moses went up. (KJV)

This was his third trip now up the mountain. So, Moses went down unto the people after receiving the Ten Commandments and he came unto them on this day and he gave them the Ten Commandments, as we see in the next chapter in Exodus 20.

Now let me read from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, quoting.

Exodus 19:1

... according to Jewish usage, the first of that month - "same day," [as we read earlier in Exodus 19] it is added, to mark the time more explicitly – [that is], 45 days after leaving Egypt-one day spent on the [mountain] (Ex 19:3), one returning people's answers (Ex 19:7-8), three days of preparation [verse 11]- making the whole time fifty days from the first Passover to the [giving] of the law.

Matthew Henry's Commentary says:

Exodus 19:1-8

1. The time when it bears date (v. 1)—in the third month after they came out of Egypt. It is computed that the law was given just fifty days after their coming out of Egypt, in remembrance of which the Feast of Pentecost was observed the fiftieth day after the Passover, and in compliance with which the Spirit was poured out upon the apostles at the [day] of Pentecost, fifty days after the death of Christ.

Now, while you can't absolutely prove it in the Bible that the Ten Commandments were given exactly on the day of Pentecost, if you do the math and look at the numbers, it is very close. And it has been the tradition of the Church of God and it's corroborated by numerous commentaries that the Ten Commandments were actually given on this very day. And, as we're going to see as we go forward, there are very good reasons that God gave the Ten Commandments on this very day.

So the first point, the first thing that happened on this day is the Ten Commandments were given.

2. The second thing that happened on this day is the New Testament church was founded on the day of Pentecost.

Let's go to Matthew 16 and verse 18. Christ is talking about something that the apostles didn't understand. They didn't have a clue about! And He was using a word that they probably had never heard in this context ever before. Matthew 16:18, talking about ... Christ is ... all of the twelve are together, but He's talking expressly to Peter and Christ says:

Matthew 16:18. *And I say also unto [you], That [you are] Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (KJV)*

We've already talked about that example and where it happened and this giant rock that was behind Christ. He was saying, "Peter, you're a little pebble." He says, "But upon this rock," referring to Himself, "I will build My church."

Now this is the first time the word "church" is used. It's Strong's 1577. We know it's *ekklesia* and it means *a calling out*. And so, I'm sure the apostles thought, "Ekklesia, what's that?" He says "church" and they were wondering because it's never been used in this context before—first time used in the New Testament.

Now let's jump to Acts chapter 2 and we're going to break into Peter's sermon that he gave after the holy spirit came in Acts 2. And notice what is said. This is on Pentecost. The holy spirit had already come and Peter is speaking. Verse 36, we'll pick it up in

verse 36. Peter is talking to the multitude that was assembled there. And it could have been thousands, many thousands.

Acts 2:36. *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God [has] made [the] same Jesus, whom [you] have crucified [because of our sins, their sins], both Lord and Christ.*

37) Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? (KJV)

“We’re guilty of crucifying our Lord and Savior!” Verse 38:

38) Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ... (KJV)

Notice the promise.

38b) ... [you] shall receive the gift of the Holy [spirit].

39) For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (KJV)

And this is one, as an aside, this phrase “the Lord our God shall call,” this is one of the mysteries that God has opened up to the Church of God about the fact that God is not dealing with the world right now. He is only dealing with those who He is calling.

I can’t tell you the number of letters I’ve gotten from Africa that want us to go over there on a missionary work and start preaching the gospel to all the people in Africa because they’re going to be lost if we don’t get over there and start some kind of missionary work and walk through all the villages and preach the gospel to everybody because if we don’t, they’re going to be lost. Well, this explains it, this and several other verses. It is that God has to issue the calling and He’s calling only a few right now.

Verse 40:

40) And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. (KJV)

And it applies a multitude more times in this generation because this generation is so far more evil than that generation I believe. Verse 41:

41) Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand [lives].

42) And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43) And fear came upon every [life]: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. (KJV)

As evidence of what was going on, as evidence that they had the power of God and it impressed the people in the Mid East at that time, all these miracles. Verse 44:

44) And all that believed were together [all this ekklesia], and had all things common;

45) And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

46) And they, [continued] daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, [they ate] their [food] with gladness and singleness of heart,

47) Praising God, and having favor with all the people. [Notice:] And the Lord added to the church [ekklesia] ... (KJV)

This is the second time it's used in the New Testament. It doesn't appear in the Old Testament.

47b) ... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. (KJV)

So here we see on this very day the actual fulfillment of Matthew 16:18, which we read earlier. The church was founded on this day and it began to grow after that. At first it grew exponentially. Then persecutions arose we know and Christians were killed. That growth tapered off until just a remnant carried over for thousands of years until most of us came into the church in the 50s, 60s, or 70s.

But the point I want to make here is the church was founded, but it took time for the brethren to understand the concept of what "church" meant because it was new to them.

They understood the temple; they understood the synagogues, but they didn't understand what a "church" was. So it took some time. Ekklesia is mentioned 77 times in the New Testament. And the apostles began educating the brethren what "church" meant because they didn't know. This was their first experience.

Now Paul teaches about the church and the concept of the church and he had to use some analogies. In this case, he used the analogy of marriage. Let's go to Ephesians 5. We often go there when we talk about the relationship between a husband and wife, but when you look at the context of it, yes, he's talking about marriage and that relationship, but he is really talking about the church. Ephesians 5:23, we'll start. He's trying to explain in this letter to Ephesus about the concept of church.

Ephesians 5:23. *For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: ... (KJV)*

He's trying to get across that there is this body that Christ is the head of.

23b) ... and he [referring to Christ] is the savior of the body [the church and us individually].

24) *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.*

25) *Husbands, [he says,] love your wives, [but he brings it back to the church again] even as Christ also loved the church, and [He] gave himself for it; (KJV)*

He died for the church. He died for the ekklesia, those called out. And what he's [Paul] saying is "In a marriage, a husband should be willing and a wife should be willing, they should be willing to die for each other just like Christ has already done for you. Verse 26:

26) *That he might sanctify ... (KJV)*

That means *to set apart for a holy purpose.*

26b) *... and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*

27) *That he might present it [the church] to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish [the church]. (KJV)*

And the church will be presented as the firstfruits on this very day. And what we're seeing here is the concept that Christ is trying to take a group of people He calls His body, work with them, help them, and with the power of the holy spirit, they will grow so that they can be ready to present to Jesus Christ and, as we will see later, ready to marry Him. Verse 29:

29) *For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but [he nourishes it and he cherishes] it, ... (KJV)*

And then he brings it back to the church.

29b) *... even as the Lord [cherishes] the church: (KJV)*

We love our bodies. What he's saying is, "Christ loves all of us, the ekklesia, as much as much as any human ... more so than any human being would ever love his own body." Verse 30, he says:

30) *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. (KJV)*

Verse 32, now he wraps it up and says:

32) *This is a great mystery: but [he says, "My focus is, I'm speaking] concerning Christ and the church. (KJV)*

He's trying to get across this concept of "church" that was new to these people.

And then Christ set a system in place whereby His body, the church, would be cared for in His absence.

Let's go to Acts chapter 20 and look at verse 17. Paul called the elders at Ephesus and he wanted to have a meeting with them. He wanted to talk to them. Acts 20:17: "And from Miletus," Acts 20:17, it says "he" referring to Paul.

Acts 20:17. ... sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.
18) And when they [came] to him, he said unto them, ... (KJV)

Now let's jump to verse 28. He said:

28) Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy [spirit has] made you overseers, [and] feed the church of God, which he [has] purchased with his own blood. (KJV)

What he's saying to the elders is "You better take care of the church, because our Savior has bought that church, bought each individual in that church with His blood. And you better not neglect that church. You better feed and take care of that church because you don't want to ignore something that Christ our Savior has purchased with His own blood."

Unfortunately, we've seen that happen, but as elders we have to be very, very careful and very conscientious of serving the body of Christ because Christ paid the ultimate penalty for that church, His body.

Let's go to 1 Corinthians 12 and verse 28. I'll read this out of the NIV. Paul is trying to explain a certain concept to the dysfunctional church at Corinth about what God has provided to take care of them, to look after them. 1 Corinthians 12 and verse 28, out of the NIV:

1 Corinthians 12:28. And in the church God has appointed first of all [he says] apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having the gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of [languages]. (NIV, 1984)

All to the point of service! Not titles. Not ranks, but what Paul is saying is, "God has appointed all of these people. He's brought these people into the church so that they can serve; serve one another; serve the brethren.

So, on this day we see that the second thing that happened is the New Testament Church was founded on this very day.

Now that comes to the third and the most obvious thing that happened on this day and, that is:

3. God's spirit, the holy spirit, came on Pentecost.

We understand that the patriarch, David said, "God, take not Your spirit from me." And we know that on a very limited, exceptional basis, God's spirit was available to those in the Old Testament that He singled out. But this is the first time that it was available to those that He had called in relatively large numbers.

Let's go to Matthew 27 and look at verse 51. We're breaking into the context here. Christ had just died and there was something very symbolic that happened the instant He died. Matthew 27:51.

Matthew 27:51. *And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain [It says in the King James.] from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; (KJV)*

The Greek word for "rent" is Strong's 4977 and it means *to split or to sever*.

The New King James says:

Matthew 27:51. *... the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; (NKJV)*

And if you look at the history and the construction of that, it was not a bed sheet. It was enormous! It was thick. It was impossible to humanly tear. And, yet, top to bottom, it was torn instantly.

And we know that was symbolic of what was now possible that through Christ's death and, yet, something that was yet to come through the coming of His holy spirit (God's spirit) that now a human being could have direct access to God the Father. Didn't have to go through a priest and then later, we know, you didn't have to go through a Catholic priest or a minister. You have direct contact with God the Father made possible through the death of His Son.

Now let's go to John 14 and verse 23. Again, Christ is trying to prepare them for what's going to happen at Pentecost. And they didn't understand (and we wouldn't either)—didn't have a clue. John 14:23, we read on Passover evening and we see here on this one verse, John 14:23:

John 14:23. *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man loves me, ... (KJV)*

There's a big "if" here.

23b) *... If a man loves me [or a woman], he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, ... (KJV)*

Because the individual loved Jesus Christ. And this is the point He's making:

*23 continued) ... and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.
(KJV)*

Now the word “with” is Strong’s 3844 and it’s p-a-r-a. And it can also be translated, and, frankly, should be translated not “with” but “in.” “We will come unto him and make our abode in him.”

Now the apostles are sitting there listening to this and they don’t understand ... “What are you saying? You’re going to come live in us? How can that be? How can that happen? They didn’t understand, but Pentecost and the miracles on Pentecost would teach them. They would have graphic proof of what was going to happen.

So, let’s go now to Acts chapter 2 and in verse 1. It’s also important that if they weren’t gathered together on Pentecost, those that weren’t there wouldn’t have received the holy spirit. So, that’s kind of a hint it’s probably a good idea we’re all here on Pentecost.

Acts 2:1. *And ... the day of Pentecost was fully come, [and] they were all with one accord in one place. (KJV)*

They were all peacefully there. One purpose—Christ said, “You wait. You wait for Me.” Verse 2:

2) And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. (KJV)

Now this wasn’t quite as dramatic as at the foot of Mount Sinai, but you’re sitting in a room and all of a sudden you hear this roar like a tornado is inside the room and that’s going to get your attention! Verse 3:

3) And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like ... of fire, and it sat upon each of them. (KJV)

It never happened before. You’re sitting there wide-eyed looking at the guy next to you and there’s this fire thing, tongue thing, over his head. And verse 4:

4) And [then] they were all filled with the Holy [spirit], ... (KJV)

Now if you’re filled with something, it’s got to be inside you. It’s not “with” you. It’s “inside” you. And so all of a sudden they began to feel inside of them a new nature, a new attitude, eyes being opened, mind being opened.

4b) ... and began to speak [in] other [languages], as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5) And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6) Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. (KJV)

This was a miracle to prove to all of those around that something unique happened today; something very special happened today. And then that gave Peter the opportunity to speak as we read earlier. You see God provided dramatic miracles to emphasize this first time ever event of the holy spirit coming to live inside a group of people. That had never happened before.

Later this gift, as we know, would be opened to the Gentiles in addition to the Jews. So no matter what someone's race or background or color, it doesn't make any difference. As we're going to see in a minute, we're all one in Jesus Christ.

Now, the apostles continued to keep Pentecost contrary to what the Catholics say and the Protestants say. Acts 20:16, you can write for a reference. Paul said he wanted to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Well, why would he write there if he wasn't supposed to be there for the purpose of keeping Pentecost? And in 1 Corinthians 6:8, he says I'm going to wait in Ephesus until Pentecost because I want to keep Pentecost in Ephesus.

So, the summary to this point, the first three points we've made, is: On Pentecost, God has given us today, and all those of the firstfruits previous to us who are in their graves, God has given us the Ten Commandments. God has given us the church. God has given us the holy spirit.

What a blessing! We don't deserve it. We can't earn it, but what a blessing!

Now, that leads to the fourth point.

4. By Pentecost exactly 1984 years ago today, by Pentecost, all the necessary helps were in place to achieve salvation.

By that Pentecost all the helps that we need to achieve salvation were finally in place.

We've already talked about the Ten Commandments were in place; the church was in place; God's holy spirit was available—but we're going to talk about two helps in this fourth point that are available to us today and that became available on that Pentecost 1984 years ago.

4. A. The first help, and this leads to the title of the sermon, the first part, is "The Way."

Notice John 14 and verse 6. Christ is talking to Thomas. He's answering skeptical Thomas. And Christ is saying something that's fundamental that we need to

understand about a help that will take us to salvation. John 14:6, and Jesus said unto him, Thomas:

John 14:6. *I am the way, [and He also said, I am] the truth, and [I am] the life: no man [can come to] the Father, but by me. (KJV)*

Now the Greek word for “way” is Strong’s 3598 and it’s the Greek word “hodos.” In English it’s h-o-d-o-s. And it has a literal and a figurative meaning. The literal meaning is *a road or a route*.

And we would say today, “There’s a path to salvation and Christ said, ‘I brought that path. You stay on that path. You walk on that path. The end of that path is salvation.’”

But also figuratively, it means *a mode or a means*. And Christ is saying, “I’m not only giving you the path I’m giving you the means to walk down the path. I am the way for you to get to salvation.” And what He meant by that was that He showed us the way by the life He lived. What He’s saying is, “Look, if you will live like I lived, if you will follow My example, then that is the way.” Just follow my example. Do what I did. Say what I said. Think what I thought. Have the same motivation that I did when I was on this earth and the end result of that is salvation.”

You see the way is so simple. Let’s go to 2 Corinthians 11 and verse 3. We’ve talked about this before, but it’s something that we should memorize. 2 Corinthians 11 and verse 3, some people over-think things. Some people over-complicate things and Christ’s way is so simple. I didn’t say it was easy to do. It’s simple in concept—what we have to do. 2 Corinthians 11 and verse 3, Paul is saying, again, to this, we’d say today, screwed up church, he says:

2 Corinthians 11:3. *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from ... (KJV)*

What?

3b) ... the simplicity that is in Christ. (KJV)

“The simplicity” can mean just as it’s translated, *simple, easy to understand*. It can also mean *single*. You could focus on it. It’s not all like a nest, a big web. It’s not all complicated. You can focus on it. Now the simplicity of Christ is so obvious. And in the church we, I think, ran away from it many years. We didn’t focus on it. We focused on a lot of things, but not on this one thing.

Let’s go to Mark chapter 12. This is where the rubber meets the road. This is the simplicity of Christ in its ultimate, most focused most simple form. Mark 12, we’ll begin in verse 28. We’ve said this before but we’ve got to get.... It took me twenty-five years, thirty years to get this in my head. And we need to make this the focus. Mark 12:28.

Mark 12:28. *And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and [perceived] that he [referring to Christ] had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? (KJV)*

Now we're getting where the crux of the matter, where the rubber meets the road. What is the first commandment of all?

29) And Jesus [Christ] answered him [and said], The first of all the commandments is, ... (KJV)

The King James says:

29b) ... Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: (KJV)

That is one of the areas where the King James falls woefully short in translation. What it means in the Hebrew is "Obey God only." "Obey God only," that's the first commandment. Verse 30, "And" He says in reference to obeying God only:

30) ... [you shall] love the Lord [your] God with all [your] heart, and with all [your] life, and with all [your] mind, and with all [your] strength: this is the first commandment. (KJV)

Sometimes we get so focused on so many other things that we ignore the first commandment. We love God with everything we have, with all that we have—our mind, our heart, our very life.

And, then, this man you see he didn't ask for a second commandment, but notice Christ gave him one. So, obviously, it is very important. Verse 31, Christ goes on to say, "And the second...." Well, the man didn't ask for a second, but:

31) And the second is like, namely this, [You shall] love [your] neighbor as [yourself]. There is none other commandment greater than these. (KJV)

He (the man) asked for one. He (Christ) says, "I'm giving you both because there's nothing greater than these two. Verse 32:

32) And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, [You have] said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

33) And to love him with all [your] heart, and with all [your] understanding, and with all [your] life, and with all [your] strength, and to love [your] neighbor as [yourself], is more [important] than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. (KJV)

We could translate that today, "It's more important than anything else we do." Anything else we do! We could think, "Well, should I turn the light off or turn the light on on the Sabbath?" The Jews do that. Or "Should I boil this or not boil this on the Sabbath?" Or

“Should I put this in a crock-pot or put this in the oven on the Sabbath?” And people stew and worry about stuff like that.

What this man that finally the light bulb went on in his head says is, “This is more important than all of this stuff that we Jews do—the washing of pots and cups and all of that kind of stuff.” In verse 34:

34) And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly [or correctly], he said unto him, [You are] not far from the kingdom of God.... (KJV)

We want Christ to say that about us. We’re not in the Kingdom yet, but, boy how would you like Christ to come and put His arm around you and whisper in your ear, “Hey, you’re doing good. You’re not far from the Kingdom of God.” All of us want that.

You see everything Christ did when He walked this earth amplified these two commandments when you think about it. Every word He said, everything He did amplified these two commandments. And let’s just give; we’re going to just cover three brief scriptures here that are very important examples of how Christ amplified these two commandments to show us the way. Let’s go to Matthew 7 and we’re just going to read verse 12. I’ll read it out of the New King James. Again, it is so simple. It is so simple! I’m not saying it’s easy, but the concept is simple. Matthew 7:12, out of the New King James:

Matthew 7:12. *Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (NKJV)*

If we want people to be kind to us, let’s be kind to them. If we want people to be patient and cut us a little bit of slack, let’s do the same to others. If we want people to open the door and tip the cap to us, then we should do the same for them.

Now look back in chapter 5 in verse 44. Now, He says, “I’m going to take it a step further—frankly, a huge step further. Matthew 5:44.

Matthew 5:44. *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, ... (KJV)*

Simple concept, hard to do.

44b) ... bless [those] that curse you, do good to them [who] hate you, and pray for them [who] spitefully [meaning with spite] use you, and persecute you; (KJV)

Very simple. How many times have we not done this? I can tell you I’ve done a lot.

In fact, it happened—I’m embarrassed to say; Dorothy’s going to smile in a minute. We landed back in Seattle. We were jet-lagged. We didn’t sleep very well while we were there. So we were really tired and we had to wait forty-five minutes for our bags. Then

we had to ... we were supposed to have the hotel pick up us where we had a park and fly kind of deal where our car was at the hotel. So we had to wait, instead of fifteen minutes, we had to wait almost an hour for them to come and get us and take us back to the car.

By that time, rush hour traffic had started to build and so here we are slogging through rush hour traffic and we head over the pass. We get just about five miles from the top of the pass and because of construction, they have a rolling slow down. And they take this pack of 500 cars and now we're going between 5 and 10 mph for five miles. And you can look around you and see tempers. People are getting anxious and they're moving up and all of that.

And I was in the slow lane and they were squeezing it down from three lanes to two. I was in the far right hand lane and I wanted to get over in the next lane. And I saw a gap. I was behind a truck and there was another truck....

(You two are laughing over here. What's going on? They know exactly what I'm talking about because they've ridden with me many times—Dorothy and Carole Robey.)

So, I threw the signal on and there was space. But this young lady behind nailed the gas and we almost hit. She cut me off to the point that she put her nose underneath the trailer in front of me. There was no way I was going to get in there. So I pulled over.

When that happens, I don't know about you, but there is a white-hot flash of anger. It's there for a half a second, but it's there. And you have to get it under control. It's just human nature. It's just a flash.

And so okay, just let you have your way. So, anyway, I pulled in behind this lady and we went on down. I got in the fast lane. We started speeding up and she put her blinkers on and did it again! And I'm chewing on the steering wheel by this time. I'm saying, "God, give me patience please! Just banish the thought that just came through my head. And then, finally later on—we were five, ten miles on down the road—I could see she wanted to move over, I just let off the gas and let her in. I said, "We're just not going to fight this battle anymore. Just let her have her own way."

But we've all been there. It's just like a white-hot bolt of lightning goes off in your head. And Christ is saying "Love your enemies. Don't get back at them. Don't return evil with evil. Return evil with good."

Let's go to Matthew 6. We're going to read verses 14 and 15 out of the NLT, New Living Translation. So, in addition to loving our enemies, notice what we're told in Matthew 6 verse 14.

Matthew 6:14. *If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. (NLT)*

Simple! It is so simple.

*15) But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.
(NLT)*

The simplicity of Christ and it is, as we're going to see in just a minute, it is only possible through the holy spirit. It is not possible humanly. The way is so simple, but sometimes it is so hard.

Now, conversely you see, under the way, this help that we have, Satan wants us to get our main focus off of these simple principles:

- Loving God with everything you have,
- Loving your neighbor as yourself,
- Forgiving so you can be forgiven,
- Loving your enemies,
- Whatever you want people to do to you, do to them.

Get your mind off of that and get your focus on other things. Mr. Armstrong used to talk about it—get out there on the twigs of the tree and focus on some detail of prophecy that people blow up in their mind as the most important thing. Or focus on some non-salvational doctrine to the exclusion of everything else. Focus on what other groups are saying or doing. Focus on ... when somebody says, "Well we're the only ones Christ is dealing with," or "We're the only ones to teach the truth," or "We're the only ones going to the place of safety." Focus on that. Not on what we've just been talking about.

Or focus on what men are saying. When a man stands up and says, "I'm the prophet." I got an e-mail from Africa two days ago. A guy's looking for a prophet. He said, "Are you a prophet?" He had gone on the website. He said, "Are you a prophet?" I wrote him back, "Nope. Not a prophet. Not a prophet." I said, "Prophet means two things—foretelling the future or inspired speaking." I said, "I can't foretell the future. So that's not going to happen." Number two, I said, "I hope that occasionally God inspires me in speaking, but that's not what you're after." I said, "I don't know of any prophets. Don't know of any prophets today." And he wasn't happy with that and so he went on looking other places.

But, you see, focus on what people are saying. "I'm the apostle." "I'm the prophet." "I'm training the two witnesses" and all of that.

Notice one of Christ's first warnings. It was in the Sermon on the Mount and think about this. If it wasn't important, why would He put it in His very first sermon? Let's go to Matthew 7, beginning in verse 15. Christ told the assembled people there in His first sermon to beware. And, boy, does it apply today! Matthew 7:15, Christ says:

Matthew 7:15. *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing,
... (KJV)*

Meaning: You don't recognize them initially as a false prophet. They come as a sheep. They come as a little lamb. Oh so sweet and so nice. Aren't they wonderful?

15b) ... but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16) [You] shall know them ... (KJV)

Who? False prophets.

16b) ... by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17) Even so every good tree (brings) forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree (brings) forth evil fruit.

18) A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, ... (KJV)

If you see evil fruit, that's not a good tree.

18b) ... neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19) Every tree that (brings) not forth good fruit is [ultimately cut] down, and cast into the fire. (KJV)

Obviously referring to the lake of fire. Verse 20, He says it again.

20) Wherefore by their fruits [you] shall know them. (KJV)

The context is false prophets. Now we also understand that we're to judge everybody's fruit. Not just false prophets. And we are being judged by our fruit.

But He wouldn't have put this in here if it wasn't a problem or a potential problem. He wouldn't put it in here today if there weren't false prophets in God's church, in corporations with titles in God's church.

I know when I first came in the truth ... came to the church, I just assumed everybody who attended church had one foot in the Kingdom of God. And they were all so converted it seemed to me and all so friendly and everything was fine. And then I assumed every minister had to speak the word of God and everything they said was true 100%. And then the regional pastor was walking on water. We all assumed that.

And I think we've all found out just because somebody's up there speaking doesn't mean that that they are a converted individual. Just because somebody has a title doesn't mean that they have God's holy spirit. That's what Christ is trying to tell us today.

So in these end days what God wants us to do is hug the trunk of the tree. He wants us to hold onto the trunk of the tree, to focus on the basics. And the first help that Christ gave us is the way. He said, "I'm the way. You follow Me. Follow My words. Follow My deeds."

But that leads us to the second one. In order to do that, we need power that human beings do not have. And that leads us to the second help.

4. B. Is just that—"The Power."

The first help is "The Way." The second help is "The Power" to walk "The Way."

Now let's go to Romans chapter 7. I read this passage for the first in the NLT, the New Living Translation, and I always generally use the King James but there are a couple of verses in here that the NLT just nails it. So we're going to read this passage in the NLT. Romans 7, we're going to begin in verse 7. I think you know where we're going here. This is the problem that all of us have. It is the battle that all of us have. Romans 7:7. Remember this is in modern English.

***Rom 7:7.** Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is evil? [Paul says,] Of course not! The law is not sinful, but it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, "Do not covet." (NLT)*

Very clear, now verse 8:

*8) But sin took advantage of this law and aroused all kinds of forbidden desires within me! If there were no law, sin would not have that power.
9) I felt fine when I did not understand what the law demanded. But when I learned the truth, I realized I had broken the law and was a sinner and was doomed to die. (NLT)*

Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death." Verse 10:

*10) So the good law which was supposed to show me the way of life, instead gave me the death penalty.
11) Sin took advantage of the law and fooled me; it took the good law and used it to make me guilty of death.
12) But still, the law itself is holy and right and good.
13) But how can that be? Did the law, which is good, cause my doom? Of course not! Sin used what was good to bring about my condemnation. So we can see how terrible sin really is. It uses God's good law for its own evil purposes. (NLT)*

Now notice verse 14. As I said, it just nails it. It says:

14) The law is good then. The trouble is not with the law but with me, ... (NLT)

Boy is that ever true! The trouble isn't with the law. The trouble is with me and that's why when we have trouble—if we have trouble on the job or in our marriages or between other people or within our family or whatever—the first place we should look is with me. "The trouble is not with the law, but with me." And he goes on to say:

14b) ... because I am sold into slavery with sin as my master. (NLT)

When we get into a pattern of sin, we are a slave to sin and sin becomes our slave master. Verse 15:

15) I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do the very thing I hate.

16) I know perfectly well what I am doing is wrong, and my bad conscience shows that I agree that the law is good.

17) But I can't help myself; because it is sin inside me that makes me do these evil things.

18) I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to but I can't [Paul is saying].

19) When I want to do what is good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway.

20) But if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin within me is doing it.

21) It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. (NLT)

We've all been there. All done it. All experienced it. Verse 22:

22) I love God's law with all my heart.

23) But there is another law at work within me that is at war with my mind. (NLT)

This is the key. The battle, the problem, is that there is a war in our mind between our human nature and between the gift of God's holy spirit. He goes on in verse 23:

23b) ... This law wins the fight and makes me a slave to sin that is still within me.

24) Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin? (NLT)

Then in verse 25, I'll read out of the King James. He answers the question how he can be relieved from this misery.

Romans 7:25. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. (KJV)

Now recently, well, it's happened continuously, but recently I've had people call—not in this area, scattered brethren—and say—one guy was just in tears—and he said, "I cannot overcome this sin." He was in tears. He never told me what it was and I didn't ask. He said, "I just can't overcome it. I'm hurting myself. I'm hurting my family. I'm hurting the people I know in God's church. I'm hurting everybody all around me. I just can't overcome it."

And what happens is people get into a pattern of sin. They commit some really bad sin, whatever it might be. And then after they do it, they feel horribly guilty. And they just ache inside because they're so guilty. And then that drives them to their knees and they repent bitterly, sometimes with tears crying out to God and they see how bad it is. And then for a period of time—it might be hours; it might be days, it might be weeks—they settle down and kind of not repeat the sin.

But then all of a sudden one day something happens and they sin again, same sin. They get into a situation where they sin again. Then they go through the guilt. Then they go through the repentance. Then they settle down. And then it happens again. And this pattern happens over and over and over and over and finally, they're crying out and saying, "I can't stop this sin."

So, after going through this dozens of times over the years, you finally realize what the real problem is when that happens. Do you know what the real problem is? They don't want to quit sinning. That's the real problem. They don't want to quit. In other words, the sin is more attractive than obeying God. They look at it. They put it in the balance scales and for a while God wins over here, but then all of a sudden the balance swings over here and they're off sinning again. And it goes back and forth and back and forth. And they are driving themselves crazy because a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways, or a woman too. They, then, at that stage are captive to this sin and this is exactly what we just read in Romans chapter 7 that Paul is describing.

Let's go to John 8 and begin in verse 31. Christ says there's an antidote for this. There's a solution to this. There is a solution. John 8:31.

John 8:31. *Then Jesus said to those ... who believed [on] Him [He says,], "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.
32) And you shall know the truth, and ... (NKJV)*

Guess what?

32b) ... the truth shall make you free." (NKJV)

Free from sin.

33) They answered Him [and said], "[Hey!] We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage [or slavery] to anyone. How can You say, '[We'll] be made free'?"

34) Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave [to] sin. (NKJV)

The example I was just giving and what Paul was talking about. If you commit sin, you become a slave to sin.

35) *And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.*
36) *Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. (NKJV)*

And we'll see how that happens in just a second. Verse 37:

37) *"I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.*
38) *I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."*
39) *They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.*
40) *But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham [couldn't even] do this.*
41) *You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father — [and that's] God."*
42) *Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, ... (NKJV)*

And so, here is the key to somebody in a pattern of sin. How much do you really love God and Jesus Christ? How much? More than the sin? If not, then we're breaking the first of the two big commandments—loving God with all our heart. If the sin is loved more, then guess what? You've made a choice. And you're going to be miserable the rest of your life and you will die in the lake of fire.

So, the question becomes, then, who do we really love? Verse 42, the latter part of verse 42:

42b) *... for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.*
43) *Why do you not understand My speech? ... (NKJV)*

He asks the question and then He answers it.

43b) *... Because you are not able to listen to My word. (NKJV)*

You can't understand it. You can't accept my word. Verse 44, the beginning of verse 44:

44) *You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. ... (NKJV)*

So think about this: When we yield to sin, Satan becomes our father. I'll say it again. When we yield to sin, Satan becomes our father. And so we have to ask ourselves, "Who is my real father?" If I'm going to pursue sin, I'm just acknowledging that Satan's my father. If I pursue the way that we're talking about, then God is my Father and Jesus Christ is my Brother.

The latter part of verse 44:

*44b) ... He [referring to Satan] was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.
45) But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. (NKJV)*

So by putting these scriptures together, it takes power to break the cycle of sin. It takes power that we humanly do not have. It takes the power of the holy spirit and it is available if we want to use it—if we want to use it. Because in 2 Timothy 1:7 (You can put it as a reference.), it tells us “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power”—the power to follow the way, the power to change from the old person to the new person.

Let’s go to Ephesians 4 and look at verse 22. Ephesians 4:22. These are verses that we need to just have daily in our minds. This is what we must do every day, every minute of every day. Ephesians 4:22, Paul says:

Ephesians 4:22. *That [you] put off concerning the former [conduct] the old [person], (KJV)*

“Old man” he says. We would say today “person.”

*22b) ... which is corrupt according to ... deceitful lusts;
23) And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; (KJV)*

Meaning: having the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5).

24) And that [you] put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and ... holiness. (KJV)

So, he says here, “You’ve got to put off the old person. You put on the new person which is in the image of Jesus Christ.” Now, he amplifies this in Colossians, two books over. Colossians 3, we’ll begin in verse 5 and he puts it pretty bluntly. Notice what he says. The King James says, “Mortify.” The New King James says, “Kill.” And that’s a blunt term. It says:

Colossians 3:5. *[Kill] therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, [kill fornication,] [kill] uncleanness, [kill] inordinate affection, ... (KJV)*

The King James says, “Evil concupiscence” which means *evil desires*.

*5b) ... [kill] covetousness, which is idolatry:
6) For which ... sake the wrath of God [comes] on the children of disobedience
7) In the which [you] also walked some time, when [you] lived in them. (KJV)*

And all of us did! Before we were converted we were right out there with all of them and doing all of this. Verse 8:

8) But now [you] also ... (KJV)

Now he's saying it again.

8b) ...put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9) Lie not one to another, seeing that [you] have put off the old man with his deeds; (KJV)

That's what we're called to do. Look at ourselves. Look at Christ. See the difference. And put off the stuff that doesn't look like Christ. Verse 10:

10) And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him [referring to Christ] that created him [referring to the new man]:

11) ... there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, ... (KJV)

We could say, "black or white or yellow or red."

11b) ... Barbarian, Scythian, bond [or] free: but Christ is all, and in all. (KJV)

The in verse 12 ... he said earlier to kill and put off. Now he says:

12) Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, tender mercies

The King James says, "bowels of mercies." It means *tender mercies*.

12b) ... kindness, [humility] of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13) Forbearing one another, ...

That means *putting up with one another*.

13b) ... and forgiving one another, if any man [has] a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do [you]. (KJV)

[This is] exactly what Christ said earlier and we quoted. Verse 14, now he gets to the crux. He says:

14) And above all [this, putting on all this, He says, above all] these things put on [love], which is the bond of perfectness. (KJV)

We would say, "Love is the glue that holds perfection together." If you don't have love, nothing matters. Verse 15:

15) And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, ... (KJV)

That's why we have the name "Pacific," because pacific means *peaceful*. And that's why we are dedicated to have peace in the Pacific Church of God.

15b) ... let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which [you] are called ... (KJV)

We're called to have peace and we're called to be:

15 continued) ... in one body; and [he says, because of that,] be ... thankful. (KJV)

And today, all of us together we should be very, very thankful. Verse 16:

16) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (KJV)

We should continue to do that today.

17) And whatsoever [you] do in word or deed, do all in the name of [our] Lord Jesus, ... (KJV)

Follow His way with the power of the holy spirit.

17b) ... giving thanks to God and the Father by him. (KJV)

So, on this day came the power to change. On this day came the way. And we need to grasp these two and follow the way with the power of God's holy spirit. So, the good news is: No matter what your sin is, it can be overcome, but only through the power of the holy spirit.

So, let's conclude. Today we've seen on Pentecost, God gave the Ten Commandments. On this day, on Pentecost, God founded the church, His body. Christ did. On Pentecost, Christ has given us; the Father has given us the holy spirit. And then, on top of that, Christ gave us the way through the example that He lived. And because of what happened 1984 years ago, God has given the power to follow the way and that is the greatest power on the face of the earth! It is the power that created the universe.

So, let's rejoice in this day for these great gifts, these tremendous gifts God has given us on the day of Pentecost.