

Sermon Outline for FBC Mar.31th, 2019

“How Do We Celebrate?”

Good morning!

Today my message is entitled “How Do We Celebrate?”

We started this series of messages a few weeks ago with “Why do we celebrate?” We then looked at “Who do we celebrate.” Today it is “How do we celebrate. The next two weeks it is: “When do we celebrate?” and “let us celebrate!”.

This look at celebration is to prepare us to arrive at Easter with an excited atmosphere of celebration as we remember what Jesus Christ did that weekend in a message titled “Now this is a celebration.”

So how do we celebrate the life God has given us through Jesus Christ’s sacrifice of love? The Psalmists knew how to do it.

Psalm 100 NIV

1 Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

*2 Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.*

*3 Know that the Lord is God.
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.*

*4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.*

*5 For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.*

Psalm 150 NIV

*1 Praise the Lord.
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens.*

*2 Praise him for his acts of power;
praise him for his surpassing greatness.*

3 Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,

*praise him with the harp and lyre,
4 praise him with tambourine and dancing,
praise him with the strings and flute,
5 praise him with the clash of cymbals,
praise him with resounding cymbals.
6 Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord.*

Back then the early Christians had two major events to celebrate – Passover and Pentecost.

Passover – celebration of Israel’s freedom from Egyptian slavery. Ex. 12 gives us all the precise details of how the Israelites were to prepare for the Passover when God would take all the firstborn of those who did not have blood on the doorposts. It is interesting that Jesus’s death and resurrection occurred during the Passover celebration. His blood was shed to save us from death for our sin!

Then we come to the new Christian Churches and their celebration of Pentecost – called Feast of “Weeks” (seven weeks after Passover), “Firstfruits,” or “Harvest”. Acts 1:4 Exod 23:16 Deut 16:10 Num 28:26.

Billy Graham states in his book “The Holy Spirit,” “The Day of Pentecost in the New Testament on which the Holy Spirit came was “a day of first fruits” – the beginning of God’s harvest in this world, to be completed when Christ comes again. Pentecost in the New Testament marked the commencement of the present age of the Holy spirit.”¹

Now “how do we celebrate?” Let’s look at those early Christians to see what they did to celebrate.

Acts 2: 36-43 NIV

36 “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ (Messiah).”

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

¹ Billy Graham, Pg. 45

38 Peter replied, “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.

39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

G. Campbell Morgan, in his book “The Acts of the Apostles,” tells us that verse 36 is “The Pentecostal message; that is the all-inclusive witness of the Spirit to-day; and therefore it is the all-inclusive witness of the church; that alone for which the Church can claim Pentecostal power. Our business – may God grant that it may be more than our business, our passion it ought to be, - to make Him Lord and Christ, Whom God hath made Lord and Christ, in our own lives, in our homes, in our cities, in the wide wide world.” ²

When we celebrate the Lord Jesus, we do it in all things! The church is to follow the teaching of Christ, to live what He taught and be a body for God in the eyes of the lost.

Morgan points out the Christian church’s four ordinances of Christian Fellowship: The Apostle’s teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers. ³

He ends his paragraph with “Wherever there is such a church you will find the church that has favor with the people.” ⁴

² G. Campbell Morgan, Pg. 87

³ G. Campbell Morgan, Pg.92

⁴ G. Campbell Morgan, Pg.95

Simply put, if the Christian church adheres to the four ordinances, then it will attract the masses because it is doing something different and strange to those masses.

We are to be unique and to be seen to celebrate what we believe. This will draw the lost to us because the work of the Holy Spirit, who is in us, is to draw them to God.

In Call Down Lightning, Wallace Henley answers “revival”—a real and deep work by the Spirit of God, impacting every facet of human life and engagement. He believes such a spiritual event is not only possible today but probable, and likely a harbinger of the end times....

Henley believes our contemporary world is ripe for the lightning of another revival...

“Revival sustains God’s order midst the chaos of fallen nations until Jesus steps back into real, measurable time, and brings the rule of His kingdom as the state of the whole, redeemed creation.” He believes that the cycle of these God-ordered events reveals that God could be up to something big, perhaps moving all creation nearer to its sudden conclusion and rebirth. ⁵

This is a feeling many Pastors and churches are voicing today! This is the thought that I have shared for a while with you. God is getting ready to show His desire to walk with us, as once again society has wandered away from Him. Will it be revival? Will it be the final chapter for the world as we know it now? I do not know how God is going to move, but move is what God will do.

So, let’s celebrate the way God wants us too. Let us concentrate on the Apostle’s teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers. All four parts are important to this celebration of our Lord. Then we will be ready for what ever God is going to do.

How do we Celebrate? By showing this world that we believe in a risen Savior and that the Holy Spirit is alive in us. By being excited about what God has done for us, is doing now and promises for the future. Our celebration has to be real, it has to be unique – togetherness in a world that is trying to separate everyone.

⁵ Wallace Henley, as quoted in the Mar.12 daily Devotional

Join us next week for a look at “When do we celebrate?”

Let us pray!

Bibliography:

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Wallace Henley, Call Down Lightning (Copyright © 2019 HarperCollins Christian Publishing, All Rights Reserved. 501 Nelson Place, Nashville, TN 37214 USA)

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