

Acts 2:1-7

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?”

We are wrapping up our final message in the series, “Altar Ego,” based on the book “Altar Ego,” by Greg Groeschel. Throughout history, people of God have knelt down at altars to make a sacrifice or to lay down something significant in an act of worship to God. So, our goal in this series is to take our egos, what we think about ourselves, and to sacrifice who we think we are at the altar so we can become, not who we think we are, but instead, who God created us to be.

We’ve talked about sacrificing three things so far; we talked of sacrificing our feelings of inadequacy; we talked of sacrificing our need for control; and we’ve talked of sacrificing our right to be offended. This morning as we conclude dealing with our “Altar Ego’s” we are talking about sacrificing our longing for others approval; we all love to be loved. We’re going to talk about sacrificing our deep seated desire for approval.

Do you like this plan? Do you approve of this? Do you feel good about this? Do you like me? Do you really like me? For as much of my life as I can remember, I have longed for the approval of others. As a child playing sports, my earliest memories was going up to bat and thinking;

“I hope I get on base, that way my dad and those people watching me will think I’m really good; or playing ice hockey hoping to score a goal so the fans would like how I play. Because I wanted people to like me, I wanted my dad to be proud of me. He loved me, but that was my warped view, if I do good, he’ll love more.”

After all these years I don’t struggle with this anymore, except for every day of my life, especially, the days when I’m around other people. Anyone here who can relate? I’d like to give you four specific signs which show you may be living for the approval of others. The first sign, you occasionally or very often worry about what others think is fear. For example, if you ever have to give a public speech, and you’re really nervous, why are you nervous? Because you’re worried about what other people will think. If you ever post something on social media, and then you go back 12 seconds later to find out, “Did anybody comment? How many likes or did anyone retweet what I said?” We’re consumed with what other people think. I know none of you ever do that, it’s just me I’m weird that way.

The second sign we may be living for the approval of others is when we are overly sensitive. We are often way too sensitive. I can be that way. A hundred people can say, "Great message preacher," and just one person says something negative and I seem to focus on the one negative more than all the good comments. A hundred people say something good but I being overly sensitive and focus on that one.

A third sign that perhaps we are living for the approval of others is that we compromise our values. There's something you believe deeply in, but you compromise it just for the approval of others. Throw the baby out with the bath water just so people will like us and/or what you we do.

The fourth sign that we're longing for the approval of others is that we hesitate sharing our faith. We claim we believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He was crucified and rose from the grave for the forgiveness of sin. We want to share this with our friends but we don't want to be seen as some hyper religious person, so you don't ever share our faith. If we're really honest, most of us care more about what other people think about us than we care about them. And so, we don't share our faith.

Why do we do this? The reason is because our egos are incredibly insecure. Our egos are crying out, "Like me. Please like me. Please!" Make me feel good about myself." But if we're not careful, we're going to miss one of the most powerful truths and biggest dangers about people pleasing and that is this. Becoming obsessed with what people think about us is the quickest way we have to forget about God and what God desires for us. I want to say it again because I think we need to all grasp this and get it into your hearts. We become so obsessed with what other people think about us that we forget about God and what God desires for us.

Proverbs 29:25 "*The fear of others lays a snare, but one who trusts in the Lord is secure*" says this: "***Fear***" of what? "***Fear of others lays a***" a what? It will "***lay a snare or a trap, but whoever trusts***" in whom? "***But whoever trusts in the Lord is secure.***" Fear of man – what will he think about me? What will she think about me? What will they think about me? What is their opinion of me? "*The fear of others lays a snare.*"

Have we ever really stopped and listened to ourselves? Have we; "What do you think of my outfit or my hair?" "Did you see our new car? What do you think?" "*The fear of others lays a snare, but one who trusts in*

the Lord is secure.” What’s the problem? What’s the problem? Pleasing people – are you ready for this – is idolatry; it’s the sin of idolatry. It’s putting the approval of people ahead of God. It’s making people too big in our lives and God too small, if He is even invited in our lives.

In fact, it could be one of the greatest limiting factors in our lives. If you’re a parent, and your biggest goal is, “I want my children to like me,” well they may like you today but they’re not going to respect you tomorrow. Because your number one call is not to be their buddies but to be their guiding force in your life. If you want to be a leader in your school, or in the working world and you’re consumed with what others think about you, you can’t lead them, because the reality is you’re following them.

If you want to be a follower of Jesus, you cannot be consumed with what people think about you because you cannot simultaneously live for the approval of people and the approval of God. Becoming obsessed with what people think about you is the fastest way to forget about God and what He desires for and of you.

Yes today is Memorial Day Sunday as we saw at the beginning, which is a time when we all remember how to barbeque and cookout, but today is also something else. Today is also a very important day in the life of the church. When someone in our families has a birthday what happens? In most cases, especially for a child or grandchild we have no problem pulling out all the stops. We spare no expense and we clear our calendars before during and after so we can celebrate. More that celebrate we want the entire world to know. No a days we post hundreds of thousands of pictures on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and as one man put it Instabook or was it Twittergram?

We are all in need to refocus ourselves on pleasing God instead of pleasing people. It's that simple. We are to live not for the crowd, but for God. Paul said it this way in **Galatians 1:10**. *“Am I now seeking human approval, or God’s approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ.”* Please hear me don't just brush me off and miss this. *“If I were still pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ.”*

You cannot simultaneously live for the applause of the crowd and live for God. We need focus on pleasing God instead of pleasing people.

This morning's passage in **verses 1 and 4** "*When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.*" First, how often do we **ALL** get together as the church? How often for parties, family celebrations, and/or getting together with friends at the lake, shore, or the links? It's apparent which garners more support.

Secondly it says when the Spirit came they all began to speak. Isn't it amazing how quick we can strike up conversations about something which only matters to us and what we think other others want to hear? But how often and how quick are we to **NOT** share our faith? Why the difference? Because we are more concerned with and about what others think of us than we are how God sees us, and what He desires for us.

Today, today is Pentecost Sunday the birthday of the church and most people celebrate this day doing everything and anything but celebrating the church's beginning. It has become nothing more than a footnote in the life of the church as a whole. You do realize that you cannot please all people?

Did you realize that? Oh, you can try and you'll wear yourself out trying.

You'll do what you perceive as good things for family and friends which will only be forgotten tomorrow. And you'll listen to music thinking they like but really can't stand. And you'll create and/or go to parties with certain people but make sure others are never invited to. And you'll go out and buy a car that you believe elevates you in the eyes of people. You may even attend worship, notice I said attend worship and not actually worship, just so others can see you sitting in your pew all pious and proud.

The truth is that you cannot, I cannot please everybody, but there is something I can do, I can please God. There is no way. In fact, a number of you are picking me apart right now, but I have realized I can't please everybody but I can please God and that is what I choose to do. How about you? Can you say "I can't please everybody but I can please God?" Now, say it like you mean it. Say, "I can't please everyone but I can please God."

We as followers of Jesus the Christ are to live from and for the approval of God instead of for the approval of people. Did you catch that? We as followers of Jesus are to live from the approval of God.

If you are a follower of Jesus, God approves of you through Christ; He already approves of you. You live from the approval of God instead of for the approval of people.

Paul said it this way in **1 Thessalonians 2:4** “*we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts.*” Hear that we’re approved by God. He trusts you and me with the gospel for mankind, even though we are sinners. If you are a true follower not just a spectator on the sideline, but a true follower you are approved by God and you are entrusted with the message of the gospel.

What does this mean? It means if you care what people think about you, you can’t take that message outside these walls. But if you truly follow Jesus, you will not be liked by all people. If you’re liked by everybody, chances are pretty good you’re not truly following Jesus. The bottom line is this. When we understand this, for those of us that are followers of Jesus, because of what Jesus the Christ did, you are the righteousness of God. When God looks at you, he doesn’t see your sinfulness; he sees the righteousness of Christ.

Because of what Christ did then, your worth is not based on what people think about you. Your worth is based on what God said, thinks, and knows about me. Your worth is not based on what other people think about you. Your worth is based on what God said, thinks, and knows about you.

Therefore it only matters what God said, thinks and knows. So as you go forth this week and from here on out don't ask the question "How do you like me now?" Remember as a true follower of Jesus the Christ your worth is based on what God said, thinks, and knows about you not what the people think.