

# Pentecost: Hearts Changed to Do His Will



GARY HARGRAVE



## The Disciples Struggled with Unbelief

The fifty days between Passover and Pentecost, known as the Feast of Weeks, was a time when God worked in the hearts and spirits of the disciples to prepare them to function as apostles (Leviticus 23:16-17; Act 1:1-5). For the disciples it was a traumatic time because they were thrown into turmoil and confusion after Christ's crucifixion. While reading the Gospels and praying about what God wants to work in me as I approach Pentecost, it became real to me that the turmoil and confusion the disciples experienced was directly related to their unbelief. This is emphasized in the Gospel of Mark.

**And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but on man's."**

MARK 8:31-33



## Our Expectations Are at the Root of Unbelief

**Y**eshua (Jesus) told the disciples plainly what was going to happen to Him. Peter's response to that was to rebuke Him. "No, You can't do this. No, I don't accept that. No, that will not take place." Peter's personal expectations for Christ caused him to oppose the will of God, prompting Yeshua to call him satan. This left me wondering about the cause of unbelief. How much of our unbelief is actually rooted in our own desires and expectations? The foundation of our walk with God is that we are to be doing His will. We are to be concerned about what He wants and what His will is. But I felt the Lord putting His finger on me personally because I was still harboring certain expectations about what is supposed to happen and the way it is supposed to happen. I was confronted by the fact that it was not acceptable to me that things would happen some other way or go in another direction. Another passage from Mark emphasizes this problem.

But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out; for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and said to them, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid." Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished, for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

MARK 6:49-52

Why were their hearts hardened because of the loaves and fish? If you remember the story, the Lord had challenged the disciples. He was getting them ready to walk as apostles, to be the ones moving in miracles, and He said, "You feed these people." Their response was to say, "We can't do this" (see Mark 6:37). When the Lord performed the miracle, they were so embarrassed in front of the people or so confronted by what they were to become that they hardened their hearts toward the Lord.



## Seeing Miracles Never Ends Unbelief

**I**t is important to recognize that no one saw more miracles than the disciples saw or moved in more of the miraculous than they moved in. When Yeshua sent them out, they came back rejoicing because they were casting out demons and performing miracles (Luke 10:17). Yet their hearts were hardened by this miracle of the five loaves and two fish (Mark 6:41). We need to see that just like the disciples, even after walking with the Lord and moving in miracles, our own hearts can still miss what the Lord wants us to get.

We will never see big enough miracles to get rid of unbelief. The children of Israel witnessed the greatest miracles ever done when the Lord delivered them from slavery in Egypt (Deuteronomy 4:33-34). Yet as soon as they arrived in the wilderness, they moved in unbelief that God could feed them or give them water or lead them or do anything for them (Exodus 16:2-3; Numbers 20:5). Miracles will never overcome the hardness of our hearts toward the Lord. Something has to happen in our hearts, in our spirits, that brings us to a different place where we are truly open to Him. The Gospel of Mark gives us another example. This is when the Lord appeared to the disciples after He was raised from the dead.

After that, He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along on their way to the country. They went away and reported it to the others, but they did not believe them either. Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen.

MARK 16:12-14



## We Can Harden Our Hearts

These disciples had not believed Mary's report (Mark 16:9-11). Then they did not believe the two men who saw Yeshua alive. What is so difficult about believing? How many times did Yeshua tell them that He would be raised again? This only underscores how much they were unable to hear what the Lord was saying to them. It did not register in their thinking; it was foreign to them. After the crucifixion, they simply assumed He was dead. It did not matter how many times He told them otherwise. So when He appeared to them, He rebuked them for their hardness of heart. Having unbelief is one thing, but hardness of heart implies resistance, putting a force behind not believing the Lord. Thomas went even further. Even while seeing the Lord, he refused to believe until he could put his hand into His side (John 20:23-27). The disciples were confronted with the fact that Yeshua stood in front of them, although they had claimed He was dead.

If we think that seeing a miracle will magically snap us out of our unbelief, then we are piling deception on top of the unbelief. It is time to be honest about our own unbelief and hardness of heart. You may have been disappointed in your walk with God. Things may not have happened that you thought were supposed to happen. You may be like Peter, rebuking the Lord because He does not appear to be moving in your life the way you expected. The reality is that our expectations may actually be putting us in opposition to His will. Now look at a passage from Hebrews chapter 10.

After saying above, “SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE in them” (which are offered according to the Law), then He said, “BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL.” He takes away the first in order to establish the second. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

HEBREWS 10:8-10



## The Peril of Sacrificing Without Doing His Will

Christ went to the cross by virtue of the vow He made to do the will of God. That is why Peter's telling Him, “You can't go to the cross” was so offensive to Him. Yeshua's whole life was to do the will of God, and that meant going to the cross. It was by this will that we are sanctified. We are not sanctified because He hung on the cross. We are sanctified by His will to do the will of the Father. If we are going to walk as Christ walked, the point is not to sacrifice. Yeshua said that many will come to Him saying, “Didn't I do many mighty works? Remember when I did this and these other works for you? I have lived a life of sacrifice for you.” What does the Lord say to them? “I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS” (Matthew 7:23). God is not in all the sacrifices you made if you never determined to do His will.

We are either serving His will and desires or we are serving some other will and desires. The difficulty is that we hide it so carefully that we lose sight of it. We lose sight of what we are really looking for or expecting. We say, “Look at Peter’s dedication. Yeshua came and said, ‘Follow Me’ and Peter followed Him. He gave up everything.” Yes, and when Yeshua was crucified, Peter went back to it all. He was the first one back in Galilee fishing (John 21:3). You can say, “I have served God all these years.” Yes, but what are you back to now? The issue is: What do we run back to? Peter was looking for something to come out of Yeshua’s being here that would enhance what he was expecting. All the disciples had different motivations and things that they were anticipating. This caused them to harden their hearts to the Lord and not believe what He was saying to them.



## The New Covenant Means a New Heart

Something had to happen for the disciples that gave them a new heart to do the Lord’s will. Their hardness of heart was blocking them from seeing who Yeshua was, and it was about to stop them from being the apostles who would turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6). It was about to stop them from moving as the men and women of God that they were to be. What happened to the disciples during the Feast of Weeks, the fifty days between Passover and Pentecost, was the removal of their hardness of heart. It was a fulfillment of the new covenant the Lord spoke of in Jeremiah 31:31-33 that He would put His law within them and write it on their hearts. As we read in Ezekiel, God said He would give His people one heart, put a new spirit within them, remove their heart of stone, and give them a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 11:19). At the Passover, Yeshua established this new covenant with the disciples (Luke 22:20). But the only reason the new covenant worked for them was because God imparted a new spirit to them between Passover and Pentecost.

Our real problem is that at some point our will and His will come into conflict. We conveniently call that unbelief because it is easier to say, "I'm unbelieving" than it is to say, "My will is fighting against His will." No one wants to admit that. I will admit unbelief before I admit that I am competing with God's will over my life. This Pentecost I am not looking for a miraculous event to shake me out of my unbelief. I am looking to get rid of what quenches the Holy Spirit in me, to get rid of what grieves the Holy Spirit in me, to get rid of that which stops the Holy Spirit from functioning (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19). Yeshua already dwells in me, but something is stopping that explosive release that the disciples saw after the Day of Pentecost when they began to move as Christ in the earth and carried the mantle He had given them.

On the Day of Pentecost, we look for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth (John 14:16-17). How will we be filled with the Spirit of truth if we will not open our hearts and minds to the truth? For me this is the truth: I need His will, and what He has I can appropriate (Ephesians 4:24). If He has it, I can receive it from Him. If I confess my sin, He is faithful and just to forgive me of my sin and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). He is also faithful to impart to me whatever I need. I can take on His nature. I can enter His presence and behold Him. And while beholding Him, I am changed (2 Corinthians 3:18). I do not want to try to live a life of sacrifice anymore. Instead, I want to live a life with a will set to do His will.



# ABOUT GARY HARGRAVE



GARY HARGRAVE has a passion for leading people into spiritual maturity. Gary effectively ministers the life-changing truth of God's Word through Bible teaching and prophetic revelation that emphasizes the Lordship of Christ.

Gary embraces the teachings and insights of the Hebrew Scriptures as the essential foundation of God's Kingdom and the roots of Christian faith.

By cultivating spiritual maturity in Christians, Gary is deeply committed to teaching and inspiring unity in the Body of Christ and between Christians and the Jewish people.

Throughout decades of ministry, Gary has worked closely with leaders in the Jewish, Catholic and Protestant communities to build relationships based on commonality and understanding. He frequently leads study tours to Israel and the lands of the Bible.

Gary is the host of a weekly podcast entitled *Growing In God*, and is the founder of Shiloh University, an accredited online Bible college and seminary.

Gary and his family reside in Hawaii.

**For other insightful resources by Gary Hargrave, including podcasts, books, articles, videos, and other educational materials, please visit: [www.HargraveMinistries.org](http://www.HargraveMinistries.org).**

## ABOUT HARGRAVE MINISTRIES

The calling of the Lord upon this ministry is to lead people into spiritual maturity by revealing biblical truth. **Our passion is to see the Kingdom of God manifest on earth** as the Body of Christ grows in unity, power and love.

Everything we do flows from the revelation of the Jewish roots of our Christian faith. It is our desire and privilege to bless the land and people of Israel. Our Israel outreach includes:

- **Feed the poor and break the cycle of poverty in Israel**
- **Support the orphans and widows of fallen Israeli soldiers**
- Provide physical and emotional care to **child victims of terrorism**
- **Build bridges between Christians and Jews with biblical study and research**
- Support archaeology and preservation of the **biblical City of David**
- Provide 24/7 **care for Holocaust survivors**
- **Help persecuted Jews around the world return to Israel and start new lives**
- Plant trees to **reforest Israel** and help create **"The Gospel Trail"** between Nazareth and Capernaum

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