

## Grace, Unleavened Bread, and the Holy Spirit

### Why We Eat Unleavened Bread

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The subject of this sermon begins chronologically during the Days of Unleavened Bread. I am doing this because there is a misunderstanding on the part of some that I want to expose. It has very much to do with whether we are going to use God's Holy Spirit rightly. I want to clarify this because much of our time in the church we have firmly held to the belief that the Days of Unleavened Bread represent our coming out of sin, and that is why we eat unleavened bread.

This is only partly true, because there is very much more to the story. So this subject directly involves something that God said regarding unleavened bread. Not the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but "unleavened bread."

This misunderstanding first came to Evelyn's mind; and she mentioned it to me, when we were studying the Wavesheaf issue (not this year, but a number of years back). It came to mind because very much of the Worldwide Church of God's argument regarding when to count Pentecost from is based on the symbolism of coming out of sin. Other groups have continued this thought, right down to this very day. But the eating of unleavened bread only *indirectly* relates to coming out of sin. Rather, it relates *directly* to something quite different. The eating of unleavened bread is intended, by God, to directly serve as a reminder of something often overlooked and very, very important to our salvation. So we are going to begin in Exodus 13, where God makes this statement:

Exodus 13:3, 7-9 And Moses said unto the people, "Remember this day, in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place. There shall no leavened bread be eaten. . . . Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with you, neither shall there be leaven seen with you in all your quarters. And you shall show your son in that day, saying, 'This is done because of that which the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt.' And it shall be for a sign unto you upon your hand, and for a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD's law may be in your mouth. For with a strong hand has the LORD brought you out of Egypt."

The keeping of the first day of Unleavened Bread, along with the eating of unleavened bread for seven days, is intended by God to serve as a reminder of *what He has done for us*. I want you to think of that. That is what He said, right here. I did not make that up. Unleavened bread is to serve as a reminder to us of what He has done to bring us out.

This is especially true of the first day of Unleavened Bread—because by that time, in our conversion, we have not overcome anything to speak of. I want you to note that this is very personal. Notice in verse 8. "And you shall show your son in that day, saying, 'This is done because of that which the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt.'" It is "me"

and "I" at this point. It is not the Body (Israel). It is "me" and "I."

And this perfectly agrees with John 6:44, where it says "No man (no single individual) can come to Me except the Spirit of God draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day." It is a personal, specific, individual *bringing out* of Egypt. But, of course, we understand that (as all of these are called out individually) they do form a group. You will find that the language, in verse 14 of this same chapter, changes to us. That is, from "I" and "me" to "us"—from the single individual to the collective group.

So, why do you eat unleavened bread? That is what this sermon is going to be about. But what you need to learn first is that this was done because of what God does. There is another piece of evidence here, and it is in verse 3. That piece of evidence is a punctuation mark. In the middle of the verse, it says:

Exodus 13:3 Remember this day, in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place:

A colon is a punctuation mark that indicates that what follows is either a list or an explanation of what the colon follows. So it is directly pointing to "for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out." And then the explanation is: "You shall not eat leavened bread." Again, it points to the reason that we eat it. It is because of what the Lord did. Of course, we are going to see as we go through this that we do have a part in this. But I think that you are going to see, very clearly, that the only reason we have a part at all is because of what God does. There would be no part, if God did not do what He does—and sets the stage.

What He wants us to remember is not what we do but *what He does!* It puts things in the right order, and it is very important. This also fits in very well by the statement by Paul—and of course, by God Himself there in Malachi—"Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated." It is showing that the calling is personal—discriminating, between one and another. You are here (I am here) because of the part that God has played in our calling. Without it, we would not be here.

The Days of Unleavened Bread are about overcoming. However, they are primarily about God overcoming. God overcoming Satan. God overcoming the world. God overcoming sin. It is not about us doing the overcoming, except indirectly. The Days of Unleavened Bread, and eating unleavened bread, must be understood in this context—or we are missing much of the point in our salvation. Things regarding salvation must be put in their proper place of importance or human nature will move us to exaggerate our own importance to the process; and we will unwittingly create a "works" religion.

I want us to think about the analogy of Israel coming out of Egypt. How much did the Israelites have to overcome in order to become free? The extent of their participation was to believe strongly enough that God was working through Moses, to then prepare a lamb, keep Passover, stay in their homes overnight, gather at Rameses the next day, and then walk out when the signal was given to march. How much overcoming did they do? There was a measure of it there, but it was not very much. And as I go through this, it is going to become very clear to you why Paul said "By grace are you saved. . . not by works." We will see this develop as we go through this.

When they left Egypt, did they leave *sin*? This is something else that is going to get clarified here. Did they leave *sin*? No, they did not. What they left was the place of their bondage.

Exodus 13:3a And Moses said unto the people, "Remember this day, in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

That is what they came out *from*. They came out from the place of their bondage. We have long understood that the exodus is an analogy of a person's spiritual conversion—especially the earliest stages of that conversion. So what we are going to do through much of this sermon is to review the analogy, and then to lead into Pentecost at the end of the sermon. And we are going to begin this all the way back in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 He [God] has made every thing beautiful in His time. Also He has set the world in their [mankind in general] heart, so that no man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end.

That phrase, "the world in their heart"—almost every Bible I have ever seen has a marginal reference there and they change the word "world" to "eternity." He has set eternity in their heart. Before conversion, all of us had at least some concept of God. For some the concept was very firmly believed. In some cases, it was very firmly and zealously believed. And it was practiced, to some degree, in their life. But I think that for the overwhelming majority of people, the concept was vague, agnostic, and even atheistic. And sometimes there was antagonism towards God and religion in general.

But however vague and wrong the concept was, there was something for God to begin to establish a beachhead to a relationship. Most of the time, one's concept is derived from the beauty, the vastness, the order, and the eloquence of the creation—so that the person (almost intuitively) knows that there is more to life than meets the eye. We are led to think of ourselves in terms of immortality. (You see, "He has set eternity in their heart.") And we reason that surely there must be more to life than what one sees.

But having that kind of a concept of God—that is derived from the creation alone—does not give one any sure direction in which to go. And so we are all just *swept along* by the tide of events—until God mercifully and miraculously begins to stir our minds to begin to think more seriously about Him, about life, and about eternity.

I went through this because there was in the minds of the Israelites in Egypt some measure of what I have just described. It had been about 350 years since Abraham. Remember that God said they would spend 400 years in Egypt, a land that was not their own. That is almost as long as people have been in what is now the United States of America. That is a long time. And you can see, by what is going on in society, that the American people are *losing* their concepts—the things that they have been told, the idealism, the patriotism—of those men who formed the government back in 1776 and 1788-89.

That is the way the Israelites were in Egypt. They had not forgotten things completely, but they were *losing* them. And so they were hopelessly drifting along in their slavery—even at times crying out to God, in circumstances beyond their control. They were groaning under the burdens of every day life, without knowing (at the time that they were groaning) that God was

already beginning to take the steps necessary for their salvation.

Exodus 3:7-8 And the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

God was acknowledging them. And it is interesting to note how God works behind the scenes—out of the view of the very ones that He has chosen to work with. It is interesting that there are four verbs in these verses that are linked. And if we were going to be translating them literally, it would say this: *God heard. God remembered. God looked*, meaning, He considered, was thinking about it. *And God knew*, meaning, He was intimately concerned.

Most of those people, I am sure, had forgotten the promises that were made to Abraham. God had been planning all along to do this, but they were totally unaware that He had taken an interest in them. Remember that this written after the fact. It is Moses looking back; and, of course, Moses (at that time) knowing what was going through the mind of God. In fact, at this time, God had already prepared Moses to be the one to lead them from their bondage. And they did not have the foggiest idea that it was going on. And neither did you—when you were called.

Notice in these verses, like in verse 7: "I have surely seen the affliction of My people." That is interesting. He is already calling them "MY people." He did not call them "MY people" because they loved Him, but because *He* loved them—and was already taking an active part in their lives. So right here at the very beginning, if we are going to apply this to our own calling, we have to acknowledge who is taking the initiative, who is doing the leading, who is providing what is necessary, who is in charge, who has the answer to all the questions.

The salvation of Israel was already under way. And yet it would be weeks before Israel would have any inkling of God's involvement. Then, when they finally did, all they would have to do was agree to do the simple things that He commanded. When they did hear, this is what they heard. And, of course, they heard through Moses.

Exodus 6:2-3 And God spoke unto Moses, and said unto him, "I am the LORD. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by My name Jehovah was I not known to them."

What He is announcing here is that *the relationship is going to change*. YHWH is the name that He uses to indicate "a relationship established."

Exodus 6:4-8 "And I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments. And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God. And

you shall know that I am the LORD your God, which brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage. I am the LORD."

They heard *the gospel* as it applied to them. They heard fantastic *good news*. It was good news to them until Pharaoh turned up the heat a bit. Then their joy turned to persecution and affliction. But I want you to note that all of these are steps, and God was beginning to put a difference between Israel and Egypt. A sanctification was taking place that was difficult for those God was working with to bear. This difference continued; and, in fact, it intensified during the plagues. But first let us consider what Israel's reaction was when they heard this "good news." It tells us here, in verse 9:

Exodus 6:9 And Moses spoke so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

They were skeptical and cynical. Their present circumstance was too real and too powerful to allow them to have any hope. And so they did not agree to this wonderful news, because they did not believe it. Thankfully, God was both merciful and patient, and determined. And so we find that they did, finally, begin warily to accept Moses as a servant of God and accept the message little by little, as the plagues began to fall upon Egypt and upon them. They began to see—by those things—that what he was saying was true. It could be relied upon. It would happen. And then a very significant thing took place.

Exodus 8:22 [God says to Moses...] "And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth."

Israel suffered the blood. They suffered through the plague of the frogs. And they suffered through the plague of the mice. But now God did something that made the separation (the sanctification) very apparent. I want you to note that word—sanctification. It is very important. They were being shown that they were *different* from others. They were different from the Egyptians. God was treating them differently than He did the Egyptians.

"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Even as God separated Jacob from Esau in the womb—before anything had been done—now He is separating the Israelites away from the Egyptians. And He has separated you away from the world. So the fourth plague did not fall on the Israelites in Goshen, though it did fall on the Egyptians in the rest of the land. So the sanctification of Israel became very pronounced at this time—thus helping them to understand that God, indeed, was working for them.

They were very soon going to need that bit of faith that was being produced. But so far, they had been required to make few decisions concerning their salvation. Yet everything was actually proceeding very nicely. Mostly, though, they were doing little except watching what was going on. It was almost as if they were *observers* of a stage play. Even though their lives had been dramatically affected, they had done little to affect their own freedom. God had done virtually everything. But as the tenth plague approached, they were finally going to have to decide whether they were going to be *active participants*. And that has happened to every one of us.

There comes a time when the pressure has mounted in our minds to the place where we have to do something.

Exodus 12:2-3, 5-7 This month shall be unto you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak you unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, "In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house. . . . Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats. You shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month. And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

When they did this, it marked the first time that there was any real involvement—other than *mentally assenting* to what Moses was saying and to what they saw happening in the land of Egypt. What they did here was tantamount to accepting the blood of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. It symbolizes protection from death, through a forgiveness that is supplied by God Himself.

Now, understand this—that repentance is still NOT symbolized in the analogy until Israel actually left Egypt. Let us consider: Does Egypt represent *sin*? Only indirectly! Remember that earlier I said that Egypt is the place of bondage. It is the place, or state, in which we commit our sins. In this analogy, sin is something that we leave behind, when we accept the blood of Jesus Christ and begin to walk out.

Now, what did Israel leave behind in Egypt that symbolizes *sin*? Remember that sin is something you turn away from and leave behind, as you progress in this life. Each Israelite who came out represented over 400 years of being in Egypt. Though they were slaves, they lived in what is described (in Genesis 47:6) as the best land in Egypt. God gave them the crème de la crème. We know from the Passover instructions that they had houses. In verse 3, it mentions "house." In verse 13—"The blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are." In verse 22:

Exodus 12:22 And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.

They had property. They lived in the best part of Egypt. I would have to interpret that, at least partly, "the best part of Egypt for them." And they had homes. But that is not all they had, because they must have had generations of family heirlooms—all the trappings of a home (chairs, tables, pictures, all kinds of things). But when they left, all they could carry out had to be something that they put on their back or could easily pull on a cart—especially if they did not have a beast of burden. They must have left a great deal of their own things behind.

With that kind of a circumstance, if you can just picture yourself fleeing to a place of safety, what would you take? I think that you would most like take only those things that you think are absolutely necessary for life. Maybe what you could get into a suitcase or two. Two for your wife, two for yourself, and maybe two for each one of the kids who could carry something. You would cram everything that meant anything to you into something that you could carry.

They went out in haste. You understand that. They left pretty quickly, when they finally did leave. They undoubtedly had done some thinking about what they would take out. But if two million-plus people are leaving, they are not leaving with semi-trailers. They are leaving with the barest of essentials and maybe a few things behind. That is what represents *sin*. When we accept the blood of Jesus Christ and we begin to come out, we are to leave behind those things of "the old man" (of the old life in spiritual Egypt), and strip down to the bare essentials.

Hebrews 12:1-2 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin [That is what Israel had to do. They had to lay aside, symbolically, "every weight, and the sin..."] which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

True repentance does not allow us to bring very much of what we are along with us. So God forces us to choose what is "spiritual baggage" so that these things do not become a burden to us along the way. Some of us do not make the progress that we should because we are carrying around too much of the world with us. Now, back to Exodus 3 (and we are going to read a verse that we read before), but this time I want to point out something different.

Exodus 3:8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

This verse tells us three things that God proposed to do: (1) He proposes to free His people from the hand of the Egyptians. (2) He is going to bring them out of the land of Egypt. And (3) He is going to bring them into the land of promise. Again, do not ever leave yourself out of this. Always carry this analogy right on through with yourself. God is promising and proposing these same things with us. But when did accomplish these things in the analogy?

Exodus 12:31-33 And he [Pharaoh] called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both you and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as you have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also." And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, "We be all dead men."

What you are looking at here is proposal # 1 being accomplished. They were freed by the word of their own captors.

Exodus 12:40-42 Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt. This is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

So they came out at night, on the first day of Unleavened Bread. So proposal # 1 is in the act of occurring. And proposal # 2 is in the process as well—to bring them *out of the land* of Egypt. I want you to note this, because it is a fact. When they left Egypt on the first day of Unleavened Bread, they were *already out*. Why is this important? When God forgives your sin, it is done and over with. It is behind you. It does not drag along for seven days. They were already out of Egypt!

They came out of literal Egypt in one day—not seven. But they were still within the territory of Egyptian control, in much the same way that we refer to the metropolitan area of a city today. But they were out of Egypt at the very beginning, and it was almost entirely by the work of God that they got out. Egypt is NOT the symbol of sin. Egypt is the symbol of the world. It is the place, the culture, in which sin is committed. And once they began their journey out of Egypt, they were no longer *of the world* even though they were still literally *in the world*. That same thing applies to us.

It was not when they accepted Christ (that is, killed the lamb) that they came out of this world, but when they actually began moving away from the place of their bondage. Why is this so? Or rather, it might be better to say, how is this shown? In the analogy, how is this shown? It is shown in Exodus 13.

Exodus 13:17-18, 21-22 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest peradventure [perhaps] the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt." But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea. And the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. . . . And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and by night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

Now, what am I saying here? It is shown *by their following God*. It is when they actually began walking, following God's lead. They made a few steps, you might say, whenever they chose the lamb, and killed it, and kept the Passover. But it really becomes evident in the analogy that it was not until we actually begin to follow God that repentance is shown. Now we are submitting to Him, openly and clearly.

So, let us just rehash. First, they sacrificed the lamb. Then they forsook the vast majority of their belongings. And then they started their journey, with their eyes fastened on the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day. This was picturing them no longer following the world—but now obedience to God. Up to this point, God has done virtually everything. But our part is still obedience to the little that we must do. And it is this combination that brings us out of the world.

God makes this very clear.

Exodus 19:4 [He says] "You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself."

Listen, brethren. God is not giving us any room to brag! In one sense, we have nothing to be

proud of, regarding this. We will finish this sermon with a verse that makes that very clear, in the New Testament. To this point, we have to understand from this analogy that we would never come out of the world unless God prepared *us* (and *the way*) so that we can come out. What we are beginning to see form here is why Paul made that statement in Ephesians 2—that we are His workmanship! God is the Creator.

Let us consider unleavened bread. During our lives in the church, we have been taught that Egypt is a type of *sin* and that eating unleavened bread pictures coming out of sin. I have been as guilty as anybody in teaching this. But, at the same time, I want to remind you that it is not totally wrong—but neither is it entirely accurate either. First, Egypt is a type of the world (not *sin*). And God does not picture Israel coming out of sin, but already out as soon as they began following Him. In one day, in one moment of time, He considered them out.

Leavened bread would have been too bulky, and it would have taken too long to rise, for them to take it with them—because they had to hurry. So He is showing us that quick action is required. Once God starts moving, He wants us to *move quickly* to follow Him. Therefore, leavening was something that they had to leave behind. This is where we have been accurate in the past. Leaven is, indeed, a type of *sin*.

We say (in Exodus 13: 3, 6-10) unleavened bread in the context of the story. In verse 3, it says that we are to eat unleavened bread because of what God has done. When you attach these things together with the whole exodus picture—and especially those things that happened on the first day of Unleavened Bread... I mean by this, God's statement that He brought us out, and that Israel's obedience in following the pillar of fire was what enabled them to step out. That is the context in which unleavened bread is introduced.

Unleavened bread does NOT, at first, picture coming out of *sin*. Israel came out of Egypt. Eating unleavened bread pictures what God has first done, and then us submitting to His lead and following Him. And our part in following Him is obedience.

Now do not miss this: What God is picturing Israel doing describes in action (in a word picture, in an object lesson) *what righteousness is*. What is righteousness? We are doing acts of righteousness when we follow God. That is what righteousness is. It is so simple. When we follow God, when we do things as God would have us do them, that is what righteousness is.

And here is the part that is important. IF one does righteousness, one will not sin. It is almost impossible to sin. So, it is the *emphasis* here that is important to this. The emphasis on eating unleavened bread is not on coming out of something but, rather, doing something that is right!

You will recall that, in the past, I mentioned to you a couple of times that the major difference between Jesus and the Pharisees was that the Pharisees sought righteousness by avoiding sin. Jesus did not sin because He went about "doing good." It is a measure of *emphasis* that is important here. What we see is a contrast between the positive and negative approaches. That is the issue.

You might also recall that several years ago (for a period of time, anyway) we were taught that one did not have to eat unleavened bread every day during the Feast; but, rather, if one chose to eat bread, then it should be unleavened. That was the teaching for a period of time, as the

church was going downhill. Now, let us take this to an extreme. What if one did not want to eat unleavened bread any day during the Feast? But the command said "You shall eat it seven days." Do you understand what this means? In practical application, what God is saying is that *we are to follow after righteousness all the days of our life!* Every day—not just during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

But the Days of Unleavened Bread serve as a reminder to get things into their right context. Eating unleavened bread translates practically into doing righteousness. That is, not sinning *because* we are doing righteousness. We are not being "righteous" simply by avoiding sin all over the place. But we are to actively, in a proactive way, follow God. Then we will not sin. In a sense, we do not even have to worry about sin—when we take the same approach that Jesus did; because we are so busy *doing what is right* that, as I said, it is almost impossible to sin (when you are doing the right thing anyway).

So that is what the Days of Unleavened Bread are about. Yes, we come out of sin. But it is *how* we come out that is important. We come out by taking a proactive approach. We follow God all the days of our lives. Paul put it this way:

I Corinthians 5:8a Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

"Sincerity" means "wholeheartedness." It literally means, "without wax." The word sincere means not being mixed—a little bit of the world and a little bit of God. So he said, "without a mixed approach to life."

Always remember that the Days of Unleavened Bread memorialize *what God did* to free us from our bondage. That is our starting point. So eating unleavened bread symbolizes what Israel did in following God's lead out of Egypt and through the wilderness. That is what righteousness is.

So we have a two-pronged approach on what Unleavened Bread is all about: (1) It reminds us of what God did to make it possible for us to have this way of life. And (2) it symbolizes to us following God and doing righteousness proactively—making it the aim of our life. Not just dodging sin here and there; but, rather, doing the right and good thing. And then sin begins to disappear.

So we are coming out of it, yes. But it is a fruit of doing the right thing—not merely dodging sin. That is what righteousness is. It is following God. It is doing things God's way. And if one does this, they will not sin. And so Unleavened Bread is an annual concentrated effort for a period of seven days, to focus our minds and our attention on God's instruction in righteousness—so that we can live in harmony with Him, as He directs our steps and gives light to our lives.

Eating unleavened bread every day during the Days of Unleavened Bread is NOT a burden. It is a reminder that following God's way *every day of our life* is crucial to our being prepared for the Kingdom of God.

Now, the normal way of finding *God's way of doing things* is through His Word. What is going to be the fruit of that, if we do it? What is going to be the fruit? I can guarantee you this is going

to happen, because of what Jesus said in John 17 where it says:

John 17:17 Sanctify them through Your truth. Your word is truth.

If we obey God's Word—if we follow Him explicitly—we will be separated from the world. That is what "sanctify" means. Set them apart, make the difference apparent. When we are obedient to the pure uncontaminated Word of God, we become *sanctified for God's use*. Following God's Word produces separation. Let us tie to this something that Jesus said in Matthew 10, because there is absolutely no way to stop separation from the world *if* truth is followed.

Matthew 10:34-39 Think not that I [Christ is speaking.] am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. A man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that takes not his cross, and follows after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that finds his life shall lose it. And he that loses his life for My sake shall find it.

When God enters into a person's life, they begin to be separated away from their past—and their present, as time goes on. It cannot be stopped. The only way that we can stop it is to go back to Egypt. Then we become "one" with it again.

It says that Israel came out with a high hand—as though they were a victor. It is very likely that, when you were converted, you attempted to tell others of your great understanding and your feelings about these things that you [now] understood. But, when you did, they did not share your beliefs and your feelings. That even shows up here in Exodus 13.

Exodus 13:14 And it shall be when your son asks you in time to come, saying, "What is this?" that you shall say unto him, "By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage."

He did not do that for the others, and that is why they did not understand. He was not bringing them out! The only ones who "got it"—to a limited degree here—were the Israelites. And so the only ones who are going to "get it" spiritually are those whom God is calling out.

Exodus 13:18 But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.

God led them in orderly ranks. And you cannot have order unless there is a certain measure of authority, and agreement with that authority. To this point in time, they were in harmony with God. So you can see that this was not a "school's out jailbreak" with everybody going their own way. There was purpose to what was being done. He had not freed them just for the fun of it. There was a serious and orderly purpose that was being worked out. And they were willing, at that time, to follow His guidance.

So God's plan was to lead His people. And we saw, in verses 21 and 22 (which I have already read) that He was present all the time. Do you get the point? He is present with us too! He does not get us out of the land, and then drop us off the edge of a cliff. But His leadership and

guidance is always there. In verse 17, it makes it very clear that God was careful—in His concern for them—in choosing the route that they would take. He chose one that, and though it was difficult, it was one in which they had every chance to succeed.

It is good to remember too that not only is He developing them, He is also magnifying Himself in their eyes—so that their reliance on Him will grow. There are at least two things, in which God is directly involved, that are important. And He is going to do this same thing for us. He is going to choose the path for our life. I can guarantee you that it is probably going to be pretty difficult to go that way. I can also be very dogmatic about why He is doing it that way. He wants to give you every chance of success. And, at the same time, He wants to be magnified in your eyes—so that your reliance upon Him (your faith, your trust) will continually grow as your knowledge increase because you will see Him working.

Taking an absolutely straight line from Egypt to the Promised Land would be what we would naturally think would be the best way to go, would it not? "Hey, let's get it over in a hurry." But with God though, when one is living by faith, the shortest distance between two points is not always the best. God's way is *not* the natural way. Please understand that. The natural way is to follow human nature. God is not going to take us the natural way.

In this world, the way to success is very frequently to break the commandments. You lie. You cheat. You steal. You fornicate. You commit adultery. You do whatever it takes to win. But that will never get you into the Kingdom of God, because that is the way of the world. To twist, to pervert, to make the self look good all the time. But God's way is to go out of one's way to give, to serve, to sacrifice by faith—out of obedience to God. That is the true way to success, because that is the way He is! And He determines what the standards of success are.

Exodus 14:1-2 And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon. Before it shall you encamp by the sea."

At this time, they were right on the edge of metropolitan Egypt (as we would say today), and another step (you might say) would have taken them out completely. However, God made them make a right hand turn, and headed them south. This would head them right into a boxed canyon, which would seemingly make it easy for Pharaoh to retake them. But there is a very important lesson for us here. Even when every natural instinct tells you that God's way will not work, we must still exercise faith and obey—regardless of the "dire consequences" that might appear just ahead on the horizon. Sometimes God seems to lead us directly into disaster. And He does. God is really good at creating calamities.

Psalms 106:7-8 Our fathers understood not Your wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of Your mercies; but provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red sea. Nevertheless He saved them for His name's sake, that He might make His mighty power to be known.

God is going to do that. He will *magnify Himself* before us if we will just allow Him to do so, by exercising our faith.

Psalms 78:38-39 But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and

destroyed them not. Yes, many a time turned He His anger away, and did not stir up His wrath. For He remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passes away, and comes not again.

Would Israel ever have "made it" without God? Would Israel have ever "made it" without God's mercy? Not at all! If we would go through Exodus 14, we would find that there was a period of time there where Moses tried to calm the people down—doing what he could to get them regrouped. But we find in Hebrews 11 a very interesting thing.

Hebrews 11:29 By faith they [meaning, Israel] passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

Can you imagine that? Despite all their complaining, despite all of the fear that they showed when they got to the Red Sea and they knew that Pharaoh was coming after them. . . They were just about ready to go back to Egypt—to give up. But God admits that they went through the Red Seaby faith! Something mighty good happened there. All was not lost. Israel was *growing*. They did, after all, walk through the parted waters. That must have been an awesome thing to do—to look at water (way over your head), and you are walking through on dry land, and seemingly nothing was holding it back.

The first thing that we might think of is courage that enabled them to do that. Yes, it took courage; but it took faith also. But, you know what, the Egyptians had courage too. They plunged right in after them; but they did not have faith, and the waters killed them. The difference between Israel and Egypt was beginning to get wider and wider. They were growing.

So they did not just merely go through the sea. By this time, God's first objective was to get them out of Egypt and to free them from the hand of the Egyptians. The first two objectives were completely accomplished. There was complete deliverance. Salvation from Egypt had come to Israel. And so we are beginning to understand why Paul wrote what he did in Ephesians 2: 8-10. Salvation is by grace through faith.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. [Meaning, the faith is a gift of God.]

Salvation did not come to Israel because they sacrificed the lamb, or merely because of the obedience. It came by what God did. Their salvation was His gift to them—by grace.

I Corinthians 10:1-2 Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

That event, on the last day of Unleavened Bread, symbolizes baptism. Baptism is the burial of the old man—the one brought out of Egypt. Baptism is, at one and the same time, a declaration of our faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, a commitment of our lives to be lived in submission (following God), and it is a cleansing to prepare us for the receiving of the Holy Spirit. Though we are counseled to "count the cost" then (when we are preparing for baptism), our knowledge of God is really at a very low level.

We are, in reality, *covenanting with God* about things *unseen*. That takes a bit of faith,

because we do not know what lies ahead. We do not know which road God is going to take. We can only be pretty sure that He is not going to take us on the road that we would like to go on. That is the pattern. But He *is* going to take us on the road that is going to be best for us. And everybody's "road" is not going to be exactly the same.

In principle, they will be similar to one another. But remember that God is a Creator. And over all of this, He is preparing everybody to fit into the temple that is going to be the one that is erected in the Kingdom of God. And He is fitting us into that temple. So everybody requires not only a specific and individual calling, but also everybody requires a specific and individual "road" to walk—working with creative efforts on the part of God to bring us to that place. So everybody's "wilderness" is similar, and yet different, at one and the same time.

What this does is that it sets the stage for the events of Exodus 20. That is when God gathered them at Mount Sinai and gave them the law. And those events in Exodus 20 are paralleled in Acts 2. So Acts 2 is the reality that is only foreshadowed in Exodus 20. And in Luke 24: 49, Jesus told the disciples to "hang around Jerusalem, because you shall receive power."

He repeated it to them following His resurrection, just before His ascension, in Acts 1: 4, 5, and 8. "Hang around here. You shall receive power."

I will give you some scriptures that you can add to this. We are now into where we are receiving the Holy Spirit. John 14: 16-17; John 16: 14; I Corinthians 2: 10-12. He is telling us what some of this *help* and some of these *powers* are going to be. It is going to be a comforter, a spirit of truth. (We need truth.) We are going to receive a guide.

In the wilderness, *our character* is worked on. This is where Ephesians 2: 10 comes in. "We are His workmanship." God is the Creator. "Created in Christ Jesus"—the temple, the Body of Christ. "For good works which God has before prepared us." So in the wilderness the intensity of our works, and the amount of our works, and the importance of our works is increased a notch or two—so that we can be prepared to follow Him right on and on.

I want you to understand (in I Corinthians 12: 6-7) that the Spirit of God is given to us "in trust." We receive only a portion. It is *a trust* that we are given, and the fullness of it is not going to come until the resurrection of the dead. But it is given "in trust" for a purpose! It is not only given to strengthen and empower us for being prepared for the Kingdom of God. It is given so that all can profit. That is what it says. *So that all can profit!* Its *gifts* and *powers* are to be shared with others.

I want to finish up here by concentrating just on this one thing. As humans, like Christ we can do nothing of ourselves. I say, "like Christ" because He told the disciples very clearly, "Of My own self I can do nothing. The Father who lives in Me, He does the works." We are the same way. Jesus said to us, "I am the vine. You are the branches. Without Me, you can do nothing."

The reason I am saying this is this: Even as we already saw, it was *God* (and what He did) that got the children of Israel out of Egypt. It is *God* who gets us out of our personal Egypt. It never stops! This principle never ends. It is *God* who is going to get us through our personal journey through the wilderness. And how is He going to do it? He is going to do it exactly the same way as He gets us out of Egypt in the first place.

He will create us so that we will then be *enabled* to do what needs to be done in order to make it through the wilderness. I want you to stop and think for just a second with this simple illustration. Anything that is created—such as a machine—can only do what the "creator" (the inventor) puts into it to do. We are God's creation. We can do only what He creates us, and enables us, to do.

Is that not what He did with the children of Israel in Egypt? It was what He did—creating all the circumstances, all the way, giving them the faith and whatever was needed to get them out. The same process continued all the way through the wilderness! I will not go through it. I will just give you the "Reader's Digest" version. *He* gave them the manna. *He* gave them the water. *He* fought their enemies. *He* gave them the cloud above. *He* gave them the pillar of fire at night. *He* gave them the directions, the pattern, for the tabernacle. *He* gave them the sacrifices. *He* gave them the leader. *He* gave them the knowledge. *He* gave them everything that was needed!

I Corinthians 15:27-28 [This is the resurrection chapter. Right?] For He has put all things under His feet. [That time is coming.] But when He said all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. [Who put all things under Christ's feet? The Father did!] And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

Let me change the wording there. "That God may be magnified to everybody—that He is everything to everybody." The time is coming when everything in creation will be restored to their rightful position and priority. When that occurs, God will be everything to everybody.

We are only learning that now. This is why the Bible teaches that salvation is by grace. Everything that we need is given to us, and created in us—so that we are enabled to do what needs to be done. God will then be SUPREME over a *plan completed*—and an entire universe that is ordered according to His will.

I gave this sermon, on this subject, for two reasons. The first is that I wanted to magnify God's part in our salvation. Just as the analogy shows that He gets us out of Egypt, He also gets us into the Promised Land. And just as surely as He supplied every "gift" needed to get them out, He supplies every "gift" needed to get us in.

I Corinthians 1:26, 29 For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. [Why?]. . . . That no flesh should glory in His presence.

None of us can magnify anything at all that we do in relationship to God's work. Remember the "all in all" statement? Let us apply that to verse 30.

I Corinthians 1:30a But of Him [the Father] are you in Christ Jesus, who of God. . .

Notice how everything is pointing back to the Father. (Not only our position, as a son of God; but even Jesus Christ.) *Of Him are you in Christ Jesus*. Without what the Father does, we would not be in Christ.

I Corinthians 1:30-31 But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. That, according as it is written, "He that glories, let him glory in the Lord."

The point of that is that from God (through Jesus Christ, to us) comes every *power* and *quality* and every *miracle* needed to make it into God's Kingdom. There is absolutely no room to exaggerate our works.