

The Whole Purpose of the Feast of Unleavened Bread

(First Day of Unleavened Bread)

Being renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him Who created him

Fred R. Coulter—March 31, 2018

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread! So, here we are, and let me just make one little correction concerning Passover: *It's my 57th Passover and 53rd as an elder!*

This is quite a Feast that teaches us a lot, and we learn a lot. The greatest lesson that we learn is *the only way we can live our lives properly is with the Word of God and the Spirit of God!*

Look at the world out there, what's happening out there. So, let's look into the Word of God and see what we need to do.

When God gave the commandments in the book of Exodus, I want you to see something very interesting. In Exo. 23 God talks about the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and this becomes important from the point of view as to where this fits in some of the other things that He has. How important are the Feasts?

Exodus 23:13: "And be watchful in all that I have said to you. And make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of your mouth.... [which is that 'you shall have no other gods before Me'] ...You **shall** keep a Feast unto Me three times in the year" (vs 13-14).

- What does the word *shall* mean?
- Does it mean it's optional?
- Does that mean if you want to?

or

- Is this a command that "...you **shall** keep a Feast unto Me three times in the year"?

Let's analyze the 'Christianity' of the world. They don't keep the Sabbath and they don't keep the Feasts of God. So, they've taken the name of God the Father and Jesus Christ *and placed them on the altar of the pagan holidays of Satan the devil!* A direct violation of what is here.

Verse 15: "You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. You shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And no one shall appear before Me empty." *Then He talks about the other Feasts.*

Exo. 34—after they had their Sunday-worship with the golden calf, and remember what happened because of that. You talk about unbridled

rebellion right in the face of God at Mt. Sinai and the weak excuse for the golden calf. He said, 'They brought me all this gold and I threw it into the fire and out leapt this calf! This is quite a command here because God is telling them not to ever do what they did with the golden calf again.

Exodus 34:17: "You shall make no molten gods for yourselves.... [very similar to Exo. 23] ...You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread...." (vs 17-18).

Right in the middle of giving the commandments of God! How important are the Feasts of God? *Tremendously important!* "You shall keep..."

"...You shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, in the time of the month Abib, for in the month Abib you came out from Egypt. All that opens the womb *is* Mine; all firstlings of male livestock, of oxen or sheep. But the firstling of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb. And if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem. And none shall appear before Me empty. You shall work six days, but on the seventh day you shall rest. In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest" (vs 18-21).

Then it talks about the Feast of Firstfruits and the Feast of Tabernacles. How important are they? *Well, they're all based on the Ten Commandments!* We will see in just a minute that it is *the Sabbath Day that sanctifies all of them!* But it's very interesting that we find here the dedication and redemption of the firstborn.

Note sermons on Deut. 16; that is not sanctifying a 15th Passover as we know:

- *Passover Offering & Deuteronomy 16*
- *Deuteronomy 16 (Bible Study)*
- *Deuteronomy 16 Exposed*

We always go to Lev. 23 during the time when we have the Feast days. And here we are on the 15th day of the 1st month on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and we're going through these things again. We do it over and over again. Why? *Because practice makes perfect!*

In sports, if you have a team that really practices and disciplines itself, and does what is

right—everything like that—they are generally winners. But if they are a team that hasn't practiced and they're out of shape, they're losers. There's a parallel and an analogy for us today.

- We keep the Sabbath every week; what's that for? *Practice!*
- We study every day and pray every day; what's that for? *Practice!*
- What does this practice do for us? *It perfects us, and prepares us for the first resurrection!*

We are to learn, re-learn, study and re-study, and by repetition... That's why the Sabbath is every seven days and the annual Feast days come once a year. And just to clear up a little matter, *none of these Feasts are the Feasts of the Jews!* The two feasts of the Jews are Hanukkah and the 15th Passover.

Granted, John refers to the Feasts as the feasts of the Jews in the book of John, but not in the context that they belong to the Jews, but in the context that most of the Jews at that time were properly keeping the Sabbath and the Feasts of God on the right days. Their behavior was not that righteous, but that's what they were doing.

Leviticus 23:1: "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying." Everything that Moses taught the children of Israel, and all the laws and commandments of God—*are from God!* The Lord God is the One Who:

- gave the commandments and the laws
- dealt with Adam and Eve
- dealt with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
- dealt with the children of Israel

He's the One Who became Jesus Christ! Here's what He said:

Verse 2: "Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, '*Concerning the appointed Feasts of the LORD...*'"

- Is the Sabbath an appointed time of God? *Yes, every seven days!*
- Are the annual Sabbaths appointed times of God? *Yes!*
- Is the Passover an appointed time of God? *Yes!*
- Is the Night to be Much Observed unto the Lord to be an appointed time of the Lord? *Of course!*

"...which you shall proclaim *to be* Holy convocations, even these are My appointed Feasts" (v 2).

If you make an appointment with someone and you don't keep it, you've missed out. Likewise with God, if you don't keep His appointed Feasts—the first one is the Sabbath—you lose out on:

- spiritual fellowship with God
- spiritual understanding of His Word
- the knowledge of what He's doing in His plan
- how you can overcome human nature

which this first day of Unleavened Bread pictures!

Verse 3: "Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, a Holy convocation. You shall not do any work. It is a Sabbath to the LORD... [not the Jews, not theirs or ours, but God's. We keep it because God said to 'remember the Sabbath Day and keep it Holy] ...in all your dwellings. These *are the appointed Feasts of the LORD*, Holy convocations, which you shall proclaim in their appointed seasons. In the fourteenth *day* of the first month, between the two evenings, is the LORD'S Passover... [we've already kept that and the Night to be Much Observed] ...and on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD. You must eat unleavened bread seven days" (vs 3-6).

Notice that these are *to the Lord, from the Lord* because all of these are two-way streets. We come and do what God says and He blesses us with His Spirit and Word. We love, worship and thank God. It comes from God, and it goes back to God. God is doing His work in us through that method.

Verse 7: "On the first day you shall have a Holy convocation... [we're here] ...You shall not *do any servile work therein*, but you shall offer a fire offering to the LORD seven days...." (vs 7-8).

That's when the temple stood and they had the altar and they had the sacrifices every day. But the individual who would come would not necessarily offer and offering every day. The most important offering that they would offer on the day part of the Passover Day is the redemption of the firstborn.

Then on the Holy Day we present ourselves before God and we bring an offering. Today we don't offer animal sacrifices. So, if you work and have a job and are paid, that is your increase. It's a little different than planting a crop and then you sell the crop and you tithe on what you sold. Or you bring the firstfruits of the crop to the priest. But nevertheless, it constitutes wealth.

So, God has the laws of tithes and offering.

Of course, He expects us to bring the best to Him. Remember Mal. 1, where God condemned the priests because they offered the lame and the blind as an offering to God. Some people do and offer very little, or don't even plan for it, or don't realize that God expects from each one of us the best, the first.

- Are we not the Church of the Firstborn?
- Is not Jesus Christ the Firstborn from the dead?
- Have we not through His sacrifice been redeemed?
- *Yes, indeed!*

All of these things fit into how we give an offering. It says in Deut. 16 that everyone who give an offering *as he is able*. God doesn't want to take from you; He wants to bless you. You give the first and the best to God, because He's given the first and the best to you through Jesus Christ. He has called you to be in the first resurrection.

You put it all together and this is the basis as to how and why we are to take up offerings. Then we use this to make the Gospel available to other people in the world, to serve the brethren and feed the flock. All of this is put to use as God intends.

(pause for the offering)

Let's see what the Apostle Paul wrote. It's right there in the New Testament and we will read the very words that he wrote, and he wrote it to those in Corinth. They had a lot of sins, troubles and problems. {note sermon series on 1st Corinthians and 2nd Corinthians (in progress).

Every problem that has faced the Church are contained right here if 1st & 2nd Corinthians and other places in the New Testament, as well. Then we have the Old Testament as an example for us of what *not* to do.

They had to put out a man in Corinth who was committing incest with his step-mother.

1-Corinthians 5:4: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, and my spirit, together with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ to deliver such a one to Satan for *the* destruction of the flesh..." (vs 4-5).

How important is it to not be living in sin? Look at what is going to happen. Look at the world living in sin. Is it leading to the destruction of the flesh? *Of course!*

"...that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (v 5)—hopefully that he would repent. Now, the ministry, along with the agreement

of the brethren, have the authority to put people out of the Church for sins and transgression, in the hopes that they repent.

There are some people going around saying that the ministry doesn't have any authority. Well, read 2-Cor. 13, where Paul said, 'I'm going to come and those who haven't repented, I will not spare.' As long as we're all

- loving God
- keeping His commandments
- doing what is right
- believing in our Lord Jesus Christ

Then no authority needs to be exerted! Except the authority to teach, to up-build and to edify the Body of Christ.

Verse 6: "Your glorying *is* not good. Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?"

Isn't that the way it is, one sin leads to another sin, which leads to another sin, and it grows and grows in its rotten magnitude! This is *why we have the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, because we still have 'the law of sin and death' within us, and we have to work against that, and that is working against us. But God wants us to overcome it through:

- His Spirit
- His Word
- His Truth

This helps us to be perfected by God!

Verse 7: "Therefore, **purge out the old leaven**, so that you may become a new lump, *even* as you are unleavened. For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us."

Verse 6: "...a little leaven leavens the whole lump," and that's exactly how Satan starts: a little bit over here, a little bit over there, and with benefit!

Verse 7: "Therefore, **purge out the old leaven**..." How do you purge it out? *You get the leaven out of your houses*, and aren't you surprised that you have so much leaven in your house, and some that you didn't even know you had? Isn't that the way it is with sin? *Yes!*

That's *why we have the Feast of Unleavened Bread, to purge it out!* To get rid of the sin in our lives, "...so that you may become a new lump..." (v 7)—a new person created in Christ:

- converted
- changed

- ready for the resurrection

“...even as you are unleavened...” (v 7). This phrase is used because what good does it good to unleaven your homes, *but you don't unleaven your life!* That is our responsibility with the power of God's Spirit through Jesus Christ. God works with us, but He expects our full and diligent work and cooperation in doing so.

They unleavened their homes, just like the command is in the Old Testament. Now, here's the reason for all of this. Just like Lev. 23 starts out with the Passover. First you have the Sabbath and then it starts out with the Holy Days beginning with the Passover. That was the day that Jesus Christ was crucified, it's not a *Holy Day*, because of all the work that had to be done on that day.

“...For **Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us**” (v 7). How does God apply this sacrifice? *To each one of us individually as we repent!* So, once we have repented and had our sins forgiven, and this is where the Protestants get off base. They say that the whole goal is to have your sins forgiven so that you belong to Christ and now you're immortal soul can go to heaven. *No way!*

Verse 8: “For this reason, let us keep the Feast...”

- How do we keep the Feast?
- Just by putting out the physical leaven?

or

- Are we also to unleaven our lives?
- Is this not the time to repent and change?
- Is this not the time to resolve to follow God even greater?

“...not with old leaven... [you can't come in the way that you were] ...nor with *the* leaven of malice and wickedness, but with *the* unleavened *bread* of sincerity and Truth” (v 8). Truth:

- the Word of God
- the commandments of God
- the precepts of God

Jesus said, 'I am the Way and the Truth and the Life.' You can't get life *unless you go in the Way and keep the Truth; the Way, the Truth and the Life!* That's why we're here, because:

- we have things that we need to change
- we have sins we need to overcome
- we have a mind that needs to be converted and perfected
- What is the goal of perfection?
- That we all have nice-nice Sabbath services?

That we all *become perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect*, and that is a *spiritual work!*

That's why we keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, to understand *our lives are a spiritual work*, and that we need God the Father and Jesus Christ. We need the Spirit of God within us, which is of the Father and Christ dwelling in us as a down payment of eternal life.

Just think how haughty we would be, and how lifted up in pride we would be, if we could be perfect in the flesh.

There's a whole book in the Bible devoted to that, and it bears the name of the man who thought that he was as righteous, or more righteous, than God. His name is Job. Remember what happened to him when he found out that he was not greater than God.

Likewise with us: *every day is a day of overcoming!* The Feast of Unleavened Bread is a time when we focus in on what we need to overcome and look at the sins that have beset us.

Heb. 12 is the whole theme, the whole picture of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For us to get our mind off ourselves, off the world, off the things going on there,

- *to come to God* in prayer and study
- *to come together* during the Feast of Unleavened Bread
- *to examine ourselves*, repent and get rid of sin

Living in the world today we have the phenomena that never occurred in past ages, that is sin comes right into your home through television, digital devices, printed word and pictures. We have other witnesses than what Paul lists in Heb. 11.

- we have the witnesses of the apostles
- we have the witnesses of Polycarp and Politiques
- we have those Christians who were beheaded for their witness of Christ down through the ages

Here we are in the lap of luxury, every convenience, every lovely little thing that we would want. That can be very deceptive, because we can slack off.

Recently we have seen that there are some ministers who have given themselves over to false doctrines. This happens over and over again. Why does that happen? *Because they're not practicing!* Here is what we need to practice every single day, but especially during the Feast of Unleavened Bread

Hebrews 12:1: “Therefore, *since* we are surrounded by such a great throng of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight...”—all the things that pull you down:

- bad attitude
- other people coming against you
- losing your temper
- bitterness
- anger
- hatred

all the works of the flesh (Gal. 5).

The spirit of man within us and our attitude is **warring** against the Spirit of God in our mind. If we do what the Feast of Unleavened Bread tells us, we can have the victory over it.

“...and the sin that **so easily entraps us**; and let us run the race set before us with endurance” (v 1).

So, we have a way to walk in: *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life!* We have to run that race, and in order to run it we have to keep in shape, *spiritual shape, spiritual strength*—Christ in us! Here’s how we do that:

Verse 2: “**Having our minds fixed on Jesus...**”

Psa. 57 is quite a powerful Psalm for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Here’s part of how our prayer needs to be. The grace of God is available to us all the time, and Jesus is the propitiation of our sins. This is why the daily prayer is *forgive us our sins!* As we saw, the sin “...**so easily entraps us...**”!

Psalm 57:1: “Be gracious unto me, O God, be gracious unto me; for my soul trusts in You; yea, in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge until these great troubles pass by.”

Isn’t that true the way it is in the world? Now, here’s how you overcome and have your mind fixed on Christ:

Verse 2: “I will cry to God Most High, to God who fulfills His purpose for me.” This is David crying out to the God Most High, though He was revealed, David had enough knowledge of Him so that he could cry out to Him.

The One Who became Jesus Christ was the One Who gave David that understanding. But the Most High was not revealed fully until the New Testament.

{note sermon series: *God the Father was not the God of the Old Testament*}

Verse 3: “He shall send from heaven and save me; He rebukes him who would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth His mercy and His Truth.” The theme of Unleavened Bread and Passover:

- mercy and Truth
- love and forgiveness
- strength and overcoming

Verse 5: “Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let Your glory be above all the earth. They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down; they have dug a pit before me; into the midst of it they have fallen themselves. Selah” (vs 5-6).

Here is where Paul had his inspiration for Heb. 12:

v 7: “**My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed...**” This is the choice we make. So, regardless of what is going on, regardless of how it comes about, we are to:

- change
- grow
- overcome
- yield to God in every way

“...I will sing and give praise. Awake, my glory! Awake, harp and lyre! I myself will awake the dawn” (vs 7-8).

He gets up and sings to God, praise to God, zeal toward God. No telephones, no television, no e-mails, no texting. Just think that if you could set those things aside how much time you would have to pray to God.

Verse 9: “I will praise You, O LORD, among the people; I will sing of You among the nations, for Your steadfast mercy is great *even* unto the heavens and Your Truth to the clouds. Be exalted above the heavens, O God; let Your glory be above all the earth” (vs 9-11). That’s how we are to have our mind fixed on God the Father and Jesus Christ.

- They will be with us
- They will help us
- They will guide us

Hebrews 12:2—Jesus is “...the Beginner and Finisher of *our* faith...” It’s not how you start, it’s how you finish. The way that you finish is how you do in between. Do you have your heart and mind fixed on God? Rather than on the things of this world? *Because all the things of the world are likened unto leaven!*

“...Who for the joy that lay ahead of Him

endured *the* cross...” (v 2). That’s what we need to do. We’re going to have troubles and difficulties in this life. We all do, I do, and there’s no way around it because that’s the way this world is. How do we overcome that?

- we have a greater goal
- we have a greater calling
- we have God
- we have Jesus Christ
- we have Their Word
- we see beyond the trouble

“...*although* He despised *the* shame...” (v 2)—endured the cross! Think about what that took. You can read that in the Gospels, everything that He went through. He endured! Was it something He loved? *Of course not!*

But He knew the goal was greater beyond. The giving, the serving, the sacrificing and the love that He showed by taking upon Himself the sins of the whole world, starting with those who are the firstfruits. The world does not have that opened to them, yet; but they will.

“...and has sat down at *the* right hand of the throne of God. Now meditate deeply on Him Who endured such great hostility of sinners against Himself...” (vs 2-3).

Think about what He went through! Remember what we read on the Sabbath Day—*Sabbath Before Passover*—that the plan of God was that ‘*He willed to crush Him.*’ He was crushed when He was beaten and scourged. Think of what He went through to save us!

The next time you have a little pity party for yourself, and you’re all drowning in your little tears because you have a little trouble, think on Christ! Think what He did for you, and for all whom He has called! Because as the Creator of all mankind, His sacrifice covers every human being in the world. But today it’s only for those who are the firstfruits. The world will have its chance beginning when Christ returns, but to until. So, meditate deeply on that.

“...so that you do not become weary and faint in your minds” (v 3—and give up. Some have done that.

Verse 4: “You have not yet resisted to the point of *losing* blood in your struggle against sin.” Then He talks about the correction that God will give. Fine, that’s good, we’ll all have that. It will come in different ways:

- through the Spirit of God
- through the Word of God

- from someone else
- from a sermon that you will hear

Whatever it is, do not despise the correction of the Lord. If you do, you’ll end up just like Esau, walking away from your birthright, and then you’ll come to the point that you’ll see that you shouldn’t have done it. But there may not be any return.

That’s why, do today what you need to do. Let’s see what we need to do, and how we may apply the lessons of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in our lives. Let’s see the overarching framework of what we need to do:

- to put the leaven out and the unleaven in
- to get rid of sin
- to have our mind fixed on Christ and on His Word

Here’s the overarching instruction; Romans 12:1: “I exhort you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies **a living sacrifice...**”—dedicated to God. Not spilling out your blood or anything like that, but:

- in prayer
- in love
- in Truth
- in service

walking in the way of God you are “...a living sacrifice, Holy and well-pleasing to God, which is **your spiritual service**” (v 1). Doing things motivated by the Spirit of God. You love God, you love your neighbors, and all of this is tied right up with it.

Verse 2: “**Do not conform yourselves to this world...**” With everything that is going on in the world today, with all the things that invade our lives—even into the innermost part of our homes and the innermost part of our mind on occasion—**do not be conformed to the world!**

“...but be transformed...” (v 2)—with our mind by the Spirit of God united with our spirit *renews and transforms our mind, our thoughts, our way of thinking, how we view things, etc.*

“...by the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove...” (v 2).

- God wants us to believe, but prove
- God wants us to accept, but understand
- God wants us to know, and be without doubt

All of these things are part of *proving*.

“...in order that you may prove what *is* well-

pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God” (v 2). Think about that! The will of God is perfect and the will of God for you is perfect, and the will of God is for you to overcome sin and build the character that comes from God:

- based upon His love
- based upon His laws and commandments
- based upon everything that is in the Bible

Isn't that the first thing that Jesus said when He was tempted by Satan the devil? The devil said for Jesus to 'make these stones into bread.' Jesus said, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'

That is how you prove what is well-pleasing, good and the perfect will of God! There you have it right there. Now let's see how we put this together. There are quite a few things in Eph. 4 for us to learn. Let's understand it and put it together. Here's the whole reason for the ministry. Not for authority—there is authority to take care of the rebels and authority to preach the Truth—but to serve the brethren so that we all together can be perfected. Isn't that what it's all about? Isn't that why you practice? *Yes!*

What is the epitome in baseball? *The practice of one man—the pitcher—to pitch a perfect game!* No hits, no runs, no errors! Twenty-seven men up, and twenty-seven men out! A perfect game! The only ones to ever do that are the pitchers who have practiced, *practiced and practiced* and have overcome their faults and mistakes and mechanics, all of those things. That's what it is for us.

Ephesians 4:11: “And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints... [not to exalt the ministers, but]: ...for the work of the ministry, for the edifying... [the up-building] ...of the Body of Christ; until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man... [or woman] ...unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (vs 11-13).

That's *why we have the Feast of Unleavened Bread!* We have to realize that what we have in the flesh, there is something greater, greater beyond to become as Christ, the fullness of Christ. Now with the Word of God and everything that we have, we have the greatest opportunity ever to do that.

(go to the next track)

Verse 14: “So that we no longer be children...”

- be adults in the faith
- understand the Truth
- know the doctrines

especially today, because there are those who come along with clever sounding arguments, and to the carnal mind they sound so blessedly true, *but they're lies!*

“...tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness... [inspired by Satan the devil] ...with a view to the systematizing of the error” (v 14).

Whatever error it is, they systematize it, they organize it. Look at everything that is in the world with what is called Christianity. It's all a systematized error. But here is what we do: Verse 15: “But holding the Truth in love...”

- loving God
- loving our neighbor
- loving the brethren
- loving our enemies and wish that they would repent, and that they would stay far away from us

“...may in all things... [every aspect of your life] ...grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even Christ!*” (v 15). Grow up to have the mind of Christ. This takes:

- a lifetime
- study
- prayer
- dedication
- action
- everything we do in living

Notice that Jesus is there to lead, to guide, to direct. Yes, we are to put sin out of our lives. Yes, we are to put these things out, but we will see that we have to put in the character of God. That's what God wants.

Verse 16: “From Whom all the body, fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies, according to *its* inner working in the measure of each individual part... [the Spirit of God working within us to help us] ...is making the increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” That's what it is to be through Christ.

This chapter (Eph. 4) is explicitly important in understanding concerning the Feast of Unleavened Bread. You get rid of:

- sin
- bad behavior
- bad company

- bad influences

Whatever is there, whatever your problem and difficulty is, take it directly to Christ:

- having your mind fixed
- looking to God
- repenting of your sins

He's forgiving and blotting out, and renewing and restoring, and *that's what the Feast of Unleavened Bread is all about!* Be renewed in the spirit of your mind! We will see how active we have to be in doing that.

Verse 17: "So then, I declare and testify this in the Lord that you are no longer to walk even as the rest of the Gentiles are walking..." *Don't be like the world, look like the world, dress like the world, speak like the world, none of that!*

"...the Gentiles are walking in the vanity of their minds" (v 17). Perfect description of this society written almost 1900 years ago. Amazing! What happens when that takes place?

Verse 18: "Having their understanding darkened..." Who is the one who is the power of darkness? Let's see the whole commission of what Paul was given. This world thinks it's in light. 'If the light is in you be darkness,' as Jesus said, 'how great is that darkness?'

Paul was explaining about Jesus Christ; Acts 26:14—Jesus said to him: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?..." If you persecute the brethren, you're persecuting Christ.

Verse 15: "And I [Saul/Paul] said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting. Now arise, and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose...'" (vs 15-16). God has a purpose for every one of us in our lives, as well.

"...to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of what you have seen and what I shall reveal to you. I am personally selecting you from among the people and the Gentiles, to whom I now send you" (vs 16-17).

Here is the commission; remember, **God gives the commission!** What did He tell the disciples: *Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all nations, making disciples! I am with you unto the end of the age!* Here is how He expressed it to Paul personally what Paul was to do:

Verse 17: "I am personally selecting you from among the people and the Gentiles, to whom I now send you to open their eyes... [spiritually]

...that they may turn from darkness to light, and **from the authority of Satan to God...**" (vs 17-18).

If their minds are darkened, it's darkened by Satan the devil. How does he darken the mind?

- by false knowledge
- by false religion
- by his spirit as the 'prince of the power in the air' who works within all the children of disobedience

"...so that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance... [in the Kingdom of God as sons and daughters of God as spirit beings] ...among those who have been sanctified through faith in Me" (v 18). That's was Paul's commission. Quite a thing!

- Is he carrying it out? *Yes, he is!*
- Who wrote Ephesians? *Paul did!*
- What is he writing?

Don't be like the Gentiles; Ephesians 4:17: "...walking in the vanity of their minds, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God..." (vs 17-18)—though in the deception of what they worshipping, they think they are worshipping God. What did Paul write in 2-Cor.?

- there's a false christ
- there's a false savior
- there's a false gospel

Brethren, if you don't understand, that's exactly what the Protestants are preaching.

"...being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their hearts. They have cast off all feelings, and have given themselves up to licentiousness..." (vs 18-19). That's the way the world is. Doesn't this describe every single Friday night of the week for the world? Look how many lives that destroys!

"...to work every uncleanness with insatiable desire. But you have not so learned Christ; if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, according to the Truth in Jesus: That concerning your former conduct..." (vs 19-22). Here is why we put leaven out of our homes, because it shows where to put sin out of our lives.

"...you put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and that you **be renewed in the spirit of your mind**" (vs 22-23). Having your mind:

- changed
- converted

- made spiritual
- perfected

That's what God wants with us. He wants our full cooperation and he has His Spirit to give to give it to us. He has His Word to teach us, *but we must do the walking! We must do the working!* Then God will do the inspiring and God will grant His Spirit, and even reveal things to us that we haven't understood, that are deep sins within the depths, the bowels, of our mind! *God will get rid of those, as well!*

Verse 22: "...you put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts." Isn't that true? So deceitful is human nature. What does Jeremiah say? Jeremiah 17:9: "The heart *is* deceitful above all things, and **desperately wicked...**"

But even things that appear really, really good can be desperately wicked if it takes you away from Christ, because it is so deceptive that you cannot tell right from wrong, good from evil. That's why you need:

- the Word of God
- the Spirit of God
- the Truth of God

We have to put those things in our lives and live by them.

Ephesians 4:23: "And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you **put on...**" (vs 23-24). You put off and you put on, never leave a vacuum, because a vacuum is always filled. If you put out, then you put in.

"...the new man, which according to God is [being] created..." (v 24)—because God is working with us.

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship, **being created** in Christ Jesus unto the good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them." The workmanship of God!

God is the Potter and we're the clay (Rom. 11). The clay doesn't argue with the potter. If he does, the potter smashes it down and starts again. Have you ever had that happen in your life and BOOM!; you've got to pick yourself up and start again.

Ephesians 4:24: "...which according to God is **created in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth**. Therefore, let each one put away lies..." (vs 24-25). Human nature is still there and lies do happen.

"...and speak the truth with his neighbor because we are members of one another" (v 25). It's

not wrong to be angry. Christ was angry at those who were angry at Him because He was healing on the Sabbath.

Verse 26: "*When you become angry, do not sin...* [Do not let it lead to sin. The best therapy of all, spiritual therapy]: ...Do not let the sun go down on your anger."

Why? *Because when you sleep on it, you build and build!* How do you think bitterness builds up? *Because you sin when you're angry and you don't forget! You don't put it out of your mind!* That's all a part of putting sin out of your life. If you don't, the next verse tells you why;

Verse 27: "Neither give place to the devil." If you don't then you give place to the devil. Paul is saying here:

1. anger, don't sin
2. don't let the sun go down on your wrath
3. don't give place to the devil

And the devil is going to come along and say, 'Yeah, you are right! Yes, you are right!'

Verse 28: "Let the one who stole, steal no more; rather, let him labor with *his* hands, working at what *is* good, so that he may impart *something* to the one who has need."

Now, here another good one, think on this, try this on; v 29: "Do not let any corrupt communication come out of your mouth... [that's a challenge, especially in this world today] ...but that which is good and needful for edification that it may give grace to those who hear. And **do not vex the Holy Spirit of God...**" (vs 29-30).

Why? *Because if you have the Spirit of God in you, which you do, and you are living in sin, which you may be, then you're vexing or frustrating the Spirit of God!*

The Spirit of God wants to lead you in the way you need to go through Christ, but you're not paying attention to that and you're going the way you want to go, so therefore, you're vexing or frustrating the Holy Spirit of God in what it's supposed to do in you with the combination of everything that God has provided.

"...by which you have been sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath, and clamor, and evil speaking be removed from you, together with all malice" (vs 30-31).

What's Paul saying? *These are problems that people who are Christians have that they need to work on!* When we come to the Feast of

Unleavened Bread we concentrate on the fact that leaven is a type of sin during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and it's so easily brought into everything. That's why we have it. What you do:

- you repent
- you pray
- you ask for God's Spirit to help you

Then you do v 32: "And be kind *and* tenderhearted toward one another, forgiving one another, even as God has also in Christ forgiven you."

Quite a thing—isn't it? What did Jesus say about forgiving? *Forgive so that you may be forgiven! If you don't forgive, you won't be forgiven!* Remember that? *That's in the Gospel! The words of Christ!*

Ephesians 5:1: "Therefore, be imitators of God..." Isn't it true that all people imitate something? How did you learn to speak? *You were taught to speak!* How did that happen? *Because you imitated or repeated the words that were spoken to you!*

- that's why we study the Word of God
- this is why we pray to God
- this is why we examine ourselves every day
- this is why we are to have our heart fixed

"...as beloved children" (v 1). Loved of God! How great a thing can that be? How marvelous is that? Think about it! That's what the Feast of Unleavened Bread is all about.

Verse 2: "And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us *as* an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor."

Then Paul lists all things to avoid, v 3: "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, do not permit it even to be named among you, as is fitting for saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking or jesting, which are not becoming..." (vs 3-4). You know no fornicator is going to be in the Kingdom of God.

Now, this is very important today, v 6: "**Do not let anyone deceive you with vain words;** for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. **Therefore, do not be joint partakers with them**" (vs 6-7).

Then Paul tells us that we are to remember that we have been in the world, we have been in darkness, we have been blinded by our own behavior, choices and practices.

Verse 8: "For you were once darkness; but

now *you are* light in *the* Lord. Walk as children of light, (because the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and Truth); **proving what is well pleasing to the Lord; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness...**" (vs 8-11).

Now let's see how we put this together in a practical manner. Col. 3 is quite a chapter and we go through this every Feast of Unleavened Bread. Why? *Because the Word of God needs to be gone over again and again!*

How many times has it happened to you that you're going along and all of a sudden BING! it hits you; you finally understand something about God, the Word of God, or your behavior, whatever. It dawns on you what you need to do. That's the Spirit of God working within you.

Colossians 3:1: "Therefore, if you have been raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above... [have your mind fixed on Christ] ...where Christ is sitting at *the* right hand of God. Set your affection on the things that are above, and not on the things that are on the earth" (vs 1-2). Always be focused on these two things:

1. you shall become perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect
2. seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness

Everything that we're covering here today falls under those two promises. God is doing these things with us, to us and for us. He's holding out to us an inheritance of eternal life that is going to be so magnificent that human words today cannot express the feeling, the meaning, the understanding or even the accurate description of what it's going to be like.

Paul says that we're 'looking through a glass darkly.' True, absolutely!

Verse 3: "For you have died... [we've covered this already, when you're buried in the watery grave of baptism, you died] ...and your life has been hid together with Christ in God. When Christ, *Who is* our life, is manifested, then you also shall be manifested with Him in glory" (vs 3-4).

What's that going to be like as a spirit being? Think of that! That's going to be incredible! Absolutely dumfounding! Amazing!

Verse 5: "Therefore... [here's what we need to do]: ...put to death your members, which *are* on earth: sexual immorality, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desires, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

How about that! That's the 'washing, the cleansing of the mind. Everything that Paul says here are tools or actions and part of the 'washing of the water by the Word'; working in our mind to bring us to that perfection.

Verse 6: "Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, among whom you also once walked, when you were living in these things. But now, you should also put off all *these* things: wrath, indignation, malice, blasphemy, *and* foul language from your mouth" (vs 6-8). Human nature is still there and still after us.

Note sermons:

- *Special Service #1 Overview of Romans 1-6*
- *Special Service #2 Romans 7 & 8—Meaning of "Law"*

Verse 9: "Do not lie to one another, *seeing that* you have put off the old man together with his deeds, and have put on the new man..." (vs 9-10). There it is, *put out, put on, put off, put in!*

"...who *is* being **renewed** in knowledge according to *the* image of Him Who created him" (v 10). There is no discrimination with God for those who are Christians working with God and His Spirit to attain to this inheritance.

Verse 11: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian *nor* Scythian, slave *nor* free; but Christ *is* all things, and in all. **Put on** then, as *the* elect of God, Holy and beloved, deep inner affections, kindness, humility, meekness *and* long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so also you *should forgive*" (vs 11-13).

All of those are the things of **putting out** the spiritual leaven from our lives.

Verse 14: "And **above all these things put on love**... [note: 1-Cor. 13, the love chapter] ...which is *the* bond of perfection."

Are we not to be perfected in Christ? Is that not the whole purpose of those who are teaching—ministers, elders—and studying and praying? *All of that for the perfecting of the saints!* So, it's to build in love, build in understanding.

The reason you have troubles and problems to overcome is so you can really appreciate the love of God, how great it is and how marvelous it is. Then two things that leads to that perfection:

Verse 15: "And ^[#1]**let the peace of God rule in your hearts**... [through the Spirit of God; it doesn't say to let the ministers rule over you] ...to which you were called into one body, and be

thankful. ^[#2]**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. And *in* everything—whatever you do in word or in deed—*do* all in *the* name of *the* Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and *the* Father by Him" (vs 15-17).

Let's see how this is done, and how we live, think and all of these things together. Speaking of Christ Who gave Himself for the Church:

Ephesians 5:26: "So that He might sanctify it... [make the Church Holy] ...having cleansed *it* with **the washing of the water by the Word**." Think about this for a minute. Think about how this is done.

- "...washing of the water..."—the water is the Holy Spirit in our mind, changing our mind, revealing the sins to us so that we can repent of it
- "...by the Word"—this is why prayer and study, *prayer and study, prayer and study!*

"...with the washing of the water by the Word."

- You know the Word of God
- you understand the Word of God
- you live by the Word of God
- you think by the Word of God

We will see how we are to do this. This can't be done with the carnal mind, because this is a spiritual operation. It's not a physical operation to 'pull yourself up by your bootstraps'; to look at yourself in the mirror as some 'help yourself, make yourself better' as people do, and talk to yourself in the mirror and tell yourself how good you are, how right you are and that you yourself are worth what you are because you are who you are!

All of that is separate from God! Paul writes and explains it. What I just did there is explaining *trying to be better in the flesh through the flesh*, carnal. You can't be better through the flesh, in the flesh, though you may have some change of behavior, you haven't been renewed in the mind!

2-Corinthians 10:3: "For although we walk in *the* flesh, **we do not war according to the flesh**." What is the war? *Overcoming the world, Satan and the self!* *The three 'S_{es}': Satan, society and self!*

Verse 4: "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds." What does that mean? What is the strongest hold that every human being has? *IFMA—Independent free moral agency!* Once a person makes up his/her mind and will not repent, it

is a stronghold.

God wants that stronghold converted to a stronghold:

- of faith
- of love
- Of Truth
- of self-control
- of kindness
- of goodness
- of meekness

All fruits of the Holy Spirit! Here's how it works:

Verse 5: "Casting down *vain* imaginations..." In other words, when a thought comes into your mind that is not right, you immediately right there and then quietly in your mind—wherever you are—ask God to expel it! You use the Spirit of God to get rid of it! **God will!** That's how your mind is renewed!

"...and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God..." (v 5). Everything contrary to the Word of God, every way that human beings are without the Spirit of God; this is the battle we have.

"...and bringing into captivity... [control] ...every thought... [our spiritual warfare in our mind] ...into the obedience of Christ" (vs 5)—Who never sinned!

He said that He always did the will of His Father, Who sent Him! "...**bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ.**"

Verse 6: "And having a readiness to avenge all disobedience, whenever your obedience has been fulfilled." **That's the whole purpose of the Feast of Unleavened Bread!**

Put out the sin, put in the righteousness. God gives you the strength and gives you the Spirit. You must do the work:

- spiritually understanding
- having your thoughts, your heart and mind fixed on Christ
- realizing that it is a battle
- understanding that it is a struggle
- realizing that God has given us the sufficient tools to overcome

and

- He is there to help us
- He is there to guide us
- His Word is there to comfort us

All of this together is the reason we keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread!

Have a great and wonderful Feast, and all during this week, extra prayer, extra study, extra understanding on how you can grow and change and overcome.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Exodus 23:13-15
- 2) Exodus 34:17-21
- 3) Leviticus 23:1-8
- 4) 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 6-8
- 5) Hebrews 12:1-2
- 6) Psalm 57:1-3, 5-11
- 7) Hebrews 12:2-4
- 8) Romans 12:1-2
- 9) Ephesians 4:11-18
- 10) Acts 26:14-18
- 11) Ephesians 4:17-23, 22
- 12) Jeremiah 17:9
- 13) Ephesians 4:23-24
- 14) Ephesians 2:10
- 15) Ephesians 4:24-32
- 16) Ephesians 5:1-4, 6-11
- 17) Colossians 3:1-17
- 18) Ephesians 5:26
- 19) 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Malachi 1
- Deuteronomy 16
- 2 Corinthians 13
- Hebrews 11
- Galatians 5
- Romans 11
- 1 Corinthians 13

Also referenced:

Sermons:

- *Passover Offering & Deuteronomy 16*
- *Deuteronomy 16 (Bible Study)*
- *Deuteronomy 16 Exposed*
- *Sabbath Before Passover—2018*
- *Special Service #1 Overview of Romans 1-6*
- *Special Service #2 Romans 7 & 8—Meaning of "Law"*

Sermon Series:

- *Epistle of First Corinthians*
- *Epistle of Second Corinthians (in progress)*
- *God the Father was Not the God of the Old Testament*

FRC: bo

Spring Holy Days—2018
1st Day of Unleavened Bread
How Your Mind is Renewed!

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