

## Unleavened Bread And Pentecost

### Understanding Unleavened Bread and Pentecost

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This sermon on this day of Pentecost is going to begin, at least chronologically, during the Days of Unleavened Bread because there is a misunderstanding that needs to be clarified that has very much to do with whether or not we are going to be using God's Holy Spirit in the way that we should. I want to clarify this because all of our time in the church we have held firmly to the belief that the Days of Unleavened Bread represent our coming out of sin and that is why we eat unleavened bread. That is true, but it is not completely accurate. There is another thing that I want to fill in here, so that we are able to see a little bit more clearly the whole story, because there is much to this story that I feel is being left out and it feeds right into the day of Pentecost.

This involves something that God says directly about the Days of Unleavened Bread. This first came to mine and Evelyn's minds during the time that we were studying the Wavesheaf issue. Mostly it came to her mind and as she kept talking to me, I resisted really picking up on it but she had an element of truth there that was working away at the edge of my mind, and the result is this sermon. We got on to this because, as I mentioned in the *Forerunner* article, the WCG's argument is based almost entirely on the symbolism of coming out of sin.

But the eating of unleavened bread is not directly related to coming out of sin, there is something quite different. The eating of unleavened bread is intended by God to serve as a reminder of something that is very important to our salvation.

Let us turn to Exodus 13, and we will read the reason why God says unleavened bread should be eaten.

**Exodus 13:3** And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day [What day is it? It is the first day of Unleavened Bread.] in which

you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; [or as it literally says in the Hebrew, "out of the slave house"] for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten."

This is the first mention of eating unleavened bread in context with the events of the day. It is not the first time that unleavened bread is mentioned in context of the days itself—that is, the Feast—because that first appears in Exodus 12. Here we find it in the context of the events of the day and Moses is inspired to write down that we are to eat unleavened bread because of what the Lord did.

**Exodus 13:4-9** On this day you are going out, in the month Abib. And it shall be, when the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters. And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, 'This is done because of what the Lord did for me when I came up from Egypt.' It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the Lord's law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt.

I cannot say it any more convincingly than God did right there. We eat unleavened bread because of something the Lord did. Not because we came out of sin, but because of something God did. God released us from our bondage. That is going to be the theme of most of this sermon. Whether or not we understand that is going to determine a great deal about whether we are going to use His Holy Spirit in the right manner. We have to get the horse before the cart. In this case, the horse is God, it is God who did the work, it is God who got us out. The eating of unleavened bread is a memorial of that.

We will feed into this other things that have to do with coming out of sin and so I want to reassure you that there is a direct connection between the eating of unleavened bread and coming out of sin, but that is not the context in which it first appears. It first appears when it is introduced as being done because of what God did. Coming out of sin is something we do. The eating of unleavened bread in its first connection is something that is connected with what God does, not what we do, the eating of it is a memorial of that. We will see this develop as we go on.

The keeping of the Days 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 did or has done to bring us out. Please, as we go through this analogy, keep feeding yourself into this as well because He made them go through the literal steps and we learn the spiritual lesson from it. We go through the steps spiritually, they went through the steps physically. We are going to see as we go along here how much they actually did in coming out of Egypt and, by comparison, we then see how much we do when we come out of spiritual Egypt. You are going to see that we do not do very much. It is God who frees us and the unleavened bread serves as a reminder of that.

The Days of Unleavened Bread is about overcoming; however, it is primarily about God overcoming Satan, overcoming the world, and sin—it is not so much about us doing it. So the Days of Unleavened Bread and eating unleavened bread must be seen first of all in this context in order that we have a right foundation for rightly observing that festival.

As we go through this analogy, always keep this at the forefront of your mind: how much did the Israelites have to do? Transfer that to yourself: how much did you have to do in coming out of the world.

As we look back, the extent of their participation was to believe that God was working through Moses enough to prepare the lamb, keep Passover, stay in their homes overnight, gather in Rameses the next day, and then walk out whenever the signal was given for them to march.

How much overcoming did they do? How much overcoming of the world, how much overcoming of Satan, how much overcoming of sin did they have

to do to do those things? When they left Egypt, did they leave sin? The answer to that is obviously no. When they got out in the wilderness it was one sin right after another, was it not? No, they did not leave sin. What they did was leave the place of their bondage. Egypt is not a symbol of sin; Egypt is a symbol of the world.

We have long understood that the Exodus is an analogy of a person's conversion, especially the earliest stages of the conversion, so we are going to review this analogy as we lead into the day of Pentecost. We will begin this in Psalm 19.

**Psalm 19:1-4** The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line [or their direction] has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

David here is personifying aspects of God's creation, especially those things that appear in the heavens. The reason that he did that and the reason that I am drawing upon this is because all of us, before conversion, have had some concept of God. Now for some of us the concept was very fervently believed and practiced. We were religious folk, and we practiced that religion. We did it very fervently. We were sincere in what we did. But for most of us, the concept of God was vague, it was maybe even agnostic, like, "What do I know?" or "I do not know anything for sure," and for some their concept of God was atheistic, that there is no God. But most of the time, our concept of God is something that is drawn from the creation. That is what David is saying here.

The creation gives people a concept, a picture, an idea that there is a God. They may be attracted by the beauty that they see in whatever God made. They may be attracted by the vastness. They may be attracted by all of the combinations of factors that they are able to see, but here is an eloquence to creation. In the combination of its vastness, of its power, of its beauty, of its complexity, of its simplicity, that leads a person to think that there is more to life than me. There is more to life than that I should just live out a span of time and then die.

These kinds of concepts that we draw from the creation actually help to lead a person to feel a sense of immortality. We find that even in God's Word where Solomon says that God has put eternity into our hearts. That is there because we get ideas that there is a Creator God. That is what David is expressing here, that their line, their direction, their voice has gone all over the creation and so everybody has a witness that there is something awesome that is behind what they are able to see and so they may call it God, they even call it Baal. They may call it the Lord, the first cause; they might come up with all kinds of names.

I want to shift gears and go back to the Israelites again in thought. They were four generations in their captivity, a total of over 400 years that they were there. They had lost much of the memory of their heritage. I do not mean that they lost it all, but those people had never lost, at least some idea, some conception, of God, a god and I do not mean that it was the true God at all, but they had a concept of God, even as we have concepts of God before God begins working with us. That is why they in their misery, in their captivity, in their slavery, that they begin to cry out to God. Hold that thought in your mind because they were doing the only thing really that they could do, in their kind of slavery and being part of a police state, they were helpless and the only thing that they could do was call out to their concept of God. So, they were groaning under the burden of everyday life without even knowing that God was already beginning to work in their behalf.

**Exodus 2:23-25** Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them.

A cursory reading of that series of verses might give one the impression that God was just sitting there on His throne, twiddling His fingers and waiting for Israel to do something. But God had already begun to move. As a matter of fact, it was He who ensured that Moses would live through the slaughter of the children; it was He who directed the boat into the hands of the

Pharaoh's daughter. It was He who ensured that Moses would have an upbringing and receive the benefit of a tremendous education, the best kind of secular education that could be given to a person at that time. It was He who began to put thoughts in Moses' mind that maybe indeed he might be the deliverer. It was He who spared Moses' life whenever the Pharaoh could have maybe taken it. It was He who led Moses to flee the land. It was He who led Moses out into the wilderness. It was He who led Moses to the family of Jethro and undoubtedly brought Moses into that family so that he would have the time, the opportunity, to continue the preparation that God was making for this man to lead His people.

Who initiated this? Did the children of Israel initiate it? No! We find that all the way back in the book of Genesis. God had already prophesied that about 400 years later He would move to bring the children of Abraham out of a captivity that He also arranged.

Is there any possibility that God, who changes not, the God who sets patterns so that we will be able to understand—is there any possibility that He was ensuring, long before even you were born, that there was going to be a church at the end time and that He was going to prepare somebody and that He was going to use this person through whom He would get the doctrines that the people needed at the end time, so that they could be part of that church? You know very well that principle is true.

How did Israel get out of Egypt? They did not get out because of any rebellion, any revolution, any intelligence, any negotiations. They got out because God wanted them out. It was part of His purpose. In Exodus 3:7, God revealed Himself again to Moses.

**Exodus 3:7-10** And the Lord said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. "So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. "Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with

which the Egyptians oppress them. "Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

Did you notice something there? God is already calling them, "**My people.**" What had they done? Had they pledged themselves to God? Had they repented? They had not done a thing yet, and God is already calling them "**Mine.**"

Does He have a feeling of possessiveness toward those that He is going to deal with in terms of salvation? Oh you better believe it! "They are Mine!" What is He going to do for "Mine?" Who is going to hold back the hand of God? Nobody is, and that is the story. Israel got out because God set His mind to do it and He said, "I have chosen them and they are Mine" and they have not done a thing yet. In fact, it was going to be weeks before they even knew that Moses existed anymore than just what their friends had told them about what occurred 40 years before.

There is no indication that Moses had any contact with anybody back in Egypt during those 40 years. He was not sending letters back every couple of weeks saying, "Get ready—I am just about ready now." No, he was not doing that. He was out there learning about what it is like to be a pastor, tending sheep, because he was going to pastor a whole nation of millions of people. So he was getting the right idea, he was getting his attitude straightened out, and God sent him to school to learn how to do that so that he would be prepared. And it was really the school of hard knocks for somebody who was reared in a cushy place, in a cushy environment, like Moses had been. I am sure that there was a great deal of pride, vanity, cockiness, to get out of that man where God could use him in the right way.

So, the salvation of Israel was already underway. Who is in charge? Who does the Bible say is in charge? Who is it that the Bible is showing as the one who has the answers to their problems? Who is the one who took the initiative? Who is the one who is doing the leading? Who is the one who is doing the providing? Even to this point, we can already see that it is God who is doing all those things.

By the time that they even begin to realize that God is involved, we are going to find that all they were going to have to do is to agree with what He wanted them to do. When they heard, this is what they heard:

**Exodus 4:29-31** Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

There is a clarification in Hebrews 4:2 which says that they heard the gospel as it applied to them; it was good news. They were going to be given their freedom and they were going to be taken to the land of their father Abraham and that was going to be their land. When they heard it, all they had to do at this time was to give mental assent they believed. How much overcoming have they done? God has already set His mind He is going to save them and all they have to do to this point is to agree.

What they heard was good news—it was fantastic good news—until Pharaoh turned up the heat and their joy of hearing the good news turned to affliction and persecution. This was part of God's purpose, too, because what they were going through—the combination of believing and then receiving somewhat of a test—was beginning to put a difference between Israel and Egypt. A sanctification, a setting apart, was beginning to take place. In this case, in this part of the process, it was just as difficult for the Israelites as it was for the Egyptians. In fact, more difficult for Israel at this point than it was for the Egyptians, and in the Israelites' estimation, it was greater than they could bear. This difference continues to be intensified during the plagues.

**Exodus 6:2-8** And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the Lord. "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name Lord I was not known to them. "I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which 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. "Therefore say to the children of Israel. [Now listen carefully!] 'I am the Lord; *I* will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, *I* will rescue you from their bondage, and *I* will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. ' *I* will take you as My people, and *I* will be your God. Then you shall know that *I* am the Lord your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 'And *I* will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and *I* will give it to you as a heritage: I am the Lord.'"

Does that make it clear or what? That is what God says He is going to do. This has a direct connection with why we eat unleavened bread. "I, I, I, I" all uttered by God about what He is going to be doing. Do you know what? They did not agree because already the persecution that they had received just a little bit earlier had put the fear into them. So what is God going to have to do?

Now He could have thrown up His hands, but since He said He was going to do this, He had already promised it to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God does not go back on His word, so "I am going to do it anyway, even though they do not agree." So God, in His mercy, began to work in a way that He would bring them into an agreement with what He wanted to do. He did not give up, even though they were resisting Him pretty badly at this time.

God had set His mind. Do you think that God's mind is made up that He is going to save you? You better believe it. Nobody can resist Him! He is going to save you! But He is not going to save us until we come to the place where we really know, and we know that we know, that *we* did not do it. As hard as we might think it is, the part that we have to do, which is so tiny in comparison to what God does, it is very important that we understand that even that part He gave us the power to do it! That is what Pentecost is about.

We have to come to understand that God is our Savior. Brethren, all we have to do is cooperate! When we cooperate with His will, it works! His way of life works and what He is creating in us is created. But we see here, Israel

dragging their heels. You and I drag our heels from time to time too and we fight against Him.

In this next verse we are coming to the fourth plague.

**Exodus 8:22** "And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the land.

The difference at this point between them and the Egyptians became very pronounced, helping them to understand that God indeed was working for them. You see God is even working to make sure that we have the faith. Everything is God-supplied, except our decision and even in the decision we make, He keeps poking us in the ribs, shoving us in the back, go this way, go this way. He does not give up easily once He sets his mind to do something.

The Israelites to this point have been required to make few decisions concerning their salvation and yet everything really was proceeding along very nicely. Mostly though, they were doing little except watching what was happening. They were almost like observers to a stage play, even though their lives had been dramatically affected, they had done little to effect their freedom. To this point, God had done virtually everything but as the 10<sup>th</sup> plague approached, they were finally going to have to decide whether they were going to be active participants in God's purpose.

**Exodus 12:2** "This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.

**Exodus 12:5-7** Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.

When they did this, it marked their first real involvement, other than mentally assenting to what God was doing. In the analogy, this was

tantamount to accepting the blood of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and it symbolizes the protection from death through a forgiveness supplied by God Himself. Now we know what the reality of that was, but repentance is not symbolized in this analogy until Israel left Egypt. But does Egypt represent sin? Only indirectly. Now remember I said earlier, Egypt represents the place of our bondage, it is the place or state in which we commit our sins but sin is something in this analogy that we leave behind when we accept the blood of Jesus Christ. What did Israel leave behind in Egypt that represents sin?

Remember that each Israelite who came out of Egypt represented over 400 years of Israel being in Egypt. Though they were slaves in Egypt, they were living in the land that is described in Genesis 47, by Pharaoh, as being the best land in the nation of Egypt. We know from the Exodus account in chapter 12, that they had houses because they were told to remain in their houses overnight. So they had houses and those homes had furnishings and I think that just like any other family that lives at any other time, they had generations of family heirlooms.

I do not mean to give the impression that these people were wealthy; I do not mean that at all. But they did have all of the trappings of home, and they had heirlooms that belonged to great grandma or great grandfather, or maybe something that had been handed down in the family of Levi all the way down to Moses' family, because again, each of those families represented hundreds of years of collecting things. Now the time comes to leave Egypt. If you were in that kind of situation, what would you choose to take and what would you choose to leave behind?

You have hundreds of possessions. In our case, we have houses, we have automobiles, we have carpeting, we have furniture, we have pots and pans, pictures on the walls, we have all kinds of little mementos, figurines, statuary, how much clothing do we have, all kinds of things. What the children of Israel left behind—it really does not matter what it was—represented sin; because when we accept the blood of Jesus Christ and we repent. We are choosing at that point to leave things behind that are going to hold us back on this journey.

They literally only took with them what they could carry. Some of them may have had some carts, it is certainly understandable that some may have had that, but they did not do any sacrificing in the wilderness because they had very little, because they did not have enough animals to sacrifice.

What they left behind, all of that excess baggage, that is what represents sin. You can connect this to Hebrews 12:1, where Paul says to get rid of that sin that does so easily beset you, so that you can run the race, and that is what these people did. They left behind anything that was going to hold them back from reaching the Promised Land. That is what represents sin.

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

Now there are three things here that God proposed to Moses that He was going to do. (1) He was going to free His people from the hand of the Egyptians, (2) He was going to bring them out of the land of Egypt, and (3) He is going to bring them into the land of promise.

The next thing we are going to do is to look to see when God accomplished these things.

**Exodus 12:31-33** Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise, go out 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 urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead."

Proposal number one was beginning to be accomplished; they were being set free by the very word of their captors. Their taskmasters were saying, "Get out of here."

**Exodus 12:40-42** Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night of solemn observance to the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of the Lord, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations.

So at nightfall, at the beginning of the Days of Unleavened Bread, they went out.

**Exodus 12:51** And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the Lord brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt according to their armies.

Exodus 13:3 says virtually the same thing.

So proposal number two is being accomplished on the first day of Unleavened Bread. He not only freed them from the hand of the Egyptians, He brought them out on the very first day of Unleavened Bread.

A little review: how much has Israel done so far? Not much, not much at all. They came out of the literal state of Egypt in one day, not seven. One day they were out of Egypt, but they were still within the territory that was under the sovereignty of Egypt, much the same way that we might consider the metropolitan area of a city. They were out of Egypt at the very beginning and at this point, it is almost entirely a work of God.

Egypt is not a picture of sin or a symbol of sin but of the world. It is the place—it is the culture—in which sin is committed. Once they begin their journey out of Egypt, they were no longer of the world even though they were still in the world. They were literally there. It was not when they accepted Christ, that is, killed the lamb, that they came out of the world, but when they actually began moving away from the place of their bondage.

How is this shown?

**Exodus 13:17-22** Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt." So God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you." So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.

Now let us review. What were they doing now? What does this last section show? They were following God. You are not of the world once you begin following God. In other words, you are not being led about and influenced by the world, by the culture, by the system in which you live. Therefore you are not of the world, and what the Israelites had to do was to begin to follow God. God no longer considered them to be in Egypt—no longer part of the world.

First of all, they sacrificed the lamb, then they forsook much—perhaps the vast majority of their belongings—then they started on their journey with their eyes fastened on the pillar of fire because it was at night and in the daytime by the cloud. This was then picturing them no longer following the world, but they were now obedient to God.

God has to this point done virtually everything, but our part in this is to be obedient in following His lead. That is what the analogy teaches us. It is this combination: all that God has done plus our willingness to actually follow His lead that brings us out of the world, and as we will see, out of sin as well.

God very clearly says that *He* brought us out, and you can tell by the Exodus story that Israel would never have left had God not forcibly thrust them out because that is what it later on says. He thrust them out. Do we get the point? This is what happens to you and me.

What about the unleavened bread? During our lives in the church, we have been taught that Egypt was a type of sin and that eating unleavened bread pictures coming out of sin. I have been as guilty of this as anybody in the church in teaching this and it is not totally wrong but neither is it entirely accurate either.

First of all, Egypt is a type of this world, not sin, and God does not picture Israel coming out of sin but rather coming out of Egypt. What He does picture Israel doing is following Him. That is what is important in relation to unleavened bread. Think about this. Why did they not take leavened bread with them?

There were two reasons. First of all it would have taken too long, under the circumstances, and when God gets ready to do something, we better be ready to do it fast. You do not delay to follow God. The second reason is this. Leavened bread is very bulky. They did not have room to be carrying all kinds of loaves of bread. Rather, all they had to do was either transport flat loaves or they took the sourdough with them, one or the other. But it is my understanding that what they did was they took the flat unleavened loaves with them because now they were going to be in the Days of Unleavened Bread, they did not know that but that is what they did. So He literally then made them do that.

Leavened bread was something that had to be left behind, and this is where we have been less than accurate in the past. Leaven is a type of sin; let us not depart from that. That is a true teaching. Leaven is a type of sin. (Exodus 13: 3, 6-10).

Do attach those thoughts together with the whole Exodus picture where God makes it very clear that we eat unleavened bread because of what He did,

especially those things that happened on the first day of Unleavened Bread. There were two factors there. Number one is what God did to bring them out and the second factor is what Israel did to get out.

This is the context in which we are to understand the eating of unleavened bread and the keeping of the Days of Unleavened Bread. They are kept because of what God did to spring them free and He did virtually everything. What Israel did was to follow God's lead. I just told you why you eat unleavened bread. It is a symbol of following God's lead. That is what Israel did in the analogy and what they did was they simply walked away. They followed the pillar of fire and they followed the cloud.

Let us change the terminology just a bit. What is it that one is doing whenever one follows God's lead? They are obeying God! Let us change the terminology *again*. If you follow God's lead, if you do what He does, and in this case, what He was doing was what? He was leaving Egypt, He was at the head of the pack, they were following Him and so when they followed Him, they were obeying Him and what is obedience in another word? They were doing righteousness.

If a person follows God, if a person does righteousness, that person will depart from sin and they will depart from sin simply because they are doing what is right, they are following God. Now the emphasis in eating unleavened bread is not coming out of something, but rather doing what is right.

I hope you are getting the picture here. You might recall 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 always did what was right. There is a contrast there between what is positive and negative. Two different approaches and that is what the issue is here.

You might recall that in the not too distant past, we were taught that one did not have to eat unleavened bread everyday during the Feast, that just if one chose to eat bread at all, it should be unleavened. Sometimes I like to take things to an extreme because it gives me a picture. What if I decided that I did not want to eat unleavened bread seven days during the Days of

Unleavened Bread? Would I have been keeping God's command? God said, "you shall eat it seven days." That is a command. "You shall eat it seven days." Not, "you shall eat it only if you choose to eat it." He said, "No, you shall eat it seven days".

Is there good reason for doing that? There is a very good reason for doing that! Is there anytime in your life as a Christian that God gives you the option whether you are to follow the way of righteousness or not? We are always under command from Him to follow Him—to do righteousness. We can choose not to do it but it is always His command that we follow Him, that we follow His son, that we always follow righteousness.

The Days of Unleavened Bread are a concentrated focus on the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God in bringing us out, all He does in order to bring us out, and then what we do, which is merely to follow the way of righteousness. It is God's command, "You shall do righteousness always."

We have the option of setting our will, but God is not going to say to you, "Don't do it if you don't want to." That is why we have to eat it seven days because it fits what we are to do in relation to God all the time. We are always to walk in the way of righteousness.

**I Corinthians 5:8** Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Unleavened bread represents sincerity, wholeheartedness, pureness. That is what the word "sincere" means in the Greek. It means, "without wax." It is talking about the honey that is brought out of the comb has no wax in it, it is completely clear, not a flaw, it is not defiled in any way, it is pure. That unleavened bread represents the pure Word of God.

We can choose not to feed on, not to follow, the pure Word of God. But is God ever going to say to you and me, "Well, do it whether you want to or not, or do not do it if you do not feel like it." No, He said, "You *shall* do it." The approach is always positive. "You *shall* do it" because that is in the best interest of His purpose, it is in the best interest of His way, it is in your best interest as well. The Days of Unleavened Bread picture what God does,

which is almost everything, and the little that the Israelites did, which was simply to follow God in righteousness. Now there is the picture for you and me.

From the time that God brings us out of the world, from the time that we accept the stripes and the blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, God expects us to walk away from this world and to follow His lead. Paul said, "Follow me as I follow Christ." We are always to follow Christ. Is Christ ever going to lead us in a way that has nothing to do with the purpose of God that He is working out? No, it is always going to be in the way of truth. He said himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He embodied it. It is good to understand this.

Now what happens when we follow the pure Word of God? The same thing happens spiritually as happened to the children of Israel when they walked out of Egypt. Back in John 17:17, "Sanctify them by your truth, your Word is truth." What takes place when one follows the Word of God? What takes place when one does righteousness?

He begins to be separated away. A sanctification takes place. On the one hand, he is separated from the place of bondage to the world, the one he is in bondage to, Satan, and of course from sin as well. A separation takes place in areas that sometimes are painful, emotionally, because literally we begin to be separated from loved ones, maybe family. I do not mean literally in the sense of being moved to a different county or a different state or a different nation. I am talking about we no longer think in the same parameters any longer and the relationship is very severely disturbed. Sometimes in the case of a marriage, the relationship is disturbed so badly that it ends in divorce, but you see, a separation is taking place.

It is good to understand that heresy is not the only thing that separates. Truth separates. The Bible uses a nicer word, sanctification, in terms of the separation that truth causes. It is sanctification unto holiness. It is sanctification, it is setting apart, it is being separated to being in the image of God because we will never be in His image unless we follow Him, unless we go in the way of righteousness and we have to do that daily.

We are never excused by God to depart from following Him from doing righteousness. We can choose not to but then we are eating the leavened bread of malice and envy. He always wants us to be following His Word.

You might recall that Israel came out with a high hand, almost as though they were the victors, like they had won this big thing. They soon caught themselves and Exodus 15 shows very clearly that they did give God the credit. They did come out with a high hand, there is no doubt about that, God's Word says it.

It is very likely that when you were first converted that you also attempted to tell others about your great victory as well, about your understanding, about your feeling about what lay ahead of you as well, the Kingdom of God, eternal life, and you wanted to share your enthusiasm. And so you talked to others and they did not share your enthusiasm. In fact, they might have turned their back on you and maybe written you off completely and you did not understand why this was taking place. Exodus 13 tells you why they did not understand.

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

They did not understand, and you did not understand why they did not understand, but the reason why they did not understand is because God had not yet moved to bring them out of the same bondage that you were just in. That is expressed by John 6:44: "No one can come to Me unless the Spirit of the Father draws him."

I hope that you understand to this point that our liberty is God-given. The Exodus story leaves us with no other conclusion: the totality of what Israel had to do, was to slay the lamb, put the blood on the door, roast the lamb, eat the lamb, wait in their houses, assemble in Rameses, and then leave.

God did all the rest! It says in Exodus 13:18 that God lead them out in orderly ranks. You cannot have order unless there is a certain measure of

authority and an agreement with that authority. To this point, Israel was in harmony with God and so you can see at this point, it was not a school's-out jailbreak with everybody going his own way. There was purpose in what was being done. He had not freed them for the fun of it; He freed them in a way that was going to teach us to follow His guidance.

If we would go through the whole rest of the story, you would see this lesson. It actually ends at the Feast of Tabernacles. One of the major lessons at the Feast of Tabernacles that appears in Leviticus 23, right at the end of the chapter, was they were to learn that in all of their pilgrimage, from the land of their bondage and over into the land of inheritance, that all along the way God supplied their need. He never, ever forsook them. He took care of them, He provided for them, He fought for them, He fed them, He gave them water. Whatever it was they did, whatever it was they needed, they were learning that they could trust Him. So we see a progression from mere mental and intellectual agreement in Egypt to the place that when they go into the land they are living by faith.

Now we know that it did not work because God was not working with them for that purpose, but the lesson is there for you and me, so that you understand what God is driving at here. He wants us to live by faith and why Christ uttered that cry, "When the Son of man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" I think He will find plenty of people who believe in a god. They have a concept of God, but there is going to be very few people who really believe God to the extent that they will even come to the place where they will bet their life on it, that they trust him so much.

Mr. Armstrong wrote two booklets on faith, *What is Faith?* and *What Kind of Faith is Required for Salvation?* We have to progress from the one to the other and if we follow God's lead, if we allow Him to guide, if we do the righteousness that is following Him, He will supply and we will learn to trust Him and we will learn to live by faith and we will just give assent consciously following His way.

There is another lesson here that is supplied in verse 17. We need to notice God's care and concern in choosing the route that they would take. He did not take them in the way they expected they would go. He took them another direction and that other direction that He took them was not easy. It was a

difficult way. But, it was one by which they had every chance of success in getting to the other end (I Corinthians 10:13). We have to understand that He was not only going to take them into the land, but He was also developing them, and at the same time, He was magnifying Himself in their eyes so that their reliance on Him would grow.

If He had taken them the one way, the Promised Land was only about 250 miles away. By nature, humanly, we would think, if we were in their shoes, that is the way to go. There is a lesson there. What comes naturally is probably not the way of God. God sees all—He is overlooking everything. It is sure a lot better to let Him choose the route that He takes us.

Have you grown weary in the route that He has taken you from the time that you repented and He led you out of your Egypt? Believe me, He knows what to do in order to make sure that when we get to the other end of the road, we are going to be prepared for what He wants us to do in His Kingdom. The Master is at hand, working there to produce what He wants to produce.

We find all kinds of lessons in the Exodus. In the pilgrimage through the land we find that Israel did, from time to time, summon up faith. We find, for instance, in Hebrews 11:29 that Israel went through the Red Sea in faith. Sometimes it is hard to imagine that these people could have any faith at all, but they did from time to time. They went through the Red Sea believing. It was not merely a matter of courage that took them through there because the Egyptians were courageous as well. They went right in. But the Israelites went through by faith and the walls of water stayed there. When the Egyptians went through by means of their courage, the walls of water did not stay there. Israel went through by faith. So, from time to time they had it and they grew as they obeyed, as they went forward following Him, even though it was erratic from time to time.

We find in Exodus 14:30 that God's first objective is completely accomplished. They were completely delivered, salvation from Egypt had come, and it was entirely a gift from God.

This of course set the stage for what happened 40 to 50 days later and that was when they were at Mount Sinai and God gave the Ten Commandments there, the law, and entered into the Covenant with them.

The events of Exodus 20 have its New Testament parallel in Acts 2. Exodus 20 only foreshadowed what occurred in Acts 2. I want this lesson to be burned into our minds: that almost everything that has to do with salvation is God-supplied, God does virtually everything, and all we have to do is make the choices to follow Him. The major thing that Israel did not have was God's Spirit. Deuteronomy 29:4 says that God never gave them a heart to understand what it was that they were going through, they could not have the faith. But God went through it in order to leave you and me a very vivid lesson of what He is doing with you and me.

God gives His Spirit, the one tool that we need to ensure that God's purpose will be worked out in us.

**Luke 24:49** "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

"With power."

**Acts 1:4-5** And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father," which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Now the power is identified as the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 1:8** "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

We can add many scriptures to that. John 14:16-17 where the Holy Spirit is called the Comforter or the Strengthener. It is called the Spirit of truth. In John 16:13, it is called the Guide. In I Corinthians 2:10-12, it is very clearly stated there that God has given His Spirit in order to reveal things to you and me, so that we will not lack guidance, truth, power, understanding, and wisdom.

How much do we do, brethren? Is it enough to humble us? God says, "He resists the proud but He gives grace to the humble."

Unless we understand and are moved to act according to what God shows us in His Word, will determine whether or not we are going to use His Spirit in the right way, because we cannot allow the cart to get before the horse. All recognition, all glory, all praise, has to go to God because what He requires of us is so tiny in comparison to what He does, what He supplies, there is no comparison between the two.

Salvation is by grace. What does I Corinthians 12 teach us? What does Romans 12 teach us? All the gifts by which we function within the church within His plan, they are given by Him through His Spirit. Paul says, "What have you that you did not receive?" It is enough to humble a person once he begins to think about this and carries it about consciously within him.

He tells us that He will never leave us, that He will never forsake us, that He will supply all of our needs according to His riches and glory. He says that He will come and take up His abode within us. He tells us that the love of God will be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that is given to us. He says that He will guide us into all truth because the Spirit is given to us to function in us as though Jesus Christ Himself was with us as when He was with the apostles in the first century.

Connect this next verse to the Exodus analogy:

**Ephesians 5:1** Therefore be followers of God as dear children.

Following God is following Christ. Following Christ is following truth, because He describes Himself as being truth. Following truth is righteousness, following Christ and truth and righteousness is what sanctifies us and makes us holy and provides the witness.

Do you realize that? That is where the witness comes from—by following that process I just gave to you. In addition to that, it prepares us for the Kingdom of God.

Now it was on the day of Pentecost in AD 31 that God provided the missing link between Himself and mankind, in that He gave us the tool that we need to enable us to follow Him in spirit and truth. He gave us the guidance, the insight, or the understanding, that we might have the faith, the love, and the power to do His will.

We see, beginning in I Corinthians 15:20, a process unfolding.

**I Corinthians 15:20-24** But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. [Incidentally Christ's resurrection began the harvest that ends at Pentecost.] Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

**I Corinthians 15:27-28** For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. [Meaning the father.] Now when all things are made subject to Him, [we are following Him now] then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him [Notice this phrase:] Who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

That is a phrase that we need to think about and think about deeply. That God may be **all** and **in all**. It is almost describing as if everything that God has created is drawn into and enveloped with in Him. Do you know why? Because at that time everyone will be absolutely at one with Him.

That is what He is working out and this day celebrates the tool that He has given to you and me that we might be absolutely at one with Him.

**Romans 11:34-36** "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?" "Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?" For of Him [or from Him] and

through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever.  
Amen.

It is our responsibility to understand that the work of salvation that God is doing is primarily done by God, overwhelmingly done by Him, and that our responsibility rests in merely making the choices to follow Him, but I hope that before a long time passes that we will fully come to understand what it means, when the scripture says that, "This was the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes" (Psalm 118:23; Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:11).