

Sincerity And Truth (Part Two)

A Life of Integrity

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Between the time I graduated from Ambassador College in 1988 and when I was hired at Church of the Great God here in Charlotte (about four years), I worked for Transamerica Insurance in their Worker's Compensation division. I was a Premium Auditor for them (if you know what a Premium Auditor is). But, in worker's compensation, they figure out how you owe the insurance company by what your payrolls are. So they needed an auditor to go out to the companies and go through their books, find out how much they were paying their employees for that quarter or for that year, and then classify everybody for the jobs that they were doing and all that. So I would take all that information, send it to Transamerica, and then they would bill the companies accordingly.

But Transamerica required its Premium Auditors to take a six months' course of training at one of their major offices. It was not just accounting and auditing training—there was some of that—but they also wanted us to have a pretty good foundation in insurance in general. So I had to take courses in insurance history and insurance theory, the basics of underwriting insurance policies (just in case they someday needed an underwriter, they could pull one of the Premium Auditors for that), and the basics of claims adjusting. It was quite an intensive six-month period there where I was taking those classes. And I was also required—because I had not done it at Ambassador College and they did not have any accounting courses—to go to a local college and take some accounting. By the end of it, my brain was done. But it was very interesting.

An extensive part of the insurance theory section covered the issue of fraud because there is a lot of that going on in the insurance industry. My instructor was an older gentleman. Now, if I look back, he would probably be just a little bit older than me, but I thought he was really old at the time. He was a guy who loved to tell stories. So this section of the insurance instruction was really fun for him because he loved to tell us stories about

fraud. There were a lot of juicy stories about fraud out there because it happens all the time.

But, you know what, I tried to think and I cannot remember one of his juicy stories. It just did not stick.

But I do remember one thing that he said during this time and it was about the extent of insurance fraud in America. He claimed that if we could wipe out insurance fraud across the board (wave a magic wand, and suddenly there was no more insurance fraud!), our insurance premiums would drop by at least one-fourth and probably a lot higher than that. Now I cannot verify this but it seems valid, as we will see as we go through this introduction.

Fraud is a wicked mixture of deceit, cheating, greed, and theft. It is all of those things rolled into one. Otherwise we call it graft or extortion. We call it a scam or a hoax, swindle, blackmail, misrepresentation, chicanery, con, double dealing, cooking the books, hustle, racket, shakedown, sham, sting, and flimflam among a lot of other words that I could have added to this list. We have so many words for this sin, this crime of fraud, because we have come up with so many different ways to cheat our neighbor. So we have all these words to describe specific aspects of fraud.

A paper by the Coalition Against Insurance Fraud (They have called this paper a very dull name: 'Measuring Fraud') gives some idea of the extent of insurance fraud, through statistics. These statistics have been gathered by various bureaus, companies, and governmental agencies.

1. The Coalition Against Insurance Fraud, which itself publishes annual estimates for claims fraud in four areas of insurance (auto insurance, homeowner's insurance, health insurance, and business insurance), estimates that US fraud is about \$80 billion per year.
2. The National Insurance Crime Bureau estimates that insurance fraud totals \$18 billion to \$20 billion. But their statistics cover only property casualty insurance.

3. Conning and Company published a landmark study on insurance fraud in 1996 (so these figures are now 20 years old) estimates claims fraud at \$120 billion. They have based these on other estimates.
4. The US Government Accounting Office (GAO) published a 1992 study (so now we are going even further back) that estimated fraud and abuse in Medicare and Medicaid (just that specific sector) reached as much as \$100 billion annually.
5. Insurance Research Council conducted a closed claims study in 1995 of automobile bodily injury claims (this is when you go out, you get in a wreck, somebody gets hurt, and so they have a claim for their medical bills). This study concluded that 36 percent of claims had signs of fraud and 18 percent of them were suspected of being actually fraudulent, but only one in five were thought to be planned as a staged or a caused accident. The rest of the fraud was somebody trying to fool the insurance company into giving them more than they actually deserved.
6. Automobile Insurers Bureau of Massachusetts conducted the original closed claim study in 1991 and found that 11 percent of auto bodily injury liability claims were suspected of fraud, and an additional 21 percent judged to be build-up claims. Now you probably do not know what build-up claims are. What they mean is somebody has a problem (let us say somebody has an automobile and they crash) and what they do is they try to inflate the amount of money that they get back from the insurance company by building up the accident to be more than it was, or that their injuries were more than they were. So they are inflated claims. They ask for more money than actually is needed to cover the cost of their problems.
7. Rand Corporation (you have probably heard of them) conducted a study of the Insurance Research Council data of bodily injury liability and no-fault claims, and they concluded, after all this time, that about 28 percent of all claims submitted by auto accident victims are exaggerated for the purpose of collecting higher insurance payments.

8. Finally, the U.S. chamber of commerce reported that 25 percent of all workers' compensation claims are fraudulent. Somebody really does not have that back problem or they really could work if they really wanted to, but they want the money instead.

When examined by the public, the media, and the government, these figures tend to fail to definitively measure how large the fraud problem really is. The fraud problem is much higher, much worse than what I have said here. Even some of those figures of \$120 billion a year and such are low. It is that much graft and such that is going through just this one small sector of our economy. Of course, this does not even tackle such things as identity theft and data breaches that take information so that people can get money. Our technology today, especially through the Internet, has made it quite a bit easier for a lot of these people to commit fraud.

In addition, 24 percent of Americans say it is actually acceptable (it is fine practice) to pad an insurance claim to make up for the deductible that you had to pay, and 18 percent also believe it is okay to pad a claim to make up for the premiums that you pay. And 76 percent (that is three-quarters of the respondents in this poll) say that they are more likely to commit insurance fraud during an economic downturn. So because they are not making quite the money that they normally would have made in good times, they are going to take it from the insurance company. So fraud increases dramatically during hard times. Think about it!

If you have ever watched the movie 'Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?' there are a couple of scenes in there of fraudulent things happening (of course, bank robberies and such), but that takes place during the Depression. I do not know if you remember, John Goodman's character was a Bible salesman and he kept saying there is a lot of money to be made in the Word of God. But then you find out, a few minutes later, that he was bilking people out of their money and hitting them on the head and running away with it. So that is just the way it is when you get into these economic downturns—people are trying to get money by hook or by crook.

I hope it illustrates what I meant last week when I said that the status quo in America is a fraud and 90 percent of everything is garbage. This is only a snapshot of one of the many major business sectors (just insurance) in the

nation. We have not even looked into fraud in construction, manufacturing, service industries, banking, retail, travel, sports, and entertainment. We mentioned religion a little bit; there is a lot of fraud in religion. The tax system—talk about people not paying their taxes or cheating the taxman out of money. The welfare system is full of fraud. The justice system. And on and on it goes. Every one of the sectors of this economy that man has touched (they have touched them all) has some measure of fraud. It is no wonder that God will have to destroy all of society—all of our culture—pretty much, when He comes back, because there is nothing good left to salvage.

Turn back with me to Revelation 18. We will see what it says here about Babylon. Because this is the system. Babylon the Great is the system that contains all this fraud. And God says, by the time we get to this point, He will have had it up to here.

Revelation 18:1-8 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a habitation of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations [all of them!] have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.” And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues [If you meddle with this system—if you find yourself becoming more and more involved in this system and become a part of this system—then it says you are going to get what this system gets.]. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix for her double. In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no

widow, and will not see sorrow.’ Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.”

Just drop down to verse 21.

Revelation 18:21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.”

God is going to wipe that society—that way of living—off the face of the earth. There is nothing in it to salvage. By this time it is not ‘90 percent of everything is garbage,’ by this time it is ‘100 percent is garbage,’ and He is just going to annihilate it and totally destroy it because it contains nothing good. In times like these, when the Babylonian system is rising to a climax (or, maybe actually you should it turn around and say, falling into the nadir of its way of life), we need something real and true to hold on to.

God has graciously provided a stable, never-disappointing, always-true anchor. And that Anchor is His Son. He is the One that is holding us in some measure of stability through His Word. And in Part One (in the sermon I gave last Sabbath), we saw that this idea—the Word of God, Christ Himself—is symbolized by unleavened bread, and this feast instructs us to eat unleavened bread seven days. Paul calls it, as we saw, the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth in I Corinthians 5:8, where actually we are going to start after we look at this holy day, just to touch bases again.

So first let us go to Leviticus 23. What we will see here, in the recitation of the holy days, this unleavened bread is very concise. It just has the bare essentials of what this day is all about. It gives a lot more ink to the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Firstfruits, and the Feast of Tabernacles. But here we just get a summary, we could say.

Leviticus 23:6-8 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. But you shall

offer an offering made by fire to the Lord for seven days. The seventh day [which is today] shall be a holy convocation [that is what we are doing]; you shall do no customary work on it.

Like I said, very bare bones here. Not very much added that we did not already know from Exodus chapters 12 and 13, which have much longer instructions on what we are supposed to do during the Days of Unleavened Bread. We have here when it is (it is almost like a newspaper story), what is it called (that is ‘What is its name?’), which days are holy convocations (and no customary work is to be done on those holy convocation days), a sacrifice is to be made. And it does give us the fundamental concept or command “Seven days you must eat unleavened bread.” That is it. It is very matter of fact. Bam bam...you have your information. That is what you need to know. So this has to suffice for us today because there is a lot more to say.

But I wanted to come here because I want to pick up this one very important command—that we *should* eat unleavened bread. In the way that it is said in this particular passage, in these three verses, it stands out as very forceful and unambiguous in the summary. Look at what it says, the wording is very clear: “Seven days you *must* eat unleavened bread.” Seven words that are very plain in their meaning. And then it moves on.

But this is the feast’s major theme and that is why it is here in this summary in Leviticus 23. This summary gives us just the vital information we need to know and the theme there is “You must eat unleavened bread seven days.” So after Christ’s sacrifice which is memorialized in the Passover, the path to the Kingdom (the plan of God you might say) begins with eating unleavened bread (or eating God’s Word, or ingesting God’s way of life).

So let us now go to I Corinthians 5. Hopefully, by this time, we are back in the mode that we were at the end of my last sermon. We covered fraud and the idea that this holy day period—this Feast of Unleavened Bread—is a time when we are to recall, remember, re-invigorate—our dedication to the ingesting (or the reading, the studying, the ‘making a part of our lives’) of God’s Word. That is pretty much where we were at the end of last week. We are going to re-read verses 6-8.

I just want you to think about what Paul is saying here, in the way he is setting up his argument. Of course, before this, he had talked about the man who had married his father's wife (his stepmother). So he was talking about a sin that was occurring in the congregation. And the people in the congregation had been letting it go (they had been tolerating it) and Paul had to come across very sharply and harshly to them in saying "You are letting this sin linger here among you and it's not doing you any good." So he says "Put that man out until he acts better, he does better—he repents of the sin." So he gets back to the people. He says:

I Corinthians 5:6 Your glorying is not good. . . .

What Paul is talking about here is that they were actually taking a kind of pride in the way they had handled this situation, which he had said was absolutely wrong. He was talking about their attitude. Their glorying was not good.

I Corinthians 5:6 . . . Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

Obviously the sin that was being done here was not a little thing. We would call it a pretty terrible thing to our sensibilities. But he was trying to get them to understand that any taint of any kind—even what you would consider the smallest, the most harmless of sins—still does its evil work. It does not matter how small it is, it still corrupts the congregation even as yeast (just a little bit of it) put into a lump of dough will eventually, under the right conditions, spread to the whole lump. That is just the nature of yeast. It has something that it likes to eat, and it does what it does; and the lump becomes leavened and swelled with gas.

What we have here are a people whose heads were swollen because they had allowed this sin to corrupt all of them—nearly all of them. Paul was afraid that it would sweep through the whole congregation.

I Corinthians 5:7 Therefore [he is reaching a conclusion—what you need to do] purge out the old leaven [get rid of it], that you may be a new lump [cleaned up again]. . .

You cannot do this physically with a lump of yeasted dough. You cannot take out all the yeast and make it into an unleavened lump of dough again. It just does not work. But you can do it spiritually because we have the sacrifice of Jesus Christ which covers those things and returns us to an incorrupt, righteous, holy individual. So he says:

I Corinthians 5:7 . . . purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump. . .

Now I want you to add this to your thinking. When we were baptized, our sins were forgiven. We came out of the water. We were a new creation. So in that sense we were a new lump at that time. We were totally new from what we had been. The old lump that we were was terrible, rotten, corrupt, and full of sin. When we came through the waters of baptism as it were, we were raised up with Christ totally new. We had been renovated to the point where we were a new creation and God was working with us, using His Spirit, to change us into the image of His Son.

Now, like I said, you cannot do that with a lump of dough. You cannot make it into an unleavened lump. But when Christ's sacrifice is applied continuously to us, we are refreshed and returned to that new condition.

What Paul is saying here is that God wants us to remain in that new condition all the time. But when we sin and we let it linger, then we are denying that newness and we tend to go back toward what we were before. So what God wants us to do, He wants us to always be in that new, refreshed, clean, pure condition. That can only be done through the blood of Christ so that His righteousness is placed upon us.

I Corinthians 5:7 [He says here] that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened.

The deed has been done. And in God's mind, because of Christ's sacrifice, we are clean—we are new. But we have a part to play in all this too. And when we become corrupt through sin, then we have to go back to the throne of grace and seek forgiveness for those things. So he says:

I Corinthians 5:7 For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

Later, in the book of Hebrews, he makes this very clear that He was given one time for all—the sacrifice was made only once—and that is all that is needed because it is efficacious for every person's every sin for all time. That is how great He is. So that has been done. We can be thankful that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ has been made for us. We can rely on it because it was done.

He reaches another conclusion in verse 8. There is another 'therefore' here.

I Corinthians 5:8 Therefore let us keep the feast [we believe that he was talking about this feast that we are observing], not with old leaven [Of course not!]

You do not want to keep one of God's feasts with sin—with corruption. We want to have that put out of our lives. And we do that before the Passover: We try to clean ourselves up as best we can and repent of those things that we find that have corrupted us over the past year. But we should be doing this all the time.

I Corinthians 5:8 [So] keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Paul wants us to keep this feast in sincerity and truth, having rid ourselves of malice and wickedness. Now these two are sets of words—'malice and wickedness' on the negative side and 'sincerity and truth' on the positive side—are contrasted to one another. So what we have here are essentially antonyms.

The first two of each set (in this case it would be ‘malice’ and ‘sincerity’) are tied together. The last two, or the last ones in each of the two sets, are also tied together. That would be ‘wickedness’ and ‘truth.’ What we need to understand here, in the tying together of these words, is that ‘malice’ and ‘sincerity’ have an inward quality whereas ‘wickedness’ and ‘truth’ have an outward quality. Paul, in using these terms, is trying to cover all of the bases.

We have ‘malice’ which is the evil, inward quality and we have ‘wickedness’ as its manifestation—the way it comes out of us in words and deeds. The same thing is true with ‘sincerity’ and ‘truth.’ ‘Sincerity’ is the inner quality or attitude that God wants us to have and ‘truth’ is what comes out in word and deed. It is not very hard to understand this.

So we would say that malice has to do with the evils of the mind—evils of attitude—and we would think of those things as hatred, envy, greed, pride. Those are all inner type of attitudes. They are things that are very difficult to show on the outside unless you do something that manifests them. They are the inner attitudes of evil. Wickedness then, describing the manifestation of these things (evils made manifest in words and actions), would be things like gossip (an evil that comes out in words), rape, murder, or theft. Any of those things are actual actions that people do to show the evil that is in their heart.

Jesus of course, in the Sermon on the Mount, made this very clear with the sixth commandment where He said: “You said in old times that if you kill” somebody, that is wrong. “But,” He says, “I say to you, when you have hatred in your heart—you say these things in your heart about people—then that is breaking the sixth commandment too.” He was showing that it is not just the outward action that is the sin, but also the inward attitude that is a sin. And as a matter of fact, the inward attitude is sometimes the most corrupting because it is there all the time festering and making the person’s nature turn to evil.

Let us look closely then at ‘sincerity’ and ‘truth.’ ‘Sincerity’ is the Greek word *eilikrinea*. It is made up of a combination of two words: *eile* meaning ‘the light’ (or some people believe it means ‘the heat of the sun’ but it is the sun that is important here) and *krino*. If you know your Greek, *krino* comes

up quite a bit. It is the Greek word for ‘to judge’ or ‘to test.’ So when you put these two words together, it means ‘to judge by the light or heat of the sun’ (*eilikrinea*).

Now many people think that it means something along the line of “tested or judged by the light or heat of the sun.” It probably comes from the custom or the practice of judging or testing the purity of liquids or of cloth by holding it up to the sun. Let us say you have a glass of wine and you would hold it up to the sun to look at the purity of it, if the sun is shining through it. Or if you are in textiles and you wanted to see how good the cloth was, whether it had any impurities or imperfections in it, you could hold it up to the light of the sun and see if there were any obstructions to the light coming through. That would show you that there was a knot here or there or whatever (that the thing was not really high quality).

So we see the idea here in this word that came to mean ‘sincerity’ as ‘tested purity.’ Because that is what they were looking for. They were looking for a pure product, when they looked at it with a light shining upon it from the other side.

It suggests a mind and a heart that are completely pure or spotless; a person whose attitude toward God and others is one of integrity; that the mind or the heart of this person toward God and man is one of integrity and complete or proven transparency. You have got nothing to hide because you are pure. It is not something that we can say of ourselves. This is actually a very high standard that we are trying to reach for down the road. But it is the way Jesus Christ was. He had nothing to hide it all because He was God in the flesh. He was sinless. You hold Him up to the light of the sun and He comes out proven to be absolutely pure and wonderful.

Some have compared it to the openness, candor, and perfect honesty of a child. Children, like Jesus tells us in passages such as Mark 10:14, are what the Kingdom of God is made of. So He is talking about the attitude of a child there who has no guile. There is nothing to hide there. You ask them a question and they will tell you exactly what is on their mind.

We had that show years ago and resurrected a few times, ‘Kids Say the Darndest Things,’ and that is what made the show. They would ask kids

these questions and these kids, with full candor and nothing to hide, would say exactly what was on their mind—and everybody would laugh because it was so funny. It is this innocence and openness that is kind of behind this word *eilikrinea*—that God is looking for us to be totally open, honest, and pure of heart and mind. That is a high standard because we all have things in our closets that we do not want anybody else to see.

We see this term a couple of more times in II Corinthians 1. Paul uses it only three times (we are going to see all three times) and he is the only one that uses it. So II Corinthians chapter 1 verse 12: He uses it again. And we will see here, in these two verses (also in II Corinthians 2), that he uses it in a way that we can see how it worked itself out in what he did.

II Corinthians 1:12 For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.

II Corinthians 2:17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

So they are both used in the same way: meaning genuinely, without ulterior motives, without admixture of anything foreign. He is talking here about his preaching to them and how he came across to them. He is telling them that when he preached the gospel to them, he conducted himself as God would have wanted him to, with this godly sincerity. He was entirely open to them and would tell them anything that they wanted to know, holding nothing back. So he spoke with great openness, candor, and perfect honesty about the Word of God—the Gospel.

He was not like some, as he says in chapter 2, who were peddling. They were using the Word of God as a sham, a crime, a way to get money out of the people. He did not do that. He did it sincerely. He did not add anything to the Word of God and did not ask for anything in return. He just gave them what he had been taught. What he had been taught, he taught to them. He left nothing out. He gave them all of it. He was not holding anything back for himself.

If we want to kind of pull all this down and concentrate it so that we understand what *eilikrinea* or ‘sincerity’ means, we can say that it is a personal quality of living life from a pure motive. Others have called it ‘unalloyed virtue’ or ‘unsullied, uncontaminated, and genuine Christian character’ which I think is a very good one.

Our goal here is to become the model Christian (of course, there already is a model and that is Christ). But of course we are to be developed into His image—transformed into His image—and that is the direction we need to go so that we are totally uncontaminated, uncorrupted, and an unsullied example of what a Christian looks like. There is no evil mixed in with the goodness that Christ has formed in our character—we have purged all that out—and this makes a person very trustworthy.

So God (Christ, we could say) trusted Paul whenever He sent him here and there, that he would give the people he was speaking to exactly what he had been taught and he would hold nothing back. And he says in Acts 20:27, that he had given those people in Ephesus the whole counsel of God. He had delivered it all to them and so they were responsible for that.

What about ‘truth’? ‘Truth’ is *alethei*. It is a very common word in Scripture. But it literally means ‘unconcealed’ or ‘not hidden,’ which makes the Greek idea of truth very interesting. The Greeks thought of truth as something that is unconcealed or not hidden. So their idea of truth is what is out there in the open—what can be seen. We would say maybe that truth to a Greek is obvious—it is right out there, it is plain to see. That is how they thought of truth. And what it is, when you come down to it, is that it points to what is real. If you could see it and you can go up there and you could touch it, you would know that it is real—it is genuine, it is the real McCoy—what actually is. That is what they thought of truth: What actually is.

We could say, this world, which is just here for a moment, is not real because it is going to pass away. So what is real? God is real and God’s way of life is real. God’s Kingdom is real and it is going to be forever. So you can see, just by this little example, how Paul looked at it. That what is real—what is truth—are those things that remain, what things abide, what things will never be undermined and shown to be false or unhelpful.

A person of truth does not tolerate or accept a way of life that is a sham, that is not going to stick around, and that is going to end in death (going to end in destruction). That is not a real way of life. That is just something stupid. It is foolishness to live a life that is going to end in death. When you have the offer set before you—a reality that is going to exist for forever—why would you choose the thing that is going to cause problems? Because you have been deceived. That is an easy answer to that. You do not know any better. But a person of truth will never accept a way of life that is a sham, a lie, or a fraud (which the course of this world is) because Satan the Devil has founded it upon his own lies. So what is real is God’s way, which will endure forever.

Paul uses this word *aletheia* not only in contrast to falsehood, illusion, and deception but also in the sense of an honesty or an integrity in which the word indeed corresponds. In this way sincerity, then, speaks to a pure inner integrity; character and truth is the integrity and character in the way of life—in the way you actually act it out each day. ‘Sincerity’ then would be the genuine character of a Christian. ‘Truth’ would be how you show that to the world—how you live it in your life every day: what you say, what you do. We could say, if we want just a short phrase, that truth encompasses active righteousness (or righteousness shown in deeds).

Now let us consider this in terms of what has been revealed to us by Christ. He is the Word of God. He is the Bread of Life. He is that unleavened bread that we are to be eating every day.

What Paul is urging here, in I Corinthians 5:8, is for us to actualize, or live out, the lesson of the Feast of Unleavened Bread by being and living the truth in a fully unadulterated and genuine way. That is what he is talking about. “Let us keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” He is saying, “Let us take what we have learned—take what God has taught us, take what we have drawn in of His Word—and live it out in a way that is commensurate with the purity of the word that we have learned.”

If you think about it, that is the way Jesus Christ lived. All he is saying here is “Let us live in the same way that Jesus Christ—who is unleavened, who is our Passover—lived.” He did not have any of the old leaven to purge out. He always lived in this unleavened way, in purity and in truth.

If I can put it another way, “be and do the Word of God” is what he is saying by using this phrase “sincerity and truth”: ‘be’ meaning what you are inside (that is sincerity—the pure, adulterated, honest attitude of a Christian—the character of a Christian) and ‘do’ is the ‘truth’ part where we do what the Word of God instructs us to do.

Maybe this will help. A commentator named Marcus Dods writes this:

The convictions and beliefs which Christ inspires are convictions and beliefs about what we should be, and what Christ means all human life to be, and until these convictions and beliefs are embodied in our actual living selves, and in our conduct and life, we feel that we are not genuine.

Meaning we are missing something. We are missing this idea of genuineness, of reality, until we incorporate God’s Word into our attitudes, our character, and in our daily living (as he says here, “our conduct and life”). Once we do that—once we begin to get to the point where we can maybe see over the horizon just how wonderful Christ was and how He lived His life—we “sniff” the way of living that He lived. And none of us have ever come close to it. We cannot really understand it because we have never really seen it except in the words of Jesus Christ. But if we can somehow get an inkling of how He was and how He lived, in our own lives, then we would begin to feel that we are genuine, real—that we are beginning to get an idea of how God lives.

But, right now, even though we have been cleaned up and made unleavened by the Passover of Jesus Christ, we still do not feel the reality of God’s way of life. We only have little snatches of it every once in a while. Let us say when we are sitting down studying a passage of the Word of God, and it just

so engrosses us and fills us with the truth that we lose all sense of time—we do not think about food or drink or anything, but we are invigorated by the Word of God.

Maybe preachers feel it when they feel like they are being inspired and the sermon is going so well, and they feel closeness with God and with the congregation, and they feel they are all on the same track here. And there is this syzygy (I love that word) between everybody involved here and everybody is going in the same direction. And the speaker then comes off the stage, not tired—not like he is spent—but ready to go because he has had an inkling of the real life of God, the Word—how the Word Himself must have felt.

So, trying to wrap all this up, we must marry our profession of the true faith and godly conduct to really live. We must put them together. We must put together (marry) our profession of the true faith (yes, we say we believe it, and we probably do believe it, but we have to put that together) with godly conduct—unalloyed godly conduct, pure godly conduct—and that will be real godly living.

Living in this world is not true life. It is a fraud. It is a sham. It ends in death. It ends in destruction. It ends in all kinds of misery. Only believing and knowing and living out God's Word is true reality—God's reality—because that is what goes through the grave. That is what endures. And we find that if we come to that point (like I said, right now we are only just barely seeing it over the horizon even after many years of being in the church), it has great benefits—even for as little of it that we actually do.

I want to end this sermon by going through John 4. It will take us a little bit of time to get through this. But I want to take a look at this scene in Christ's life to see how His living of the true life of God benefited Him, and it can have similar benefits for us. So put yourself in Christ's place here, as He is talking to the woman at the well, and see if you can see, as we go through it, how His conversation there with the woman gave Him great benefits. I want to start in verse 3 because we need to set the stage here. Jesus had been in Judea, but He did not want to stay there. Things were happening too quickly, He needed to go, and kind of let things cool down.

John 4:3-8 He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But he needed to go through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

This sets the stage here for what is going on. We need to focus on Jesus and His responses to this woman, remembering that He came to the well, bone tired. He had been walking all day. It was, it says, the sixth hour which most people believe was about noon time. I have heard some people say that it was evening but I cannot see how that is. But it was high noon, so the sun was high in the sky; and we are talking about Israel here, so it was hot and dry and dusty. Like I said, He had been on His feet probably since early in the morning, maybe even from before dawn, and they had walked a long way to get to Sychar and Jacob's well.

Jesus was not a super-man. He had flesh like the rest of us and He got tired. He got footsore. He got weary. He had all the problems that we have with this physical body that just does not want to go. It needs to be refreshed with water and rest and food. But He had had none of those things for a long while. So, when He gets to the well, He basically flops down and sits by it to regain his strength. He was parched and hungry after all this physical exertion and He just wanted to rest. I do not believe I need to give you any other background information here. We can pick up some of the other stuff as we go.

Let us go to verses 9-15. Of course, the woman is a Samaritan and she is a woman of ill-repute. So Jesus is breaking a lot of taboos here by speaking to a Samaritan, and speaking to a woman, and speaking to a Samaritan woman of ill-repute. This was triply bad. The normal Jews do not do this.

John 4:9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

It does not mean that they never had dealings with each other. It usually means, if they could avoid it, they would not talk to one another, they would not buy from one another. But, of course, we saw, just a few verses up, that the disciples had gone in to Sychar to get something to eat, so the Samaritans were at least willing to sell them something to eat. There was obviously a dealing there. But what we are talking about here is, generally, there was an antagonism between the two groups of people and normally, if they could avoid one another, they did.

John 4:10-15 Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” The woman said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?” Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw” [“Hey, that will save me a lot of time and lot of effort.”].

I do not know if you noticed, I had built up Jesus’ tiredness—His bone-weary exhaustion, His thirst, His hunger. But did you see any of that in that conversation? It seems to have all gone away! All sense of His tiredness, thirst, and hunger disappeared during His conversation with the woman. They were talking about water and they were talking about thirst. But there is no indication that Jesus was saying, “Shut up woman! Just draw some water out. I need a drink. Why are you bantering with Me like this? Can’t you see that I am about to keel over here?”

No. What He does is He launches into teaching about the Holy Spirit.

“I have living water here. And matter of fact, forget about Me asking you for a drink of water, you should have asked Me for a drink of water and I would have given it to you. This water is something more than what you would give

to Me. You would give it to Me, and I would take it and drink, and I would want more—I would need more after a while. But I can give you water that is going to not only give you satisfaction right now, but it is going to be satisfaction forever and satisfaction for eternal life.”

“And if you knew who I was,” He says, “I am the One who gives the Holy Spirit. I am very God. If you knew you were talking to very God, you would have asked Him for all sorts of blessings and help.”

What I am trying to get you to see here is that the preaching of the Word—the teaching of the good news—to this woman made all of His physical troubles disappear. He did not think about them anymore. They were things that would bother his physical body, but they were not important. They were not real. Because they had been supplanted by something that was far more real, which was the Word of God, the plan of God, the giving of the Holy Spirit, eternal life, life with God. That was so much more important than the fact that His mouth was dry and his limbs were weak.

You look at this conversation that He is having with this woman. I thought some commentators say that the woman keeps changing the subject. That is just the opposite of the truth; it is Jesus that is leading the conversation. He is the One that says: “Give Me something to drink.” He is the One that says: “If you knew who it was that asked you, you would ask Him for this living water.”

Now she has her replies because she is taking them the wrong way. She is taking it totally physically: “You do not even have anything to draw with. Are You greater than our father Jacob who put this well here?”

There is kind of an interesting idea here. He says He is going to give her living water. Living water is flowing water, something that springs up out of a spring. There was a spring under Jacob’s well, but it was way down. So the water came out and just sat in Jacob’s well. It did not bubble up, it just filled. The spring filled the well up. If you wanted the actual purer spring water, you would have to go way down deep in the well, under the sitting water, to reach the pure water that was coming out of the spring. And so that is what she was thinking, on two levels:

1. “You don’t even have a rope bucket to get down to the spring where the living flowing water is. So how can You do that?”
2. Another that is going on here—talking about “greater than our father Jacob”—was that Jacob had had his people dig this well out, and it was about a hundred feet deep. They did it by hand, so it was a deep well. She is saying: “Are You greater than he that you can go deeper in this well than even he went?” She is hardly even thinking necessarily that He is spiritually greater than Jacob. She is just looking at it from the physical point of view.

But He is the One that keeps turning the conversation around to go into these spiritual matters. He wants her to be disabused of her physical thoughts about these things because they were leading them nowhere. He wanted her to start thinking spiritually. He was trying to bring her toward Him as much as He could, drawing her in to the glories of the Word of God. She just kept misunderstanding so He kept giving her new things to think about. This made Him happy. It made Him invigorated and positive. He was having, I think, a good time talking to this woman because He was teaching her the way of God.

He kept turning the conversation away from the physical water to the spiritual, living water that He wanted to give her. It was far more important than the physical water because His mind—the way He thought—was always on the spiritual, not on the physical, that He wanted to be able to give. That is what we talk about: the character of God. It is one of love and outflowing concern.

Here He was given an opportunity. Even though He was bone-tired and weary, He wanted to give her something and help her. He wanted her to enjoy the same kind of blessings that would flow from the receipt of the living water because He knew that only that brings true satisfaction. He could tell from this woman that she was not satisfied. She even says, “Give me this water to drink.” She was probably “Oh man, I have to come out here to the well again,” thinking about how tedious her life was. And He wanted to help her. Of course she would still have to come out to the well to draw

water, because she is a fleshly human being, but He could give her something that would occupy her mind and her life that was much more satisfying.

Let us start in verse 16 here. We will read down through verse 19.

John 4:16-19 Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her [He is probably chuckling], “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.” The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.”

What this shows is Jesus’s insight into this woman. He had been talking to her for just a short time and He already had her totally pegged. He had been able to gather so much information and know exactly about this woman what He needed to know—what drove her, what her life was like. It says elsewhere that He knew what was in men. Of course He was God, but He was also fleshly, so I am sure He did not have perhaps total insight. I do not know quite how that worked (maybe, through the Spirit, God gave him this information).

But the lesson for us is that, in living in sincerity and truth as Jesus did, it gives us a unique perspective that allows us to discern what is really going on. Remember, the truth is reality—what is actual. If you live according to the truth, genuinely and really, then you are going to have an insight into people and into situations that the people of this world cannot have. It is because the Spirit of God is working within you, opening up your mind to things that they cannot see. You see attitudes. You see cause and effect.

You are not going to be able to work in a circus and guess everybody’s weight. That is not what I mean. I am saying you are going to be the kind of person that, when you come into a situation, you are going to be able to discern fundamental, rudimentary truths about a situation that give you a perspective on how to respond in the situation—because you have the Holy Spirit of God. And what does it say in I Corinthians 2 about the Spirit of

God? It teaches us spiritual things. It opens up spiritually reality to us. It helps us to understand, not what we see with our eyes, but what the Spirit reveals to us.

This is what Jesus used in this situation. He understood that this woman was not all she appeared to be and that part of her problem was this man-hopping from one man to the next (call it serial adultery or whatever you want to call it). She had had five husbands and now she was living in sin with another one. I cannot say that He knew perfectly everything that was going on in her life, but He knew that that one fact was a basic detrimental factor in her life and it needed to be pointed out to her. He was Jesus Christ. He could do stuff like that.

But what I am trying to help you to understand is that the same sort of thing can happen to us because we allow the Holy Spirit to work within us and do not allow ourselves to be caught flat-footed in situations where we do not know what is actually going on.

Now she is perceptive enough to understand that Jesus knew things about her that He probably should not know, and she calls him a prophet. What she means is “I can see that You are inspired by God, that God has given You some message for me,” and He was revealing it to her there.

So if we are working in the Spirit (or living in the Spirit) and we are allowing God’s Spirit to help us as we go through situations in our lives, we will be able to see things that others cannot because we are able to see reality—see what is true.

Let us go to verse 20 here.

John 4:20-26 [She says:] “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what do you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship

Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”

Her statement, that she opens with, has to do with a place of worship, and Jesus has to immediately reveal to her that worship is not about a place, but about knowing a Person. God had revealed Himself to the Israelites and the Israelites alone under the Old Covenant.

Amos 3:2 [He says:] “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.”

So they knew Him through the Old Covenant. And then He had revealed Himself again to the Jews through Jesus Christ Himself (John 1:11): “He came to His own, but His own did not receive Him” [They knew Him not]. Jesus, in turn, had revealed the existence of the Father; and it was knowing the Father and the Son (John 17:3) that was the way to eternal life. So salvation is of the Jews because Jesus Himself is a Jew. Jesus died for them and it is only through Him that they can have salvation.

All of that is kind of interesting stuff. But, He says, God is Spirit. What He is trying to get this woman to do is go away from all her physical way of looking at things and see that God is a Spirit. He is One that has to be worshipped in a spiritual way. They must have a spiritual connection with Him. So just going to some mountain or going to a temple was not enough. Even if you showed up there and there were religious services going on, that was not really worship. The worship was in the relationship.

So, in John 4:23-24, we have the phrase that we must “worship in spirit and truth.” This is very similar to “sincerity and truth” that Paul uses in I Corinthians 5:8. ‘Spirit’ here is *pneuma* and it does not imply the Holy Spirit. It implies a sincere mind or a true heart. It is talking about your attitude, the way you are inside, and your outlook on things. So He is saying that those who worship God must worship Him with the right attitude, with the right heart, with the right sincere mind.

Jesus is speaking here, not of an outward worship, but a pure inward worship of God that has nothing to do with holy times or places or appurtenances or ceremonies. Just doing something at a certain time does not make you worship Him. You have to worship God not only at the right time, but you have to be in the right attitude and have the right relationship with Him to do it.

So He means that we worship God as He instructs us to do in His Word through the relationship—through the Spirit that He gives to us. That includes prayer. It includes study. It includes meditation. It includes faithfulness to Him. It includes obedience to Him. It includes growth in His way.

In other words, it is our whole life. It is not just one time a week. It is not just in one place. It is not reading one set of scriptures. It means everything. Our whole lives have to be dedicated to the relationship with God. That is what He means by worshipping in spirit and in truth. It means an all-out, all-the-time relationship with God. That is what He teaches us in His Word.

We are introduced to this very early in the Scriptures when it says, “Enoch walked with God.” That is what we are talking about here. His whole life—all his walk, all the course of his life—was spent in a relationship with God, as if he and God were walking side-by-side on a path all the time (from whenever he was converted till his death). Jesus is telling this woman that that is the kind of worship God wants—in spirit and in truth.

I was going to go a little bit further, but what it shows here is that when the disciples got back to Jesus at the well, He did not want their food. He was just totally energized. And He said, “Look out there! The fields are white for harvest.” He was saying, “Let’s do God’s work. There is great hope in what God has given us, and we want to spread this to other people. Why wait and eat food when we could be doing what God wants us to do?” He felt totally invigorated by pleasing God and doing His work. That is what He says there.

John 4:34 “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.”

That is what made Christ happy—made Him positive and hopeful—and it made Him want to do more.

Let us finish in Isaiah:55.

Isaiah 55:1-2 “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen diligently to Me. . .

This is what He is talking about. He is not talking about actual wine and food and those things that they were going to get from Him. He is talking about hearing His Word.

Isaiah 55:2-3 “Listen diligently to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live [really live]; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you.”

This is how the Feast of Unleavened Bread is to re-orient us each spring. It reminds us that the only way to true satisfaction and real life is through eating (making a part of us; ingesting) the Word of God—the truth of God. Why do we waste our time and our energies on what is worthless? On what is garbage?

Then we are to take that reminder that He gives us, in this Feast of Unleavened Bread, and put it into practice—throughout the year and throughout our lives.