

The Unleavened Life Is A Happy Life!

Righteousness Brings True Joy!

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We are going to begin the sermon for this afternoon in John the 13th chapter, verse 17, where Jesus made a penetrating statement in regard to His way of life, something that we always have to keep in mind. All of us want to be blessed, all of us want to be happy in what we are doing. And as the foot washing was proceeding, He said,

John 13:17 "If you know these things, blessed [happy] are you if you do them."

Now taking that principle and reflecting on what is occurring within the greater church of God, it is very clear that cleaning leaven from one's home has become unfashionable and that one major church within the church of God is seriously considering also eliminating the foot washing as well. And they have not only do denigrated these practices, but even the keeping of the holy days themselves. The attitude seems to be that somehow or another they have outgrown them and these things have become nothing more than tired traditions that no longer serve any purpose.

We need to consider: Why continue to go over these days and practices of God? Now it is because each day (this is a general principle), meaning each holy day and the practices associated with that day, are object lessons. It is because even though there is a clear and simple theme associated with each holy day, the overall teaching is so deep and so broad that it takes more than going over it once lightly to understand the many nuances of each day. The lessons contained in the keeping of these days cannot possibly become ingrained as a part of our character in one mere go around because our memories are dull and human nature is so strong.

There is a very interesting psalm in regards to this. It is in Psalm 78 and I would like you to turn there. We are going to look at a number of verses contained within that psalm because I think that it shows a general principle,

and that principle is that mankind, human nature, is thick. You know what I mean, thick, hard-headed. We seem to have an impenetrable skull—mind—when it comes to God. We are not going to go through the whole thing, just pick up a few cogent verses.

Psalm 78:11 [talking about the Israelites] And forgot His works and His wonders that He had shown them.

Psalm 78:19 Yes, they speak against God: They said, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?"

You mean to tell me that He did not give them ample demonstration of what He could do?

Psalm 78:22 Because they did not believe in God, and did not trust in His salvation.

Psalm 78:32 In spite of this [all the great, wonderful miracles that He did, all the signs that He gave them] they still sinned, and did not believe in His wondrous works.

Psalm 78:36-37 Nevertheless they flattered Him with their mouth, and they lied to Him with their tongue; for their heart was not steadfast with Him, nor were they faithful in His covenant.

Psalm 78:56-57 Yet they tested and provoked the Most High God, and did not keep His testimonies, but turned back and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers; they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.

This psalm gives ample evidence of what human nature is like. They could see awesome demonstrations of God's power. They could see that He was willing to intervene and supply them, deliver them, regardless of whether the need was food, or whether it was water, protection from enemies, comfort from the heat, guidance for their feet to follow a certain path in order to reach their destination. They could see these things and yet somehow or another, they never got the lesson. It somehow escaped them.

I think, in an overall sense, we could say that the reason is because they were so self-centered in their focus, they tended to keep repeating the same way of life, the same kind of conduct that was set in patterns while they were still in Egypt. And somehow or another, they would find ethical reasons, logical-to-human-nature reasons for doing what they did. It seemed so right for them to go in the direction that they did go in. We can see the story from the end back to the beginning, because God recorded it. And we see very clearly that God was not pleased with the way that they acted. He called them hardheaded, stiff-necked, forgetful, "they remembered not."

Now, this is what I mean when I say that human nature is thick when it comes to God. We have to be very aware of this, because even though we were baptized, even though we received God's Spirit, human nature still resides within it, and wants to rear its ugly head all the time, and it wants to continue to dictate conduct and attitudes. And so it is an ever-present reality that we have to be dealing with and to be aware of.

It is much easier for human nature to remember our own pleasures because they are ingrained within our character. But we easily forget the things of God in the rush of everyday events, because they are not yet ingrained within our character. So events like the holy days and all of their traditions and practices must be commanded by God. And our fear of Him and our faith in Him is what keeps us doing them. And as we do them, they gradually become ingrained as a part of us.

There is a great deal of a vanity contained in what is presently going on within the church of God, because what they are in effect saying is that we are above practicing to hone and to keep our skills. But every professional—a professional singer, a professional instrument player, an artist, any profession, any field of endeavor—knows that he or she has to practice in order to maintain skill levels. And if this person does not do it, they begin to lose their edge.

I think a vivid modern day example of this, for anybody who follows sports at all, is the return to professional basketball of Michael Jordan. He has been away from the game for a couple of years. And he has openly admitted that it is going to take a good while for him to get his sharpness back. And just as

an example of how much he has lost in those two years, the last time I looked his field goal percentage was only 30%. That is terrible for a man who is of his quality, probably the greatest basketball player who has ever lived, ever played the game. Being away, he has lost it. And it is going to take a while for that to return.

This is the principle that we are dealing with in regard to this sermon. It is part of the principle, part of the reason of why God has us repeat these practices, these traditions, over and over again.

Exodus 13:3-10 And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place. No leavened bread be eaten. On this day you are going out, in the month of Abib. And it shall be, when the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and 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 be seen among you, nor shall there be leaven 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 out of Egypt.' It shall be for 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 has the Lord brought you out of Egypt. You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year."

Now, let us look at a vivid example of the theme of the sermon in chapter 14.

Exodus 14:10-14 And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord. Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness?"

Why have you so dealt us with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, . . . The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

They had all ready forgotten. I do not mean that they had forgotten what happened in Egypt. I mean, they had not forgotten the events of their very recent past, but they had forgotten the lesson of the past. If they had learned the lesson, they would not have been afraid. They would not have actually cursed God by their failure to believe. It would have positively affected their conduct at that time. You see, Egypt should have been a school. The events that involved God's liberation of them from their bondage should have been a learning experience that changed their lives! But it did not.

I hope you are already beginning to think. Are these things that we are doing—the constant repetition of keeping each one of the festivals of God, and the customs that are associated with them, the ceremonies, the traditions that are associated with them, whether it be the putting out of leaven, the eating of unleavened products, whether it be the fasting, whether it be even the travel and the keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles and all the things associated with that—are they having a positive impact on our conduct? Are we learning the lessons? If we are not learning the lessons, then it is possible that we are no better off than Israelites when they came out of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 16:3-4 "You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shall you eat unleavened bread with it, that is, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life. And no leaven shall be among you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the meat which you sacrifice the first day at twilight remain overnight until the morning."

Not eating leaven, putting leaven out, and the eating unleavened bread are all intended to be learning experiences designed to help us *remember*. Being

deeply, intensely involved in an activity makes memories much more vivid than if one is merely a bystander watching what is going on. I have read interviews of, I have heard interviews of baseball players after the game is over. Let us say that that pitcher pitched a whole nine-inning game. He will pitch, he will throw the ball around 100-130 times. Most of the time, the figure is higher than that, depending on how many walks or how many men he struck out. But in the interview, he remembers every pitch, he remembers exactly what kind of pitch it was, he remembers where it was in relation to the batter.

I will tell you something that I feel is, to me, an amazing demonstration of the principle that I am talking about here because I participated in it. My last two years in the steel mill, I worked as an estimator coordinator. It was my job to coordinate maintenance jobs in this very large steel mill, maintenance jobs that involved welders and boilermakers and pipe fitters. It was my job to make sure that the materials needed for the job were on the job, enough men were scheduled, and that any kind of sketches or details that were needed in order to carry that job out, I made sure that they were provided. Oftentimes steel plate was needed by the boiler makers for the job that they were going to do.

So generally what our fellas did is they worked from what was normally considered to be scrap material, things that they were not going to sell to the public, but they would nonetheless use within the steel mill for maintenance work. And so they had piles and piles of steel that had been run off in the mill that were not used. My eye—in my head—became so skilled at determining the thickness, the gauge of a piece of steel, a steel plate, that I could walk past the pile, and I could tell you how thick that steel was within a couple of thousands of an inch. It just came from experience in measuring pieces of steel over long periods of time. At this time it was 16 years in the steel mill.

Now, everybody is capable of doing those kind of things in one area of expertise. Here, we are talking about conduct in relation to God. So God has us go through practices, traditions, customs in the keeping of His holy days, and if we are really involved in them, we can develop the same kind of skills

in conduct and attitude in relation to God, and in relation to other people. We can know, as it were, in our mind's eye, every pitch that has been made or the gauge of any piece of steel that we might have to use.

Incidentally, I have lost that ability, I cannot do it anymore because I am not practicing it all the time. And now I am lucky that I can come within an 8th or 3/16th of an inch. It is just something that has been lost by not practicing. Of course, I have not done that now for 27 years but that is what I mean. You lose your sharpness in these things unless we are practicing them all the time.

Matthew 16:6-12 Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread." But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "O you have little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—but that you should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of Sadducees.

Jesus used leaven as a teaching, you see, a doctrine. Leaven is normally ingested by us without thought. I mean, we eat bread without thinking about it. I mean, leavened bread, puffed-up bread, blown up bread, risen bread, all the time during the year. We eat it without a second thought. Well that is the principle that Jesus is talking about here. It is very easy for us to ingest leaven— a false teaching, a false doctrine—unless we are consciously thinking about it. That maybe, just maybe, what we are being taught really is not true. In fact, the teaching may appear to be good, pleasurable, stimulating. I will tell you there is hardly anything better than a wonderful puffed up piece of whole wheat biscuit or a roll or croissant with butter on it. It is so good and we enjoy it. It goes in, it goes down, and we want more.

You see, if we are getting what Jesus is teaching here, that is, in regard to teaching, to doctrine, we have to be careful because something that is

leavened, a false doctrine, may appear to be pleasurable. It may appear to "taste good." But, you see, in the end it has bad consequences. So the warning in Jesus using this symbolically, is that we should not thoughtlessly ingest spiritual teaching. Now the reason is because all conduct is the result of what we have learned in and from the past, and nothing will ever change in our lives unless we remember the lessons of our past experiences and consciously choose to do the right and good.

Now, this is not always an easy experience. Learning something requires repeated drilling, practice, practice, practice, doing exercises designed to ingrain a certain procedure that will produce a certain result in our conduct or whatever it is that we do. Unfortunately, the practice, practice, practice, the doing of the exercises was in wrong things. We ingested the teachings innocently but they were devastating to our character and to our attitudes. And the product produced by these teachings was not what God intends at all.

I Corinthians was written just prior to the Days of Unleavened Bread or just after, somewhere in that time.

I Corinthians 5:6-8 [Paul said] Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The Days of Unleavened Bread define our responsibility in God's plan. I want you to notice our responsibility. Paul makes it very clear. *We* have to purge out the old leaven, that we may be new, we may be converted. Now, we do not do it totally because he also says, "as you are unleavened." Some of this God does but we have a responsibility too. It seems as though virtually everything in God's purpose, I mean the actual mechanics of it, God does His part, but we are required to do ours. God does for us what is impossible for us to do, but He requires that we do what we can. And so there is a responsibility for us to purge out old leaven. There is a responsibility to purge out old teaching, false teaching, false doctrines.

So we have to purge out the leaven, false teaching, and the habits, attitudes, and ways that those things produced in order to conform to God's doctrines, habits, attitudes, and ways.

Sin is the actual breaking of God's law, but sin has its beginning in false teaching that is accepted, believed, and practiced. Now, most of the false teaching came into our minds early in life before we were converted and we were helpless before the onslaught of Satan, and God knows it. He knew it about you, He knew it about me. Now in order to begin the process of becoming new, it has to be brought to our attention, and then the responsibility comes upon us to exercise our free moral agency to work and to do our part in purging the effects of that false teaching out.

Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age, looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

As an overview of these verses, what it says to me is that forgiveness, redemption, the appearance of grace has a long-range purpose. Grace should teach you and me that we are responsible to overcome sin, to do good works—to purge out the leaven would be another way of saying it. Now, I am going to read this to you from the Moffatt translation. I want you to just listen carefully and drink it in. He really does a masterful job in translating this into modern English.

For the grace of God has appeared to save all men, and it schools us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live a life [listen to this] of self-mastery, of integrity, and piety in this present world, awaiting the blessed hope of the appearance of the glory of the great God, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself up for us to redeem us from all iniquity and secure Himself a clean people with a zest for good works.

Now, *self-mastery* refers to a man's attitude and conduct regarding himself. It reflects his desire to discipline himself and to live according to God's codes, not allowing wrong desires to control his destiny, or his conduct at any time. *Integrity* has to do with the trustworthiness of our side of relationships with other people. It reflects a person who is responsible in carrying out his duties and obligations to others. It reflects his willingness to sacrifice, to swear to his own hurt, as the psalm says, even when others are failing. It means a person who is honest to a fault, who is whole and without flaw. *Piety* is a general overall term that defines one's relationship or one's fellowship with God in a life that is lived with God as its focus. Almost as if the person has blinders on that keeps him looking only in one direction and that is at God.

It becomes clear that God gives us grace to relieve us of the penalty of our sins against His government in order that we can be changed. We can be changed to a new way of life that involves these three basic areas: Self-control, or we might say self-mastery, or we might say self-governing; integrity, a person who is whole and sound in his relationships with other people; and piety, or godliness that defines his relationship, his focus, and his focus is on God.

But the fly in the ointment, the same kind of fly that we might say bedeviled Israel all the time, is that human nature wants the good life. It wants all of the benefits, but it does not want to work to achieve it, nor does it want to pay the penalty either. It wants to be free to live in the world and yet be given eternal life. It wants to be free to eat a horrible diet, but yet have God heal it. It wants to be free to sin and yet be free of the penalty of sin. It wants the best of everything without having to pay the price. It does not want to give anything up that is going to cost it personally.

Notice again the phrase, that God has bought for Himself through the blood of Christ a clean people who are zestful for good works. That is an interesting phrase because goodness in this world dominated by human nature, has become synonymous with dullness. "Oh, he's the goody two shoes," you know. And if you are good, you are scoffed at, you are looked down on. You are a square, you are a nerd, you are a joke to other people.

You are odd. You are weird. You are somebody that really does not belong, and that is partly right. They do not belong. And so it is looked upon, it is equated, is synonymous with dullness.

But the apostle Paul, one of the most godly and enthusiastic and energetic men who ever walked on the face of this earth, he saw goodness as something exciting. He is the one that wrote that word zestful. Now the world is full of bored people who are looking for excitement in novelties; in stimulus like drugs; in possessions like houses and automobiles, and clothing and so forth; in power, becoming the captain of an industry, in dropping out and becoming a hippie being free from obligations. Do you know what? That is why they are bored. And the reason they are bored is because God has not given those pursuits the power to do any more than stimulate people for a brief spurt.

And then what happens? In order to get an equal stimulation, they have to go further into it. You can see this so clearly with drugs. The little bit that gave the stimulation or the peace becomes a little bit more and then a little bit more and then a little bit more, and then the person becomes a slave to it and he cannot get along without a little more. And unless they make some kind of sacrificial effort, it kills them.

That is the principle that we are talking about here. Jesus said to "beware of the false teaching" because it is going to kill you. It may seem to be pleasurable for a little while, but it is leaven that is going to destroy. Life's purpose is to attain to the Kingdom of God through transformation into the image of God. A life that is bound up with the needs and concerns of God's purpose is always going to be new, challenging, satisfying, exciting. Oh, it may be scary because stepping out in faith can be scary, but that is exciting! And it is leading in the right direction.

This is why Jesus said blessed, happy, are you if you do them. The knowledge of God's way cannot be merely something that we accept. It has to be done. And if it is done, then the old will get purged out, replaced by the new, and we will be stimulated, satisfied, happy because we are following the things that God intended produce an exciting zest for life.

Now the greatest leaven of all is the ego-centrism of Satan's spirit, which is going to serve the self, do its own thing, regardless of its effect on others. Mankind is very confused as to the right way to live. We have been called out of this confusion, but it is still having its lingering effects on us. And to remove doubts from the minds of the called, God has given us His Book, the Bible. And in that Book He is the example of His Son. How did He live? Was He a goody two shoes? Well, by this world's standards, He certainly was. He did not give one inch in terms of sin. Yet this world thinks that sin is where stimulation, excitement, satisfaction resides.

John 15:9-14 "As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy [You want joy? Keep the commandments.] may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another [and the basic definition of love is the keeping of the commandments] as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."

So we find that the way that Jesus pointed out, the way that He lived, was by following the commands of God by laying on His life for His friends. Let me rephrase this in another way. Do not believe those who say that the only thing that matters is one's relationship with God. They might say to you that it is only me and God. That is not true. Do you know that the primary area of our judgment is in our relationship with our brothers? Because that tells God whether or not we are applying what we are learning from Him.

We will not go through the whole book of I John, but this is the major subject that is involved there. I will define it for you or sum it up in just one sentence what I John is teaching us. It is that in our relationship with our brothers shows whether we have a good relationship with God.

John 14:5-9 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father

except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." Philip to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father?'"

Jesus then is the way. He is saying that My life is an example of how you can get to where I am going. The question was, "How can we know where you are going?" How can we get there was what was implied. Jesus said, "If you follow what I did, then you're going to end up in the same place that I'm going." And of course that is the Kingdom of God. Jesus said, "Keep the commandments." There is one group that wants to throw out one of the commandments. If the Father and the Son's positions had been reversed, the Father would have lived exactly the same way as the Son. Do you know why? Because that is the only way worth living eternally. Do not forget that last word—*eternally*.

Unless we are showing God by our own lives—more than merely agreeing that this is the right way to live—but rather by showing Him by the practice that we are already living that way, we may not be there. Because the only people who are going to enjoy living in the Kingdom of God are those who are already living that way. Everybody else will be uncomfortable, miserable living in that kind of situation. Brethren, this is why the leaven has to come out.

Sin is a deeply rooted leaven and it is not tolerable because of this property of affecting the whole lump. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. That principle is true. So God does not want leavened people in the Kingdom of God. Now, answer this question: Does Satan fit in the Kingdom of God? He does not fit, does he? He would be miserable, he would be leavened. And so God in His mercy will not let him be there.

Each and every year then as we begin the annual repetition of the holy days, right at the very beginning God begins it by reminding us that we have received grace through the blood of Jesus Christ, and that gets us started.

Then once we are started, a major responsibility falls upon us to work towards purging out the leaven that is there. And as we work to get it out, we become prepared for living in His Kingdom.

Now, from this point on, we are going to look briefly at some of the symbolism that is involved in leaven so that again this teaching is repeated to us and hopefully it becomes a little more deeply ingrained. Maybe we will see another aspect of it that we never saw before.

1. God chose for us to put out something that seems to be necessary to life.

Ephesians 4:17-24 [Paul says] This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

You know, the world realizes that sin is bad but accepts it as a necessary evil. The world assumes that the perfection of which Paul writes is impossible. Martin Luther, one of the greatest of the Protestant leaders, had a very severe character flaw in him. He had a fiery temper that would ignite apparently over virtually nothing, and he could never get it under control. He had a wonderful mind, sharp. Probably, if we were measuring it, an IQ that went off the scale kind of thing. But he could never overcome his temper.

Do you know what he finally concluded? He finally concluded that God was just going to have to put up with him the way he was. He wrote it! As if the God who created him, as if the God who divided the Red Sea, as if the God who raised Jesus from the dead, as if the God who restored limbs on people,

somehow lacked the power to change a person's mind. This is why he eventually wrote that the book of James was an epistle of straw. And so he denied the whole book in the Bible's inspiration by God, because he had a problem.

Augustine, one of the great scholars of the Catholic Church, had something that he could not overcome either. So he too came to the same conclusion, that God was just going to have to put up with him because that is the way he was.

You know, the Bible does say that God puts up with us. He does it not because of what we are, but because of what *we can be*. And He patiently works with us, molding and shaping us. He wants, indeed commands, us to cooperate and to change. Leaven in bread is not necessary. It is necessary only if one wants a certain kind of bread. I had this thought, I do not know whether it is true or not. But I got to wondering, Did Israel not have puffed up bread for the whole 40 years? I do not know, I have no idea. But the thought came to me the other of the day, they got so upset about their food I wondered if they had flat bread the whole time.

Interesting parallel there in terms of the symbolism of leaven. I got to wondering, does leaven really work with manna? Maybe it would not do its thing with manna and maybe they could never get it puffed up. I do not know, just a thought. But if they did not have leaven for the whole 40 years, there is a very interesting lesson there. They got along without it, did they not? Almost for a lifetime.

Now carnally, as far as we are concerned, God's universe revolves around us. As far as God's purpose in the Bible is concerned, He gives us a picture of reality as compared to vanity. Reality is living by faith, reality is in the spirit world. Vanity is real, however it is temporal. It only lasts a little while. And though there may be spiritual aspects, its focus is on that which is physical. Now, what is God's purpose to help us to see that which is real as opposed to that which is temporal. And so reality is God's truth. And so he educates us in His truth and then He expects us to choose.

Do you know what happens when we make the right choice? The leaven comes out little by little. Something that seems impossible to this world. The leaven begins to come out, it begins to be purged.

Isaiah 59:14-15 Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity [or justice or evenness] cannot enter. So truth fails, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey [an easy mark]. Then the Lord saw it, and displeased Him that there was no justice.

Most of our problems come from not recognizing what we are, and then when we do see what we are, we fail to do very much, we do very little about it. This is where God in His mercy comes in because He does not give up. He is patient, He keeps molding, He keeps shaping, He keeps educating, He keeps helping us to see that which is real, real about us, real about Him. And you see, in reality, God sees us as a human being that is fermented because of sin. Sin cannot be corked, it cannot be covered, it cannot be completely stopped. It is like a spring that is always under a certain amount of pressure. Remember how He said through Moses in Numbers, "Your sins will find you out." That is reality. And God in His mercy exposes us to the reality of what we are. The critical issue is whether we are going to accept it to do anything about it.

So just as when bottling wine, before it is put into the bottle, the fermentation must be completed or the bottles will blow up. We had amusing experience when I was a boy. We had a lot of grape arbors, both sides of our property were lined with grapes. One whole side of our property, I mean hundreds of feet, had white grapes. The other side had the Concord grapes. Every year my dad tried to make wine. He never succeeded, not even one time. He always ended up with vinegar. But there was one time that was really funny. I do not know what he did wrong, I mean, I know part of what he did wrong. He took the wine out of the jug that it was fermenting in and he put it into bottles. These were actually soft drink bottles, pop bottles, the big size, maybe a quart. And he corked it (we had we had a corking machine) and we put the caps on. And we had a little spring house, it was in our house, we had a pump right down in our basement. The bottles were probably dirty on the inside but I know for sure that the wine was not done working because

one time we were awakened or whatever, bottles began exploding, I mean just like they were bombs. There was glass all over the basement. We were afraid to go in there and handle the bottles because we were afraid they were going to blow up in our hands and so he put a tarpaulin over across the spring house and we just waited until they all blew up.

But that is the way human nature is. Human nature with its leaven is working away within us and it will come out. And that is why it has to be gotten rid of and why it has to be worked on because God will not just put up with it. God will do His part and we have to do our part. Though living according to human nature may seem to be something that just has to be lived with, it does not. We do not have to accept that condition. We can go on to the perfection, the growth to maturity that God wants us to attain to.

2. Leaven is pleasurable to eat. Leaven is responsible for qualities in many things that we enjoy that otherwise would not be there. And these things are enjoyable. Leavened bread is enjoyable— croissants are enjoyable, Danish is enjoyable, cakes are enjoyable. These things taste good. And so leavening, of and by itself, the material leavening, is enjoyable. And the Bible admits that sin is also enjoyable. It is pleasurable, and if we are not careful, we can be drawn into it because it does give us pleasure. A scripture on this part, this area, that I know that you are aware of is,

Hebrews 11:24-25 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.

It says sin, leaven, provides a very helpful teaching vehicle because sin is appealing, that it is pleasurable as well. Moses turned his back on fun, things that I am sure would have been very pleasurable for him. I know that I have thought on a number of occasions, that it is entirely possible that Moses the man sacrificed more in the way of things material than anybody else in the Bible. Who else very likely gave up being Pharaoh of the most powerful nation on the face of the earth, a general of the army, well, I do not need to go on.

You know how they portrayed him in the "Ten Commandments" movie. That was probably very close to the truth. A man of awesome stature. I am not talking about tall, I am talking about intelligent, powerful in many areas, schooled in all the wisdom of Egypt, seemingly had everything going for him. Money, power, and yet, he turned his back on it and left with a slave people for forty, shall I say, very difficult years, leading some of the most hardheaded people who ever walked on the face of God's great green earth. He did it because he had the vision, he did it because he had the faith, he did it because he had the humility to submit to it. An awesome individual. He turned his back on greater pleasure, probably, than any of us have ever experienced in our lives. By greater, I mean greater in terms of the areas of life that were affected. You and I may have to give up a simple job. Look what he had to give up. Perhaps no greater example exists in all of the Bible.

I want to read to you in the final couple of minutes, some quotes from a young lady I received a letter from whenever I was pastoring what is now the Garden Grove Church. It was Norwalk then. This young lady was 21 years old. She did not write it directly to me. She wrote it to Ambassador College and they forwarded it on to me because she was living in the area and I just want you to get a feel for what this young lady was going through. She said,

I wrote you in the past about four years ago seeking your help. I have been into witchcraft and Satanism for almost seven years now. [A paragraph later she says] I have made three suicide attempts since November, one of them was almost fatal. [another paragraph] I had been living with my boyfriend for almost three years, but I caught him with another girl who was 16 and so I kicked him out. I am now off welfare because my son is no longer with me. [Catch that. 21 and she has already had a son and now the kid has been taken away from her, she would find out later.] But I got a job, my first one [she said, 21 years old], last month working at a Winchell's Donut shop, 12 miles from here. I earn \$2 an hour. [She works from 10 pm to six am.] I have been suffering from epilepsy since last July. In fact, I had a seizure, which lasted for over an hour last Saturday. The doctors could not control it so I am on Valium, phenobarbital, and dilantin. Three times a day I take these, but the seizures continue. My seizures average five a week.

[She tells of one in which she said] the convulsions lasted for more than an hour and the doctors could not control it either. One thing that really bothers me is the abortion I had last year.

What formed this young lady's mind? What kind of an example did she have from her parents? She had parents, she does not say whether her parents were still living together. She does not say whether her father walked out on her mother when she was quite young. She does not say whether she was raised in an orphanage or maybe in a foster home, but whatever formed and shaped her into what she was, I think that you can see, was very deficient even by normal standards, so that would lead to a life what she described. I do not know whatever happened to her. I do not know what kind of movies she watched, what kind of television she watched, what kind of music that she listened to, but all of those things worked together to produce that kind of a mind.

I bring this up to you so that you can get a vivid and clear example of how this world impacts, and what the leaven, the false teaching, did to this young woman. It has done the same thing to you and me! Maybe not to that degree, maybe not to that intensity, but we took the leaven in, we took the false teaching in, we took those doctrines in, and they formed and shaped our lives. We went along with it willingly because we did not know any better. We thought that it was necessary to live that way. We accepted it in our ignorance and it enslaved us. In fact, we even thought it was fun until God begins to show us reality. And we can begin then to see a clear difference between reality, God's truth, God's purpose, and what we have been deceived by into thinking is fun.

It took God a long time to get Moses to the place where he would walk away from it. Forty years, in fact. Forty years learning to be a shepherd, learning to trust God implicitly in everything. It worked and it will work with you and me. And we can turn our back on these things. Leaven may seem to be necessary, perfection may seem to be impossible. But the reality is that it can come out. All God asks us to do just to yield to Him. He will do His part, and He will miraculously purge it from us. But it will never come out unless we are willing to get rid of that which we think is necessary to life and pleasurable to live with. Until we are willing to make the sacrifice to pay the price.

That is the the lesson of the Days of Unleavened Bread. And the getting rid of the leaven out of our houses seems like such a childish thing to do. But it reinforces a spiritual lesson so that it drives home the point of what we are to do the whole rest of the year. If we do those things, we will be blessed, we will be happy, joyous, or Jesus did not tell us the truth. But He did tell us the truth, and there will be the kind of satisfaction that is long-lasting and we will carry right on over into the Kingdom of God.