

No U Turns

After our regular Bible on the weekly Sabbath, I have time to spend in prayer and reflect on what lesson was shared. This past Sabbath, we discussed “Come out from the midst of them.”

2 Corinthians 6:17- “Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,” says *the* Lord, “and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you;”

I had not really thought about how his scripture ties into the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but it does. No surprise, God knew.

At the onset of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we focus on removing all of the leavening products from our homes. This stays in the forefront of our thoughts during the week and our reflection on ancient Israel being set free from physical bondage. This is not wrong in its thinking as we are to remember this event.

Exodus 13:3-10- “And Moses said to the people, “Remember this day *in* which you came out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for the LORD brought you out from this place by the strength of His hand. There shall be no leavened bread

eaten. On this day you are going out, in the month Abib. And it shall be when the LORD shall bring you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. You shall eat unleavened bread seven days, and in the seventh day there *shall be* a feast to the LORD. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And there shall be no leavened bread seen with you, nor shall there be leaven seen with you in all your borders. And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, ‘This is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out from Egypt.’ And it shall be a sign to you upon your hand, and for a memorial between your eyes, that **the LORD’S law may be in your mouth**, for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. You shall therefore keep this law in its season from year to year.”

This is certainly the foundational reason we keep this Feast, but we can get tunnel vision and even lose sight of the bigger picture that surrounds this week long observance.

Egypt represents the physical bondage of slavery that the Nation of Israel was delivered from. We too often over emphasize this “coming out of sin” as opposed

to the surroundings that God delivered us from where sin abounds. Egypt then does not automatically represent sin but the environment where sin happens. So many of those that fled Egypt, never really left the sin as they brought its atmosphere with them. They wandered Sinai for 40 years because of it. They were not delivered from sin just yet. Those who profess to be religious are often too short sighted to see “the forest for the trees.”

Matthew 23:23- “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, but you have abandoned the more important *matters* of the law—judgment, and mercy and faith. These *you* were obligated to do, and not to leave the others undone.”

We know that unleavened bread has both a physical and a spiritual element. In looking closer at Exodus 13:9 we can see a line that may add another thought to eating unleavened bread.

Exodus 13:9- “And it shall be a sign to you upon your hand, and for a memorial between your eyes, *that the LORD’S law may be in your mouth*, for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt.”

This is insightful if we think in New Testament terms and Jesus Christ being “the Bread of Life.”

John 6:32-35- “Then Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven; but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He Who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” Therefore, they said to Him, “Lord, give this bread to us always.” Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; the one who comes to Me shall never hunger; and the one who believes in Me shall never thirst at any time.

In this passage, Jesus identifies Himself as the Bread of Life with an Old Testament reference.

John 6:48-51- “I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate manna in the desert, but they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven so that anyone may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is even My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

We all know we are to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God **(Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:4)**, and if we look deeper into scripture and seek Him more diligently, some words we may have missed may pop out for additional meaning. Unleavened bread then signifies the spiritual food that feeds our minds and hearts. If we re-read Exodus 13:9, what could be more important or have a greater impact on spiritual growth than having “*the law of the Lord in your mouth?*”

Keeping God’s laws and words in our hearts and minds makes it too crowded for the things of the world to gain access back into our minds. That is why He tells us to “pray unceasingly.”- **1 Thessalonians 5:17**.

The catch is, we have to be vigilant and devoted to our spiritual development and not just playing church. For me, I think of it as watching something in the rearview mirror. If I remain focused on my destination, the past (the things of the world) gets further and further away. The things that used to draw us to the world will no longer be appealing. The joy of knowing God and His will for us will outweigh any earthly pulls we left behind. God will fill us with His Spirit.

Has anyone else had a rough week? We tend to expect trials at the onset of the Holy Days, but this past week had a few bumps as well. The closer we draw to God in our relationship with Him, we can tend to become complacent. The “bumps” are there to remind us there is work to be done in preparation for the Kingdom. It simply does not end because we got all of the potato chips out of the house.

As we have been keeping the Feasts for several years now, we must not ever allow them to become a habitual routine and mundane. God will know if you are “just going through the motions.” It is just human nature to become bored or cynical as there is a cost for walking God’s path and keeping His Sabbath and Holy Days. It goes against the current of our societal norms and we will be viewed as “different or “strange.” When judgement comes, there is no one on the planet that will have an opinion that matters. Who would you rather please, God or man?

Falling into complacency will create in us an idle approach to our obedience to God. With all of the temptations and sin around us, we cannot afford to make a U-turn. Our modern celebration of Thanksgiving is a good example of what happens when the original intent falls into a complacent observance. We have read its history and know it was originally set aside as a “Day of Thanksgiving and Praise”

to honor God for His benevolence toward the prosperity of our nation. We can clearly see how it has degenerated into a commercialized glutton-fest, full of TV sports that ends up in a Black Friday shopping frenzy.

God will not tolerate that for His Sabbaths or Holy Days. We have been “called out and set apart.” Half-hearted observance will take us to a place we do not want to be in. Paying “lip-service” to God will not suffice.

Amos 5:21-25- “I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them. Nor will I regard the peace offerings of your fat animals. Take the noise of your songs away from Me; for I will not hear the melody of your harps. But let judgment roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream. Have you offered sacrifices and offerings to Me forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?”

The New Testament warning for “lip service” is, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the one who *is* doing the will of My Father, Who *is* in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?

‘And then I will confess to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.’- **Matthew 7:21-23**.

It takes great commitment to follow God’s law and keep His Sabbaths and Holy Days. But the sacrifices we choose to make adjusting schedules and stepping out in faith, are far less than the sacrifice Jesus Christ made so that we are able to follow God’s plan for mankind.

God knows whose heart belongs to Him. He will judge accordingly.

Psalm 44:20-21- “If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god, Shall not God search this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart.”

When God calls us to remember something, it is imperative we keep it in our thoughts continually. Remembering the “Greatest Commandment” will keep things in perspective. If we love Him first, things fall in alignment with His will.

Matthew 22:37-38- “And Jesus said to him,” ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is *the* first and greatest commandment;”

When God commands us to remember something, it is certain it has tremendous significance to His plan of salvation for mankind.

Exodus 12:15-20- “You shall eat unleavened *bread* seven days; even the first day you shall *have* put away leaven out of your houses; for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done in them, except that which every man must eat, that only may be done by you. And you shall keep the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for in this very same day ***I have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore, you shall keep this day in your generations as a law forever.*** In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at sunset, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at sunset. Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses, for whoever eats that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the

congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. You shall eat nothing leavened. In all your dwelling places you shall eat unleavened bread.’ ”

In addition to the reasons we observe this Feast, another major reason is to remember the deliverance God provided from the place Israel was in. There are over two-hundred scriptures in the Bible relating to deliverance. Joseph was delivered in Genesis, Samson was used to deliver the Nation of Israel from the Philistines in Judges, so many in the Old Testament, too many to list at this time. We have all been delivered from sin and death by the sacrifice of our Savior Jesus Christ.

It is in this context that the remembering becomes a Feast. We may not think of giving up beer, bread, or pizza for a week can be related to a Feast, but when we do remember what God did for us and continues to do, backflips are permitted! We should be shouting from the rooftops.

Matthew 10:27- “What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops.”

The Nation of Israel kept this Feast as a memorial of their physical deliverance from Egypt by God's Hand. We as spiritual Israel keep this Feast as a memorial of an even greater, eternal reason, our spiritual deliverance by Jesus Christ.

When the Nation of Israel came out from Egypt, they did not do anything of their own accord, other than to physically walk out of the land. God Himself made all things possible in their deliverance from their physical bondage. This week is a memorial to God for His deliverance of mankind, physically and spiritually.

As we have been told to "come out from the midst of them" this was made possible by God sending His only Son Who was our Passover Lamb. He paid the price for our Exodus from the world and its influences, sin, and death. The price was paid once and for all, but our work must continue for the remainder of our lives.

Colossians 1:10-14- "That you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God; Being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy; Giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light; Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness and has transferred *us* unto the

kingdom of the Son of His love; In Whom we have redemption through His own blood, *even* the remission of sins;”

1 John 5:18-21- “We know that anyone who is begotten by God does not *practice* sin; for the one who has been begotten by God keeps himself *by the power of God*, and the wicked one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and *that* the whole world lies in *the power of* the wicked one. And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding, so that we may know Him Who *is* true; and we are in Him Who *is* true, and in His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and the eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

“Keep yourselves from idols” is another reminder as we have been called out. An idol is anything that we put between God and us. In eating the unleavened bread, we will keep God’s word and His laws in our mouths, minds, and hearts.

Galatians 1:3-5- “Grace and peace *be* to you from God *the* Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins, in order that He might deliver us from the present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father; To Whom *be* the glory into the ages of eternity. Amen.”

Every bite of unleavened bread we have taken this past week should remind us “from whence we came” and what God has done to bring us forth.

Galatians 4:3-9- “In the same way, when we were children, we were held in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the time for the fulfillment came, God sent forth His own Son, born of a woman, born under law, In order that He might redeem those who are under law, so that we might receive the *gift of sonship from God*. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, “Abba, Father.” So then, you are no longer a servant, but a son. And if a son, *you are* also an heir of God through Christ. Now on the one hand, when you did not know God, you were in bondage to those who are not gods by nature. But on the other hand, after having known God—rather, after having been known by God—how *is it that* you are turning again to the weak and impotent elements, to which you again desire to be in bondage?”

We need to heed Paul’s warning to the Church at Colossae not to turn back to our old ways. God has so blessed us to have been chosen and called at this time we cannot lose our devotion in our observances of His Sabbaths and Holy Days. There are yet so many in the world who have no concept of God’s truth and are missing the greatest gift imaginable.

Colossians 2:8- “Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ.”

Colossians 2:16-17- “Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you in eating or in drinking, or with regard to a festival, or new moon, or *the* Sabbaths, Which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming, but the body of Christ.”

Colossians 2:20-22- “Therefore, if you have died together *with Christ* from the elements of the world, why are you subjecting yourselves to *the* decrees *of men* as if you were living in *the* world? *They say*, “You may not handle! You may not taste! You may not touch!” The use of all such things leads to corruption, according to the commandments and doctrines of men,”

In keeping this Feast, we remember God’s deliverance of physical Israel, we remove the leaven of sin from our lives, we ingest the unleavened word of God into our beings, we rejoice in being delivered by Jesus Christ from sin and death and we resist the temptations of returning to the former bondage from the darkness which we were delivered. Making a U-Turn back to the world is always on the

road ahead, but God is driving. If we love Him, trust in Him, and do what He says in His word, He will bring us home. Amen.

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