

OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

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Today is one of God's Feast Days ... though you'd hardly know it! The world seems entirely ignorant of it ... carrying on with their every day activities.

The last time we spoke ... we looked at the symbol of Leaven ... how it's used in the Bible ... to picture sin and false doctrine.

We put leaven out of our lives ... we eat unleavened bread for 7 days to remind us of the need to put sin out ... to live unleavened lives before God ... to picture living God's way of life.

The Days of Unleavened Bread are almost over ... but we should carry the lessons with us all through the year.

One of the biggest lessons we need to learn is to be serious about living a Godly life ...not to be half-hearted ... one foot going God's way and one foot in the world.

One of the key illustrations from the Passover and Exodus story was that ancient Israel had to leave Egypt. They couldn't stay behind. They had been protected by the blood. They had to get out ... start their journey to the Promised Land (and ideally ... actually arrive there!!)

Exodus 12:14-18 (NKJV)

14 'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. *(The 15th ... the first Feast day of Unleavened Bread)*

15 **Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.**

16 **On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you.** No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you.

17 So **you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I**

will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance.

18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.

This was after Passover. They were still in Egypt ... but needed to leave. It was their responsibility... they had to take action.

This is a picture of sin and satan and society around us.

We need to leave our sins ... our sinful lifestyles ... the sinful world around us. To come completely out of spiritual Egypt ... and start our journey towards the Kingdom of God ... and continue our journey ... ALL OF THE WAY! Unlike Israel where only 2 people made it ... Joshua and Caleb.

We should believe God's way is a better way ... and happily commit to walking God's way. Being half-hearted is not a good idea.

Revelation 3:14-21 (NKJV)

14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. (*Half-hearted. Lukewarm ... but don't know it?! Neither one thing or the other*)

17 Because you say, I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. (*These people are complacent. Naked?!*)

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

20 **Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.**

21 **To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.**

These people are lukewarm ... complacent. They are in great danger. If nothing else changes ... it's the Lake of Fire.

James 1:21-25 (NKJV)

21 **Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word,** which is able to save your souls. (*"Lay aside" = put out/put away*)

22 **But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.** (*BE DOERS!! ... take action ... leave ... walk*)

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;

24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is **not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.**

It is easy to be complacent ... comfortable ... slow down ... LUKEWARM!

We are easily puffed up by what we know ... feel superior because we have such doctrinal insights.

But James says **it's what we're doing that counts** ... not just talking the talk.

How many of us have kept Unleavened Bread for 10-20-30-40+ years. How much "doing" have we done in that time? How far are we along in our journey? How much fruit have we produced in that time?

John 15:1-8 (NKJV)

1 **"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.**

2 **Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.** (God wants more fruit)

3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

4 **Abide in Me, and I in you.** As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you **abide in Me.**

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. **He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.**

6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 **If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.**

8 By this My Father is glorified, that you **bear much fruit**; so you will be My disciples.

We need to be joined to the Vine. How much fruit? After 10-20 years ... how are we doing ... "much?" Is there a rich harvest of fruit?

Are we committed to our Exodus journey ... or have we become half-hearted? One foot still in Egypt??

Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV)

1 **I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.**

2 **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

We should give our whole bodies ... our lives ... entirely to God.

If you brought a sacrifice to the priests (lamb ... goat etc) ... how much did you offer? Just a part? Just a leg? An ear?

So ... if we're a living sacrifice ... how much? ALL OF US!

And if we brought a sacrifice to God in the Old Testament ... what quality of sacrifice does God want? What would God want from us?

Deuteronomy 17:1 (NKJV)

1 **"You shall not sacrifice to the Lord your God a bull or sheep which has any blemish or defect, for that is an abomination to the Lord your God.**

No defect. Best quality.

Was that just an instruction for the animal sacrifices?

Leviticus 22:17-22 (NKJV)

17 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

18 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them: Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, who offers his sacrifice for any of his vows or for any of his freewill offerings, which they offer to the Lord as a burnt offering—

19 **you shall offer of your own free will a male *without blemish*** from the cattle, from the sheep, or from the goats.

20 **Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf.**

21 And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the Lord, to fulfill his vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, **it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it.**

22 **Those that are blind or broken or maimed, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the Lord, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to the Lord.**

The animal had to be without blemish ... perfect.

Is God really that interested in an animal? Not really ... but ...**He is interested in our heart ... our attitude ... our thankfulness ... our willingness ... our commitment.**

We're a living sacrifice. Would God insist on a quality lamb or goat ... but then be happy if we offered just a lukewarm ... half-hearted carnal life ... blemished and stained with this world? Is God more concerned about an animal being in good condition or more interested in us being in a good condition?

Malachi 1:6-8 (NKJV)

6 **"A son honours his father,**

And a servant his master.

If then I am the Father,

Where is My honour?

And if I am a Master,

Where is My reverence?

Says the Lord of hosts

To you priests who despise My name.

Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'

7 **"You offer defiled food on My altar,**

But say,

'In what way have we defiled You?'

By saying,

The table of the Lord is contemptible.'

8 **And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice,**

Is it not evil?

And when you offer the lame and sick,

Is it not evil?

Offer it then to your governor!

Would he be pleased with you?

Would he accept you favourably?" *(Of course not! How dare you bring that to your Great God)*

Says the Lord of hosts.

Malachi 1:12-14 (NKJV)

12 "But you profane it,

In that you say,

The table of the Lord is defiled;

And its fruit, its food, is contemptible.'

13 You also say,

'Oh, what a weariness!'

And you sneer at it,"

Says the Lord of hosts.

"And **you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick;**

Thus you bring an offering!

Should I accept this from your hand?"

Says the Lord.

14 "But **cursed be the deceiver**

Who has in his flock a male,

And takes a vow,

But **sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished—**

For I am a great King,"

Says the Lord of hosts,

“And My name is to be feared among the nations.

These verses show that God is looking for a quality sacrifice.

If we're offering ourselves as a living sacrifice ... is it good quality ... or poor?

Do we seek ways to delight God ... or just do the absolute minimum? Our actions reveal a lot.

In olden days ... we often had loads of church members to our home after services or on a Sunday.

It is courteous to bring a gift. Some brought chocolates ... or a bottle of wine ... or one bachelor brought a bag of potatoes. Some brought very cheap biscuits (which we binned!) ... some people brought nothing ... some just brought the “Holy Spirit”!!

Is God in the market for 2nd best?

Mark 12:28-31 (NKJV)

28 Then **one of the scribes came**, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, **asked Him**, **“Which is the first commandment of all?”**

29 **Jesus answered him**, **“The first of all the commandments is: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.**

30 **And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’**
This is the first commandment. (All your heart ... DEDICATED!)

31 **And the second, like it, is this: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’** **There is no other commandment greater than these.”**

According to Jesus ... **the number one commandment is to love God with all of our heart** ... with all our mind ... with all our strength.

Luke 9:23-25 (NKJV)

23 Then He said to them all, **“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.**

24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.

25 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?

“Deny himself” ... offer his life as a sacrifice ... daily. Put yourself to death. (The cross is where you put someone to death ... not a great burden that you have to carry).

It takes action to deny ourselves.

Just knowing doctrine isn't good enough ... just attending services. But ... TAKE ACTION ... MAKE DECISIONS ... WALK OUT OUR JOURNEY ... LEAVING EGYPT.

Years can pass ... we can keep many Feasts of Unleavened Bread ... yet remain almost as worldly as when we started?

1 Corinthians 3:1-4 (NKJV)

1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.

2 **I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able;**

3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

4 For **when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not carnal?**

That was one of their problems. They were worldly ... fighting over “leaders”. You only have to take a look around the churches of God today. What do you see? Among the leaders ... envy ... strife ... division!

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 (NKJV)

11 For **no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

14 **If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.**

15 **If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.**

There is a different quality of building on our foundation. What does our building look like? Gold? Straw?

Our building ... actions ... words ... decisions ... how are we progressing on our walk?

Hebrews 5:11-14 (NKJV)

11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

12 **For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.**

13 **For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.** (*Unskilled ... haven't progressed. Still got one foot in Egypt? Compromised?*)

14 **But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**

Hebrews 6:1 (NKJV)

1 **Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,** (*"going on to perfection" = going on to maturity*)

Don't be sluggish ... half-hearted ... luke warm ... keeping company with taskmasters of Egypt ... still camping in spiritual Egypt. A permanent baby!

We should be a long way by now on our Exodus journey. A long way to the Promised Land.

1 Peter 1:13-16 (NKJV)

13 **Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;**

14 as obedient children, **not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;** (*don't live the way you used to live*)

15 **but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,**

16 because it is written, "**Be holy, for I am holy.**"

To be Holy = to be unleavened.

Put sin and bad conduct out ... live in sincerity and truth. LIVE JUST AS JESUS LIVED.

2 Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1 (NKJV)

14 **Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?**

15 And **what accord has Christ with Belial?** Or **what part has a believer with an unbeliever?**

16 And **what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.** As God has said:

"I will dwell in them
And walk among them.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people."

17 Therefore

**"Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.**

Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you."

18 "I will be a Father to you,
And you shall be My sons and daughters,
Says the Lord Almighty."

1 **Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**

Don't be conformed to the world. Put away the sin. Get these things out. Be separate = be Holy. That is part of the message of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. No longer influenced by Egypt. We had better take action. Leave Egypt ... move on.

Exodus 20:1-3 (NKJV)

1 And God spoke all these words, saying:

2 **"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.** (When? At the Feast of Unleavened Bread! The 15th day = the Memorial Day when I took you out of the land of Egypt!)

3 **"You shall have no other gods before Me.**

Key Lesson: **come out ... no other gods ... no other allegiance.**

Deny ourselves. Give our lives as a living sacrifice. Quality! **GOD COMES FIRST.**

Caution: we often tend to separate our lives ... compartmentalise into:

- Spiritual Activities (prayer ... Bible Study)
- Secular Activities (work ... shopping ... driving the car)

Then many of us get frustrated ... trying to increase our spiritual activities ... struggle to put God first!

But ... it is an artificial distinction. Apparently ... it comes from Greek Philosophy (they divided mankind into mind and body). They had high regard for the mind ... of high regard ...of the spirit. But not for manual workers. They looked down on that. That's what slaves did. Hebrew thinking is different ... there is no division. Everything we do is us ... just you ... just me. There isn't a spiritual and physical side to us. So ... everything we do ... can be for God.

Work: showing love for families and the 4th commandment.

Shopping: showing love for families.

Child-Rearing: raising future God beings as God's stewards ... in His place.

Driving: opportunities for patience. Consideration of others. Self-control.

Whatever we are doing. Everything! Our lives should be a living sacrifice!

2 Timothy 2:19-23 (NKJV)

19 Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: **"The Lord knows those who are His,"** and, **"Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."** (Get out of Egypt!)

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honour and some for dishonour.

21 Therefore **if anyone cleanses himself** from the latter, he will be a vessel for honour, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

(Put out the sin)

22 **Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**

23 But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.

2 Timothy 2:21 (GNT)

21 **Those who make themselves clean from all those evil things, will be used for special purposes, because they are dedicated and useful to their Master, ready to be used for every good deed.**

Those who make themselves clean. Taken action. Leave spiritual Egypt ... put leaven out of their lives. "Dedicated and useful" to the Master.

Walking in the way of the Lord ... heading through the wilderness to the Promised Land ... unencumbered by sin.

Jesus gave up everything for us ... He was a perfect sacrifice. He set the example.

So ... it only reasonable that we aim to walk in His footsteps. His way leads to eternal life.

Unlike those who fell by the wayside. Let's use the Feast of Unleavened Bread to encourage us to walk on ... in our journey ... to the Promised Land in the Kingdom of God.