

Audio Transcript of Sermon

April 9, 2020

First Day of the Christian Feast of Unleavened Bread

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Today we observing the first day of the Christian Feast of Unleavened Bread. While many Christians are looking forward to Easter, we instead observe this feast and today we will review Biblical reasons for our observance of the Christian Feast of Unleavened Bread. Many think that when Jesus died, so died the commandments and the Holy Days, but the New Testament provides evidence that the church believed otherwise. Having recently observed the Christian Passover, we understand the significance of the death of Jesus Christ and how His death gives us the opportunity for eternal life where before this was not possible. That should keep us humble throughout the year and because we are human it is easy for us to forget the extreme hardship that Jesus went through just so we could have the opportunity for salvation. It is important for us to remind ourselves of this periodically, even beyond the observance of the Christian Passover. When we fail to remind ourselves of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we can live with a mindset that lacks gratitude for what we have been given, and when there is a lack of gratitude there is commonly a mindset of entitlement that it is replaced with. A long time ago, I once knew a person who felt he was entitled to a hot meal every day. He wasn't grateful for the food he had. The lack of gratitude and entitlement loop is alive and well in consumer-driven economies. We have because we want even if we cannot afford. From time-to-time Paul encountered the lack of gratitude/entitlement mentality and verses relevant to the Feast of Unleavened Bread can be found in first Corinthians five beginning with verse one.

1 Corinthians 5:1-8

- 1. It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.**
- 2. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.**
- 3. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,**

- 4. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,**
- 5. To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.**
- 6. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?**
- 7. Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:**
- 8. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.**

With the congregation at Corinth, the people had this lack of gratitude/entitlement mentality. They somehow worked it out in their mind that it was acceptable for a son to have a sexual relationship with his step mother. By solely focusing on the gift of eternal life and minimizing the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, it is easy to attribute acts of sin to forgiveness and to allow sin to freely reign in our lives. Paul says instead they should have mourned that the sin be removed from them. Paul then reminds the people that a little leaven leavens the whole lump. Common leavening agents in baking are yeast, baking soda, and baking powder. You might follow a recipe that calls for a cup of flour but only a teaspoon of baking powder. Very little leavening is needed to cause the bread, pastry, or dessert to rise. Paul reminds us to purge out the old leaven as we are to be unleavened because Jesus Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. In verse eight, Paul tells us to, *“Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”* The feast that is to be kept with unleavened bread is the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We know that by reading Leviticus twenty-three beginning with verse five.

Leviticus 23:5-8

- 5. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S passover.**
- 6. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.**
- 7. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.**
- 8. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.**

You can read the other feasts of God in Leviticus twenty-three. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is the only feast that is kept with unleavened bread. When Paul was writing to the Corinthians it was the Feast of Unleavened Bread he was referencing. This shows that the church immediately after the death of Jesus still observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Holy Days. There are those who reading the passage from Leviticus will ask about the offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days. They might also ask about the sacrifices mentioned with other Holy Days in other books of the Old Testament. The difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament is the death of Jesus Christ, our Passover. Jesus died once for all, there is no longer a need for the sacrifices and offerings mentioned in the Old Testament. This is beautifully explained for us in Hebrews chapter ten beginning with verse one.

Hebrews 10:1-18

- 1. For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.**
- 2. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.**
- 3. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.**
- 4. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.**
- 5. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:**
- 6. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.**
- 7. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.**
- 8. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;**
- 9. Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.**
- 10. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**
- 11. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:**

- 12. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;**
- 13. From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.**
- 14. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.**
- 15. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,**
- 16. This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;**
- 17. And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.**
- 18. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.**

The death of Jesus removed the penalty of sin from our life; therefore there is no need for offerings and sacrifices to cover our sins. That price has been paid once by Jesus Christ for all people. There are other New Testament references to the Days of Unleavened Bread. These are mentioned in Acts twelve beginning with verse one when Herod had imprisoned Peter.

Acts 12:1-3

- 1. Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.**
- 2. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.**
- 3. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)**

The Days of Unleavened Bread are also mentioned in Acts chapter twenty beginning with verse one when Paul sailed away from Philippi.

Acts 20:1-6

- 1. And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.**
- 2. And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,**
- 3. And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.**
- 4. And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.**

5. These going before tarried for us at Troas.

6. And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

The Days of Unleavened Bread are mentioned in passing in the Book of Acts in multiple locations showing these were still important to Luke, the author of the Book of Acts. Paul referenced the Feast of Unleavened Bread in his first letter to the Corinthians and reminded the Corinthians to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Holy Days as listed in the Bible were important to the first century Christians because they were commanded, and the early church still observed the Holy Days. What changed with the death of Jesus Christ was the need for animal sacrifices and various types of temple offerings. With this thought in mind, let's examine how the Feast of Unleavened Bread was introduced to the Children of Israel by looking at Exodus chapter twelve beginning with verse fourteen.

Exodus 12:14-20

14. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.

15. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.

During the Feast of Unleavened Bread, also known as the Days of Unleavened Bread, we are to eat unleavened bread. By the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we are to have removed leaven from our houses, and again common leavening agents are yeast, baking soda, and baking powder. If prior to today you were unaware of this requirement, today would be a good time to remove the leaven from your house. We are not to eat leavened bread. Virtually all bread including flour tortillas have leavening, as do cakes, cupcakes, pancakes, biscuits, waffles, cookies, and candy bars made with cookies. Self-rising flour also has leavening. The only way to know if a bread doesn't have leavening is to read the ingredients. Sometimes a leavening agent is listed by another name. For example, sodium bicarbonate is often listed for baking soda. Verse sixteen.

16. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you.

The first and last days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread are Holy Days, today and next week Wednesday. No work is to be done except for food preparation. It's a time to come together and worship God and because of COVID19 many will need to come together remotely. I encourage everyone to follow all guidelines of health authorities wherever you may live. Verse seventeen.

17. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.

The children of Israel were brought out of Egypt during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and we remember this freedom from Egypt during this time of year. As Christians we also believe that Egypt is used as a representation for a sinful lifestyle with leavened bread used as a symbol of sin, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is a time for us to reflect on our own journey from sin. Our Journey out of sin as Christians is made possible by the death of Jesus Christ. Verse eighteen.

18. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even.

19. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth 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.

20. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

In verse eighteen through twenty we are again reminded that we are to eat unleavened bread, that we are not to eat leavened bread, and that there is not to be leaven found in our house. A key to moving forward in our life as Christians is to consider that not only are we not to eat leavened bread, we are to eat unleavened bread. Let's go back and revisit what Paul wrote to the Corinthians in first Corinthians five verse eight.

1 Corinthians 5:8

8. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Paul compares leaven to malice and wickedness and unleavened bread to sincerity and truth. Malice is the desire or intent to do evil, injury, or harm to another person with a desire to intensify problems with or for other people. Wickedness includes sinful acts. Instead of doing malice and wickedness we are to instead act with sincerity and truth. Sincerity is acting without a hidden agenda from a pure heart and we are not to stray from the truth. By keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we affirm the value of truth in our life. Jesus warned his disciples about the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees in Matthew sixteen beginning with verse one.

Matthew 16:1-4

1. The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.

2. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.

3. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

4. A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

The Pharisees and the Sadducees came to Jesus hoping to tempt Jesus to give them a sign that He was the Messiah. Jesus did not take the bait. The only sign that would be given to people was the sign of the prophet Jonah. That sign was spelled out in more detail in Matthew twelve beginning with verse thirty-eight.

Matthew 12:38-40

38. Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

39. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

40. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The time given by Jesus was three days and three nights in the grave before his resurrection. Those of us who observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread see difficulty in counting three days and three nights from the traditional Good Friday death and Easter Sunday resurrection. Since Jesus said this would be the only sign given that He was the Messiah, we do not observe the Good Friday and Easter customs. Let's return to Matthew sixteen verse five.

Matthew 16:5-12

5. And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

6. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

7. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread.

8. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

9. Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

10. Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

11. How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

12. Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Jesus warned his disciples to be careful of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and while it took his disciples time for the disciples to understand what Jesus was teaching, they finally did understand it. Jesus was saying the doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees had caused them to become puffed up and arrogant. Think about that for a moment. Is it possible to become arrogant and puffed up over religious teachings? According to Jesus, it is. Doctrines are man's interpretations of what the Bible teaches, and we need to be careful that what we believe is centered on what the Bible teaches and not what man teaches

because if we get this wrong, it can have disastrous consequences. Doctrines that aggrandize the self and minimize the importance of God and Jesus can lead to arrogance and becoming puffed up. When God first made man and woman he made mankind after the image and likeness of God. Genesis chapter one verses twenty-six and twenty-seven.

Genesis 1:26-27

26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Do we see ourselves as being made in the image and likeness of God, or when we worship God have we instead made God after our image and likeness. Are we worshipping God or are we really just worshipping ourselves? How do we know if we may have problems with the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees? Let's take a look at a warning given in the New Testament beginning with second Corinthians twelve verse twenty.

2 Corinthians 12:20-21

20. For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

21. And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

Paul gives a list of problems with the Corinthians and there are some who may question how these could be a *doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees*. Doctrines are designed to teach. For instance, if you are part of a congregation and your group likes to debate, you have learned debate, it has been taught or imparted to you. Debate is part of your doctrine. If you envy, maybe it's because you believe God works through only through a small group and members of your group are part of the true believers and you can't understand how others can have more favorable outcomes and their success makes you jealous. Envy is part of your

doctrine. Maybe you believe that because the Bible speaks of the great and dreadful day of the LORD that you have the right to act with anger and to be angry with sin that you see. Wrath may be part of your doctrine. Maybe you see the many twists and turns of passages in the Bible and you like to get other people worked up about the twists and turns in scriptures you see. Strife may be part of your doctrine. Maybe after being part of a group for many years you feel disappointed and you begin to criticize decisions made by others. Backbiting may be part of your doctrine. Maybe you believe there should be no secrets among friends because the Bible tells us to share our faults with others and when you think a friend is keeping a secret, you want to tell a secret, too. Whisperings may be a part of your doctrine. Maybe you are proud of the knowledge you have or another spiritual accomplishment in your life. Swelling, or arrogance, may be part of your doctrine. Maybe you believe we are here to serve others and when others don't serve the way you think they should, you want to remove a person from helping you through service. Maybe tumult is part of your doctrine.

In the modern era, many people have things and objects in their life that they enjoy. It's truly incredible what we can enjoy. Even people of modest means today are rich compared to how people lived thousands of years ago. We may not have a household of servants, instead we have modern appliances that take the place of many servants. With this thought in mind, let's examine final thoughts given to Timothy by Paul in first Timothy six beginning with verse seventeen.

1 Timothy 6:17-20

17. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19. Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Paul reminds us in writing to Timothy that we not think of ourselves more than we should. If we are wealthy we should be appreciative of what God has given us. Some when they have wealth believe that they have wealth because they have been rewarded by God for their good deeds. God gives people physical things as part of our life so that we can enjoy life. For those who have been given a surplus

of material goods, we can use that surplus to help other people. When we in our own mind make the leap between personal wealth and being rewarded by God for good deeds, is our doctrine trading the Kingdom of God for wealth today, and how is that no different than the temptation of Jesus by Satan in Matthew chapter four beginning with verse eight?

Matthew 4:8-10

8. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Satan offered to give Jesus not only power over the nations, but all the wealth. Instead of succumbing to the temptation of power and wealth, Jesus knew and taught we are to worship and serve God. Jesus rejected the appeal and allure of wealth and power.

Luke records the passage of the leaven of the Pharisees slightly differently. Let's look at Luke twelve verse one.

Luke 12:1-3

1. In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

2. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

3. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

Jesus shared that the leaven of the Pharisees in Matthew sixteen verse twelve was their doctrine and in verse one of Luke twelve that their leaven was hypocrisy. Jesus affirms that it is possible for a religious group to have hypocritical doctrines. We cannot proclaim liberty while we oppress, and all that Jesus had

issue with regarding the Pharisees was their oppressive and hypocritical doctrine. Oppressive doctrines make it more probable for somebody to err in relation to the doctrine and gives place for accusations to be hurled against the people who could not live up to the requirements of the doctrine. Like the Pharisees and Sadducees who oppressed people through their doctrine that was based on scripture yet perverted scripture, we must be careful to solely base doctrine on scripture without perverting scripture. We cannot read into the Bible what is not there. When we do read into the Bible what is not there, we worship ourselves and make God and Jesus Christ to be after our image and likeness, a complete 180 degree turn from how it should be.

We can deceive ourselves into believing we are acting righteously out of love towards God, and yet we must examine ourselves according to the standard given to us in the first letter of John chapter four, beginning with verse twenty.

1 John 4:20-21

20. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21. And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

When we act hypocritically and oppress people we know, we cannot claim that we love God. We cannot hide behind the commandments as a reason to oppress other people, because the commandments are a source of liberty, not oppression. We are to be righteous so that our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees. Notice Matthew chapter five beginning with verse seventeen.

Matthew 5:17-20

17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

19. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but

whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Are we to disregard the commandments? No, because Jesus says we would be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven. Did the Pharisees and scribes keep the commandments? They did. Did they oppress people by going beyond what was required in the Bible? They did. We are to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees by keeping the commandments without placing a burden of our creation on other people.

Instead, we are to grow and mature through the development of our faith, a topic which we looked at towards the beginning of the year. Let's read second Peter one beginning with verse one.

2 Peter 1:1-11

1. Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

We have been given the promise of eternal life which will help us escape the corruption of this world that comes through lust. Being diligent in our faith we must add to our faith.

5. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

- 6. And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;**
- 7. And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.**
- 8. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
- 9. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.**
- 10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:**
- 11. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**

When we allow our faith to grow and develop, we make our election and entrance into the Kingdom of God sure, and we do this by every day practicing what we are doing during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Like Paul wrote in first Corinthians five verse eight, we remove the leavening of malice and wickedness from our lives, that which causes us to act puffed up. We remove those things from our life that may cause us to worship ourselves instead of God. Even the Pharisees and Sadducees were guilty of this though they saw themselves as righteous even when they oppressed. Instead of being hypocritical in our religious faith, we will act with sincerity and truth because through diligence, we will be allowing our faith to grow and mature, and in so doing, the Holy Spirit will lead us into the Kingdom of God.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.