

Seven Days You Shall Eat Unleavened Bread

James Smyda

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As we keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread every year, we're typically very focused on making sure we get the leaven out, as we should be. In the weeks prior to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we're typically very diligent in making sure that we're thorough in our cleaning, and we don't miss anything getting all the leaven out of our homes. Then, during the Feast itself, we try to make an effort to be very diligent, to see that we don't slip up and unknowingly eat some leavening, because we're just not thinking about the fact that it's the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Because sometimes you're at work, and a co-worker brings in some doughnuts or some cookies and starts sharing them with everybody. And you just unknowingly grab one and take part in it. We try to be diligent to see that we don't slip up like that.

But we also need to be aware that the Bible makes a similar, if not an even greater emphasis, on the fact that we should be -- during the Feast of Unleavened Bread -- being proactive in eating unleavened bread. In fact, there are some very important spiritual lessons in that for our daily life that are equally, if not more important, than the issue of keeping the leavening out. So, what we're going to do today is focus on this particular lesson. And if you'd like a title for this sermon, it's:

Seven Days You Shall Eat Unleavened Bread

As we're going to see when we go through this sermon, there's a number of scriptures that speak about this festival that don't even mention putting out the leaven. But they specifically mention the command that we should proactively eat unleavened bread for seven days. And just to notice this, turn over to Exodus 12. This is the very first mention of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Exodus 12, and we'll start reading here in verse 15.

Ex 12:15 *“Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread....”* (NKJV)

And notice it starts off making an emphasis of the proactive effort to eat unleavened bread during this festival. Now, it's also going to go on and explain how we should put the leaven out and avoid that for seven days. That's also important as well. But notice the emphasis that it starts off with on what we should proactively be doing, not just what we should be avoiding. Continue on in verse 15.

“...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. 19) For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. 20) You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.’ ” (NKJV)

Now, as I mentioned, we oftentimes put a lot of emphasis on making sure we get the leaven out. And we should. As we just read here, that is one of the instructions of what we're supposed to do during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. But oftentimes, we don't put a similar emphasis on the fact that we should be proactively making sure that we eat unleavened bread during this festival. And, more importantly, learning the spiritual lessons attached to that. What we're going to see here in the next several verses that we're going to look at is that there are multiple times that this festival is spoken of in the Bible where it specifically mentions the proactive effort of eating unleavened bread during these seven days and doesn't even mention the act of not eating leavened bread. To notice this, turn over to Exodus 23, and we're going to read here verse 15.

Ex 23:15 *“You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty);” (NKJV)*

Notice it mentions this particular festival, and it specifically mentions the fact that we should be actively eating unleavened bread during this festival. But it doesn't even mention putting the leaven out. Now, I'm not saying that we shouldn't put the leaven out. We obviously should. That's part of the instructions for this festival. But oftentimes our focus is solely on avoiding the leaven, and we don't put a similar focus on the fact that we're supposed to be proactively eating unleavened bread. Now, let's notice this a few more times here. Turn over to Exodus 34, and we'll read verse 18.

Ex 34:18 *“The Feast of Unleavened Bread you shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, in the appointed time of the month of Abib; for in the month of Abib you came out from Egypt.” (NKJV)*

Notice once again, it mentions this festival, specifically mentions the fact that we should be proactively eating unleavened bread, but it doesn't mention putting the leaven out. Again, I'm not saying that we shouldn't have an important emphasis on getting the leaven out and avoiding leavening during this time frame. We definitely should. That's part of the instructions. I just want you to notice how the Bible emphasizes eating unleavened bread for seven days, because oftentimes we don't think about that as much. If you notice here in these verses, that's a strong emphasis that the Bible places upon this.

Now, notice one more. Turn over to Leviticus 23. This chapter is typically our go-to chapter when it comes to addressing the Holy Days, because it lists all of them out. Starting with Passover, all the way through the Eighth Day. But pick up here in verse 6.

Lev 23:6 *“And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. 7) On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. 8) But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.”* (NKJV)

Notice once again, it speaks about this festival of seven days. It specifically tells us that we're supposed to proactively eat unleavened bread, but it doesn't happen to mention putting the leaven out. Again, I'm not saying that we shouldn't have a strong emphasis on making sure we're avoiding leaven and being thorough in our de-leavening prior to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. I'm not suggesting that at all. That is part of the instructions.

But, again, oftentimes we don't focus as much on the fact that we're supposed to be proactively eating unleavened bread during this time. In fact, there's important spiritual lessons about how we should be living our day-to-day life as a result of this. Because the whole act of putting the physical leaven out and physically eating unleavened bread during these seven days is all symbolic to teach us important spiritual lessons.

And to see some more insight on this, turn over to 1 Corinthians 5. We'll see here this particular chapter gives us the spiritual meaning of both leaven and unleavened bread. Now, we read this on the first day, but we're going to notice here in a little more detail. We're going to dig into some additional details in these verses that we didn't on the first day and see how it defines in greater detail for us exactly what leaven is. It also defines for us spiritually what unleavened bread is. In other words, what this pictures for us and what spiritual lessons we should be learning from it.

Now, just to explain what's going on here in the context this particular chapter, when Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians, he was addressing a problem that was taking place there in the Corinthian Church. They had a guy that they were allowing to actively attend services. This individual was actively in an adulterous affair with his stepmother, and the people knew about it. It wasn't like it was a hidden sin and the people just weren't aware of what was taking place. It was commonly known what this guy -- the behavior that he was taking part in. People were just basically being “tolerant” of it. They were just kind of looking the other way and ignoring this.

Paul is basically chastising them for this and correcting them and telling them, "No, you shouldn't be allowing this in the congregation. You should dis-fellowship this guy as long as he's participating in this behavior." Now, later in 2 Corinthians -- we won't read that today -- but if you follow up and read through that book, obviously, later this guy repents, and changes from his behavior. And then Paul says, "Well, you should forgive

him and bring him back to services now that he stopped this behavior." But just notice here in verse 1 when he starts addressing this problem.

1 Cor 5:1 *"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! 2) And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you."* (NKJV)

So, they were actually proud of themselves for how "tolerant" and "open-minded" they were and permissive of this behavior. Paul is correcting them, saying, "This is not something to be proud of. This is something you should be ashamed of." Pick up in verse 3.

"3) For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. 4) In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5) deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6) Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" (NKJV)

And then notice here, he's telling us that leaven is a spiritual picture of sin. Then continue in verse 7.

"7) 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." (NKJV)

Now, we're going to notice here as we dig into verse 8. It's going to define for us exactly why leaven is a spiritual picture of sin and define more deeply what that means for us. It's also going to define for us spiritually what unleavened bread pictures. So, notice here in verse 8.

"8) Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (NKJV)

Now, if we dig into some of the Greek words that are used in this particular verse, we can get a deeper understanding of what spiritual leaven is and what spiritual unleavened bread is. If you notice in verse 8, it refers to leaven as the "leaven of malice and wickedness". Now, there's two different Greek words that are involved here. The Greek word for "malice" is transliterated into English as "kakia". It's Strong's # 2549. And the Greek word here for "wickedness" is transliterated into English as "poneria". It's Strong's # 4189.

Now, the reason I mention these together before giving the definitions is you're going to see as we read through the definitions for both of these words, they both reference the other. Because they define them in terms of comparing and contrasting the other term. So now the definitions I'm about to read to you come from The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Spiros Zodhiates. In fact, there's a number of Greek words that we're going to discuss in this sermon, and all of the definitions I'm going to read to you come from Zodhiates. But to give you the definition that Zodhiates gives for “kakia”, again, Strong's # 2549. Again, this is the Greek word that's translated as “malice” in English. He defines it as:

“Wickedness as an evil habit of the mind, while ponēria (4189) is the active outcome of the same. Ponēria is malevolence, not only doing evil, but being evil.”

So, what you're going to see here is “kakia” -- which means “malice” -- is really more evil in the mind, in the thoughts, in the intentions. Whereas “poneria” -- which is “wickedness” in English -- is really more about the action. It's about acting on and affecting others. So really what we're getting at is the thoughts and intentions of the mind, and then the actions. That is really what this is getting at. Now, to give you Zodhiates' definition for “poneria” here, again, this is Strong's 4189, and Zodhiates defines it as:

“Evil nature, badness...In the NT, only in a moral sense, evil disposition, wickedness, malice... Ponēria means maliciousness and it is to be distinguished from kakía (2549) which is simply the evil habit of mind, depravity, not necessarily being expressed and affecting others.”

So, you can see the Greek word here – “malice” in English -- is basically referring to our thoughts or intentions. That's why it's referred to as “malice”, whereas the Greek word for “wickedness” -- as it is in English -- is more about action. It's acting on those evil thoughts and evil intentions.

But now, as I mentioned before, what we should focus on is the unleavened bread that we should not only be physically eating for the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but we should be spiritually partaking of daily in our regular day-to-day lives. And to understand what that is, notice here in the latter part of 1 Corinthians 5:8.

“...but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (NKJV)

Now, the Greek word for “sincerity” there is transliterated into English as “eilikrineia”. It's Strong's # 1505. Zodhiates defines this as:

“Purity, sincerity, cleanness,...”

Now, to give you a better idea of exactly what this means, what we're going to do is look at all the scriptures that use this particular word. Because it's only used three times in the New Testament, and all of them are in Paul's letters to the Corinthians. Now, we've

just read the first time that this is used here in 1 Corinthians 5:8. The second time that this word is used is in 2 Corinthians 1. So, if you turn over to 2 Corinthians 1, we're actually going to start here in verse 8. The word is actually used down in verse 12, but we need to get the full context here. So, we're going to read verses 8 through 14 here. So, to start in verse 8.

2 Cor 1:8 *“For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. 9) Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, 10) who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, 11) you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many. 12) For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you. 13) For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end 14) (as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.”* (NKJV)

Notice that the word “sincerity” is used there in verse 12. Notice the whole context here. When he's talking about the persecution they went through, the trouble they went through, even to death, he's talking about how they basically taught through sincerity under great adversity. In other words, they were willing to do this even when it hurt. Even when they were being persecuted. When life was not easy for them. They weren't being rewarded for what they were doing. Life was not going well for them. Because you see, that's when you know you really believe something. When you're willing to live something even when it hurts. Even when it's painful. Even when you're being persecuted and you're suffering for it. You're losing friends for it. Or you're being ostracized. Or you're being hurt in your income or your work, or in some way your life is just being painful for you.

You see, it's easy for us to do the right thing if we're being rewarded for it. You can be doing righteous things and living the right way of life, but not always out of the most sincere intentions. Because if everyone around you is doing this, and this is the popular thing to do, and it gains you friends and gains you social credit and prestige among others, you may be doing the right things and living the right way. But if we're just doing it because it makes us popular, because we're rewarded for it, we may not be doing it out of a sincere heart. We may be doing it because of the benefits that we get out of it.

See, that's the distinction that's being made here in what this word is referring to with sincerity. It's when you're willing to do it even when you're not only not being rewarded for it, you're being persecuted for it. And to just further see this, the third time that this particular word is used in the New Testament is in 2 Corinthians 2:17. So, if you just look over here into the next chapter here at verse 17.

2 Cor 2:17 *“For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.”* (NKJV)

And notice he says we speak from sincerity, and we're not “peddling the word of God”. Well, to further understand this, it helps to understand the Greek word that's translated here as “peddling”. This particular word is transliterated into English as “kapeleuo”. It's Strong's # 2585. Again, the definition I'm going to share with you is from Zodhiates. He defines it as:

“a retailer, huckster. To treat as if for personal profit, a profiteer. Used only in 2 Cor. 2:17 translated “corrupt,” i.e., corrupting God’s Word for personal gain.... It means to profiteer from God’s Word, to preach for money or to profess faith for personal gain.”

So, if you just think about that, in the context here, he says, “We're not peddling the word of God.” Well, a person can preach the truth when it personally benefits them. Maybe they're getting a paycheck, or they're getting rewarded for it. Even if you're not in a position of being able to preach God's word, we can be living and obeying God, but again, not necessarily doing it out of a sincere heart. We can do it because it gains us friends or because it's popular. So, see, that's the important thing to understand. What it's referring to here as the “unleavened bread of sincerity and truth”, sincerity is being willing to do it, even when it's painful.

As I discussed on the First Day of Unleavened Bread, we have to be willing to come out of our comfort zone. We have to be willing to do things that are difficult and painful for us. It's being willing to do that, and following God sincerely. Because we're willing to do it, even when it hurts, and when it's unpopular for us.

Now, to further clarify the definition of unleavened bread here, turn back over to 1 Corinthians 5, just to finish up the thought here. 1 Corinthians 5, we'll just notice again here the latter part of verse 5.

“...but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (NKJV)

Now we need to define what the Bible defines as “truth”. The Greek word that's used here, that's translated as “truth” in English, is transliterated into English as “aletheia”. It's Strong's # 225. Again, the definition I'm going to read to you comes from Zodhiates. He defines it as:

“...Spoken of what is true in itself, purity from all error or falsehood.... “The truth of the gospel”... means the verity of the gospel. “The word of truth” means the true doctrine Truth, love of truth, both in words and conduct, meaning sincerity, veracity... In the NT especially, divine truth or the faith and practice of the true gospel is called “truth” either as being true in itself and derived from the true God, or as declaring the existence and will of the one true God, in opposition to the worship of false idols. Hence divine truth, gospel truth, as opposed to

heathen and Jewish fablesHence the Lord Jesus is called the truth, meaning truth incarnate, the teacher of divine truth.... "The Spirit of truth" means one who declares or reveals divine truth...."

So, you can see here, it has a rather broad definition. But what I want you to notice here is it encompasses not only true doctrine -- because oftentimes we refer to "the truth", or when we came to "understand the truth", or one who "teaches the truth", referring to correct Biblical doctrine. It certainly does mean that. It also means the practice of that doctrine. Because notice here, it referred to the "practice" of the truth and "following" the truth. Because it also refers to action and actually living the truth.

And to see both of these, let's first start with understanding that truth is something that we know. It's something that we can understand. Because again, you might think of it as information or as correct doctrine. To see this, turn over to John 8, and we'll start reading here in verse 30.

John 8:30 *"As He spoke these words, many believed in Him. 31) Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32) And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." 33) They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?" (NKJV)*

Notice He refers to "knowing the truth". In other words, it's like information. It's something that we can understand, and we can know. He referred to if you "abide in His word". Or in other words, His teachings. What He taught during His ministry. In other words, correct doctrine.

But notice that it also says that this will set you free. As we're going to see here a little later, truth also means actually putting that into practice. Actually living it in our actions. The combination of this will set us free. But notice here, He refers to "His words". If you abide in "His words", then you will "know the truth". Like His teachings. Well, Christ also applies this same concept to the Father as well. So, if you notice, turn over to John 17, and we'll see this.

John 17:17 *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18) As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19) And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth." (NKJV)*

And see just like how Christ said that His words were truth, He's saying the Father's word is truth as well. In other words, Their teachings. What both of them have revealed and teach is truth. That truth can also sanctify us, can set us apart. And that's not just knowing that truth, that's putting that truth into action. What we'll see later here a number of scriptures that tell us this truth is something that you do. It's something you practice. It's something you walk in.

But just to finish this thought here, realize also that truth is something that we know. It's something that the Father desires that everyone will eventually know. To see that, turn over to 1 Timothy 2. We'll start reading in verse 3.

1 Tim 2:3 *“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4) who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* (NKJV)

Truth is knowledge. It's true doctrine that we can come to understand.

“5) For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, 6) who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, 7) for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.” (NKJV)

Notice, Paul here talks about how he is a teacher of the truth. Again, this comes back to knowledge, to correct doctrine. Something that we can understand. But it's also something that we have to put into practice. It's not enough that we just know the truth. What really sets us apart and sanctifies us is living the truth. It's putting it into action in our daily lives. To notice this, turn over to 1 John 1, and we'll start reading in verse 5.

1 John 1:5 *“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6) If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”* (NKJV)

This truth is not just something you know. It's something you can practice.

“7) But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (NKJV)

For the truth to be “in us” we have to be walking in it. We have to be practicing it.

“9) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.” (NKJV)

Now turn over to 3 John. Notice here again that truth is something we have to “walk in” and practice in our day-to-day life. This is 3 John 1.

3 John 1 *“The Elder, To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth: 2) Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. 3) For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. 4) I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”* (NKJV)

Notice, you can “walk in truth”. In other words, it's something you practice. It's not just something you know. *It's something that you do.* See, once we understand this combination, kind of this all-inclusive definition, that it's not only the understanding of correct doctrine, understanding what the Bible actually teaches, it's putting it into practice. It's living it in our daily lives. See, this is why Jesus Christ said that “He is the truth”. Because not only was He someone who brought the truth and who taught the truth during His ministry, He was the ultimate example for us to follow in how to live and how to practice that truth in our day-to-day lives. To see this, turn over to John 14, and we'll start reading in verse 5.

John 14:5 *“Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” 6) Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (NKJV)*

See, when Christ said, “I am the truth,” He's not just trying to spiritualize away the concept of truth. No, He's basically summing it up. Because not only was He a revealer and teacher of the truth, He was also the ultimate example in how to live the truth and how to walk in the truth in our day-to-day life.

As we'll see a little bit later in this sermon, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of truth. Well, it's through Christ's sacrifice and Him paying the penalty for our sins, reconciling us to the Father, that enables us to enter into the covenant to receive that Spirit. To receive the Spirit of truth. As we're going to see a little later here, it not only enables us to understand spiritual knowledge and to understand spiritual information and understand true doctrine, it's also what enables us to overcome our carnal human nature and to be able to walk in the truth. To be able to follow Christ's example. This is why He can basically be summed up by saying He is the truth.

But see, if we put all this together and also understand that as New Covenant Christians, one of our responsibilities is to be regularly eating unleavened bread. And by that, I don't just mean physically eating unleavened bread during the seven days of Unleavened Bread. We should certainly be doing that. That is something that we're commanded to do. The spiritual lesson from this is that we should be, in our day-to-day lives, not just during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but all year long, regularly eating the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Well, see, if we understand that Christ, as He said, basically He is the truth. When we look at His warning -- the warning that Christ gave regarding the state of the end-time Church. What the Church is like in our lifetimes here at the end, not long before His return. What we're going to see here is the end-time Church is in a state of delusion that has outrightly rejected truth, because it has rejected Christ. We're going to see here, Christ Himself paints a picture that the end-time Church will be in a state of delusion, not even realizing that they've basically kicked Him out. That they have rejected truth. And He's on the outside of their lives, knocking on the door, trying to get back in.

To see that, turn over to Revelation 3. You're probably familiar with the fact that Revelation 2 and 3 contain seven letters that are oftentimes referred to as the letters to the seven Churches. Now, there are several ways to look at these and how they can apply. Because just like a lot of scripture, there can be a lot that we can glean from it. One is the obvious fact that, at the time that the Apostle John received the visions that resulted in him writing the book of Revelation, there were several literal Churches on a mail route in Asia Minor that correlated with all the Churches that he writes these letters to. And obviously, this applied to them in their day. There's also spiritual lessons that we can learn from these letters, regardless of what time throughout history that we live in.

One of the bigger lessons that we can also learn from these letters is, if we study the sequence of these letters and some of the specific statements that are made -- basically describing the Churches in these letters -- obviously, they also refer to what's oftentimes referred to as Church eras. In other words, the predominant condition of the Church of God throughout history. Basically, from the time that John originally wrote the book of Revelation all the way down to the return of Christ. Well, what that means is the predominant condition of the Church of God in the years just prior to the very end, when Christ would return, would be the letter to the Church of Laodicea.

Well, that's something that we need to seriously take a look at. Particularly during the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This is a time when our focus should be upon repentance. Upon identifying the sin in our lives and putting it out. Again, not just identifying the sin and putting it out, but making changes to basically rectify it. To make sure that we're regularly taking in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Well, let's just read through this letter here and notice that Christ's warning about the end-time Church, it's a pretty sad picture. He basically says that we're in a state of delusion, not even realizing how bad things are. Not realizing the sad state that the Church is in. But think about this in terms of what we just covered. In terms of truth and the definition of truth. It's not just correct doctrine. It's actually living that doctrine.

It's summed up by saying that Christ is the truth, because He's the ultimate example. He was the ultimate correct teacher of the truth. But He was also the quintessential example of how to live, showing us the example of how we should live our lives as Christians. Well, if the end-time Church is in a state where Christ is on the outside -- as we're about to read. He's kicked out of people's lives and trying to get back in. That means the end-time Church has rejected truth. That is what He's saying. Now, pick up here in verse 14.

Rev 3:14 *“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 spew you out of My mouth.” (NKJV)*

Now, the New King James that I'm reading from here uses the word "spew". But a lot of translations here say, "I am about to vomit you out of My mouth." It's a very graphic picture, but what Christ is saying is, "I'm about to eject you out of the body. You're just nauseating in the condition that you're in." That is basically what He's saying. Notice here why He says this. As you will notice, as we read verse 17, what He's saying is this is a Church in a state of delusion. They don't even realize the state they're in.

"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. 19) As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent." (NKJV)

Now, notice the last couple of verses here, because it's a scary picture.

"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. 22) 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'" (NKJV)

Notice it's a picture of Christ on the outside of people's lives, knocking on the door, and He's saying, "If anyone hears Me." In other words, He's expecting to be ignored. He's expecting that a Church that's in delusion, that doesn't even realize that He's on the outside knocking to get back in. They're just going to go on about their lives, ignoring Him, and not even hear Him. That's being in danger of losing salvation. So, this is something we should take very seriously.

As I mentioned, if you look at this picture, and understanding that Christ says He is the truth, and our responsibility, and one of the lessons that we should be learning from the Feast of Unleavened Bread is we're supposed to be regularly eating the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Truth is something we're supposed to be partaking in regularly. Well, we can't do that if we've gotten in a state where we're basically rejecting truth and not even realizing it. See, this is a warning that we're repeatedly told is going to happen to the end-time Church. To see this, turn over to 2 Timothy 4. We'll notice here that Paul gives Timothy a warning that the day is going to come -- because he was saying this way in advance -- when even the Church of God won't tolerate sound doctrine. Notice this in 2 Timothy 4:1.

2 Tim 4:1 *"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2) Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have*

itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4) and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 5) But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” (NKJV)

Notice they're turning aside to fables. But keep in mind they're in a state of self-delusion, not realizing that that's what they're doing. That they're rejecting truth. You see, not loving truth. When we don't love truth, and we're willing to turn aside from it, that results in a state of self-delusion. To see that, turn over to 2 Thessalonians 2 and we'll start reading in verse 5.

2 Thess 2:5 *“Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6) And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7) For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. 8) And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9) The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10) and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11) And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12) that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (NKJV)*

See, if we don't love the truth, if we're not regularly eating the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth -- I don't just mean the physical act during the Days of Unleavened Bread, but regularly eating in truth spiritually in our day-to-day lives -- then we stop valuing it. We lose the love of the truth. We slide into delusion, and we don't even realize that that's what's happening. You see, we have to make a priority out of regularly feeding upon truth. How do we do that? We do that by regularly studying to start with. To see that, turn over to 2 Timothy 2, and we'll start reading in verse 14.

2 Tim 2:14 *“Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. 15) Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16) But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. 17) And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, 18) who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.” (NKJV)*

Notice, it's the same picture that we just read previously, in 2 Timothy 4, where he was talking about basically turning away from the truth and turning to fables. Well, the same thing is happening here. Paul gives us the way to avoid this. Notice he said in verse 15, "rightly dividing the word of truth". Now, what exactly does that mean? If we look at the

Greek word here for "rightly dividing," it's transliterated into English as "orthotomeo". It's Strong's # 3718. And Zodhiates defines it as:

"to cut or divide. To handle correctly, skillfully; to correctly teach the word of truth."

Now, to handle something skillfully, you don't necessarily have to be in the role of a teacher to do that. But just think about how you become skillful at anything. Well, for example, if you're a musician and you want to become skillful at an instrument. Playing the piano or the guitar or whatever instrument you want to do. What do you have to do to be skillful at that? Well, you have to regularly practice. You have to spend time working on and developing those skills. Regularly practicing so that you become good at it. You can't just put the instrument over in the corner and occasionally look at it and magically become skillful at being a good musician. It doesn't work that way.

The same is true if you're an athlete. If you're an athlete and you want to be good at a sport, say, for example, basketball. Well, you've got to spend a lot of time on the court. You've got to spend a lot of time out there working on your skills and developing them. If you want to be skillful at shooting, what do you do? You spend a lot of time at the gun range. Regularly practicing to get good at developing that skill. You can't just think about these things and never actually put action into it to become skillful at whatever thing that you want to do. Whether it's a sport you want to do, or becoming a musician, or whatever it is.

Well, the same is true with the word of God. If you want to become skillful at it, you've got to make time to regularly study. You've got to have your face in this book on a regular basis. Now, if you're like a lot of people -- and I know I've certainly been guilty of this a lot of times in my life -- sometimes you fall into bad habits. And you discover sometimes that the last time that you picked up your Bible, well, that was the last time you were at services. And then you go to services, and when services are over, you set it aside. And it doesn't get picked up until next Sabbath, when you're going to services again.

You notice that, and you're like, "Well, but I've been really busy lately. There's just a lot going on in my life right now, and I just don't have time to do a lot of that." But oftentimes, if you take a step back and take an honest look at your life, what you'll find is, "Well, I always have time to catch my favorite TV program when it comes on." Or "I have time to go see that latest movie that's out that I want to see," or "I have time to go do the hobbies that I like." "I just don't seem to find time to study."

Well, if you find yourself in that situation -- and I've certainly been guilty of that as well. I think we all have had those periods in our life when we slip into that. But if you take an honest look at that, that says something very telling about our lives. If you have time to catch your favorite TV program when it comes on, or catch the latest movie, or catch up on social media and all the posts you haven't read. And you've got time to do all of that, but you don't have time to study. *It's not a time issue. It's a priority issue.*

What you're saying is those things are more important to you than being skillful at the word of God, than regularly eating the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. It's more important to you to be up on the latest posts on social media, or to catch my favorite TV show, or the latest movie that came out, or spend time on my hobbies. Your behavior is saying that those things are more important to you than being skillful with the word of God. Regularly eating the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

See, that's what we have to do. Make a priority out of studying God's word. That's where truth starts. It starts with understanding correct doctrine and making sure that we correctly understand it. Again, ensuring we haven't been turned aside to fables. And then it's putting it into practice. It starts with studying. But we have to study with an open mind. Oftentimes we can fall into the pitfall of just studying to confirm what we already think. We need to study with an open mind. Not only to consider whether maybe our previous understanding, maybe there are things that we got wrong. Maybe there's more that we can learn. We also need to study from the standpoint of self-correction. Being willing to take an honest look at ourselves and see where we might be falling short.

And to cover both of these, let's first of all just start with studying with an open mind. To see that maybe what we've always thought, maybe we don't understand it as well as we thought we did. To see a good example of that, turn over to Acts 17. We'll look at the example here of the Bereans. This is Acts 17, and we'll start in verse 1.

Acts 17:1 *“Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2) Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3) explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.” 4) And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas. 5) But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. 6) But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. 7) Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus.” 8) And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. 9) So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.” (NKJV)*

Notice the response here of those in Thessalonica. They were very hostile. Notice here, Paul isn't teaching them some fringe new theory or some speculative prophecy. He's teaching them foundational doctrine. Jesus Christ is the Messiah, and you have to accept Him as your Savior. But what was happening here -- as we put it today in our modern-day “Church of God speak” -- this wasn't what they had “always been taught”. This wasn't what they had always believed. It was true. It is what scripture said. But it wasn't what they had “always been taught”. So, they turned very hostile to it.

What we need to do is, when we study the Bible, we need to take the approach of the Bereans. Let's just notice here in verse 10.

“10) Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11) These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.” (NKJV)

Notice, they basically listened with an open mind. They didn't just jump on any new thing and think, "Well, hey, this is some new, exciting idea that Paul's been sharing," and then just run with it. No, they heard out what he had to say with an open mind. Then they went and searched the scriptures.

See, they were regularly eating the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. They were regularly studying the word, and they were comparing what he had to say with the Bible. And what they found out was what Paul was saying about the Messiah, this checked out. Christ really was the Messiah, and we really should accept Him and follow Him. Even though this is a new teaching we haven't heard before, it turned out it was correct.

See, that's how we should approach studying the Bible. We shouldn't just study it for knowledge. We should also study it for self-correction. That's another very important part of scripture. It basically is a discerner of our hearts, and it can reveal to us what we need to overcome in our personal lives. To see this, turn over to Hebrews 4, and we'll start reading in verse 1.

Hebrews 4:1 *“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2) For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them,…” (NKJV)*

In other words, they had knowledge, but they weren't acting on it.

“...not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. 3) For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: “So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest,’ ” although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4) For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”; 5) and again in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.” 6) Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, 7) again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.” 8) For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9) There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10) For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as

God did from His. 11) Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.” (NKJV)

In other words, having heard the truth but not living it.

“12) For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13) And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” (NKJV)

See, the other part of studying is, again, not just studying the word of God to understand correct doctrine, or to understand what's correct, or why those other guys are wrong and why we think that we're correct. No, it's also to see what we need to change about our own personal lives. How we need to put the truth into practice, and where we may be falling short in our lives.

See, the key to both of these, to both understanding true doctrine and putting it into practice, is yielding to God's Spirit and asking God for more of His Holy Spirit. Christ told us directly that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. It's not only the Spirit that will lead us into truth and give us the understanding of truth. It's also the Spirit that enables us to live the truth. To see this, turn over to John 16, and we'll start reading in verse 12.

John 16:12 *“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13) However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14) He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15) All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.” (NKJV)*

Notice He was telling the Apostles, "You guys can't understand what I'm telling you right now, but once you get the Spirit of truth, once you have the Holy Spirit, then you'll be able to understand." That's what opens our eyes so that we can correctly understand the truth. It's also what enables us to "walk in the truth". To see that, turn over to Galatians 5, and we'll start reading in verse 16.

Gal 5:16 *“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17) For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19) Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20) idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21) envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22) But the fruit of the Spirit...” (NKJV)*

In other words, the Spirit of truth.

“...is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23) gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24) And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26) Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.” (NKJV)

See, we can walk in the Spirit, the Spirit of truth. Truth isn't just what we understand. It's what we live in our day-to-day lives. One of the lessons that we need to learn from the Feast of Unleavened Bread is not just putting out the leaven. We definitely need to do that. As we've seen, leaven is a picture of sin. We definitely need to be trying to identify sin and get the sin out of our lives. The important way to do that is also proactively focusing on eating the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Again, not just the physical act of eating unleavened bread for the seven-day period of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. But practicing that spiritually in our day-to-day life. Sincerely living what we know is correct because it's sincerity and truth. Again, sincerity, as we've seen directly from the Bible here, means being willing to do it even when it hurts. That means living the truth in our day-to-day life, even when that's unpopular. Even when we get persecuted for it. Even when it's going to hurt and we're going to lose friends and be ostracized. It's sincerely doing it in spite of all that because we sincerely believe it.

We also have to be daily taking in of the truth. That means making time to regularly study our Bible. If we have time for our hobbies and for all the other things in our lives, but we don't have time to study God's Word. *It's not a question of time. It's a question of priorities.* So, if we're going to love the truth, we need to make time to become skillful at it. To be regularly studying it with an open mind. To allow it to correct us. To correct us of any incorrect understandings we have. And even more importantly, the areas in our life that we need to correct. Identifying the leaven, the sin that we need to be putting out.

So, brethren, as we go forward from this festival and live our day-to-day lives throughout the rest of the year, let's make sure that we're regularly eating the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.