

## **From Self-Will to God's Will**

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Feast of Unleavened Bread

As we know, God's plan is progressive; one step follows the next, and those steps are outlined in the Holy Days. I really like how, in the new book, it describes the Holy Days as a blueprint. Because what the Holy Days give us are a complete set of directions and plans we are to follow in order to change and live up to our full potential. But in the yearly calendar, before we start with any Holy Days, we first have Passover.

So, what is the main thing that was fulfilled in Passover? Well, we know that Christ died for our sins. And there are plenty of scriptures that speak to His sacrifice and the removal of the penalty of sin. And that is true. But it is not something that happens automatically. The removal of the penalty of sin is just a potential. There is a potential that our sin does not result in death.

Right after Passover, we come to the first of the Holy Days, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The primary thing which we are told is to get rid of sin and to get it out of our lives. Why? Because the penalty of sin is death. It is and always will be.

But what Christ did by fulfilling Passover is He removed the penalty of sin for mankind IF mankind follows in His steps. But, by our own self-determination, our own self-will, that is in no way possible. And that is what the help, the comforter, the holy spirit is all about. We do not get rid of sin by ourselves. We do not fight sin by ourselves. And if we try to do it by ourselves, we will fail.

Just look at the physical act of de-leavening your house. You can do it to the best of your ability, but it is physically impossible. You can even clean out your toaster, and you can have it looking all polished and brand new. You might even feel good about that. You can clean so good that you think you accounted for every spot. But the reality is you can't clean to perfection. Because I guarantee that in the depths of your kitchen cabinetry, stuck behind the refrigerator, and maybe in between your sofa cushions, or stuck in the carpet or a rug, somewhere there will be just that tiny, little bread crumb (maybe even microscopic), but nonetheless, infected with leaven.

And that's exactly how it is with sin. You can do your best, analyze every aspect of your life, and maybe you can do a fairly decent job of doing it on your own, but you will never be able to get rid of sin completely. There will always be something that lingers that you don't even realize. And that is precisely why we need God and His help to bring those things to the surface, so that we can know that they even exist. If you don't know it exists, then how can you overcome it?

But the good news is that God isn't looking for perfection by our own effort; He's looking for sincerity, repentance, and even dependence on Him. He isn't expecting us to depend on our own abilities to

overcome sin. In fact, He knows that we can't do it alone, and that's pretty much the whole point of why Christ had to come in the first place.

So, in these Days of Unleavened Bread, we know that leaven represents sin. Right? Leaven is sin. But let me pose this question to you: What does sin represent? You can think about that for a moment. Well, we know that sin is the result of going against God and His will. So, whose will does sin represent? If it is not God's, then whose is it? You could say that, well, it is the will of Satan. And that is certainly true: His will is to oppose everything that is of God.

But let's leave him out of the picture for a moment because we don't actually need his influence in order to sin. His influence may encourage sin, of course, but mankind is perfectly capable of sinning without it. Just like in the Millennium, people will still sin even though Satan will not be present.

So, if when we sin we are not doing the will of God, then it should be perfectly clear whose will we are doing. Our own. Self, self, self.

Leaven represents sin, and sin is the expression of our own self-will. This is much like the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life. Which one do you choose? Do you choose life or do you choose death?

And that is what baptism is about as well. That's why we must first go through baptism, even before we can take part in the Passover. That decision to get baptized should symbolize our willingness to put our old sinful way of being – that one that chooses self and thinks it knows best – the old way is supposed to be put to death when we go under the water. Then, when we come out of the water, we're a new person, ready to walk a new way of life. All of us who are baptized should have made that choice. We choose God's will over our own.

The title of today's split-sermon is *From Self-Will to God's Will*.

So, what is God's will? That's a little bit tricky to define. In the Bible, when it speaks of God's will, it is generally speaking about what God commands and desires morally, as in how we are supposed to live life towards one another. In other words, what is considered to be morally correct versus what is wrong.

The other aspect of God's will concerns His plan. In the most simple terms, we could say that God's will is the plan and way of life that God wants to happen and that leads to the fulfillment of His purpose. That is easily contrasted with our own will. Our self-will is what we want to happen. We may think it leads to fulfillment and contentment, but unless it aligns with God, then it won't lead to that. But so often we convince ourselves that our actions will lead to just that.

And if we contrast God's plan and His purpose, we can think, well, what is our plan, what is our purpose? And oftentimes, sadly, we don't even have that. Just think about how people act out on their own selfish self-will. How often are they really thinking about those long-term repercussions and effects?

Oftentimes, our self-will is more concerned with instant self-gratification. Just think of all the sins that are a result of someone doing something that they shouldn't just so they can be happy in the moment or feel good about themselves. And sure, it might provide an instance of self-gratification, but in the long term, the result is ruin.

On the other hand, God's will takes into account His plan for mankind and the unlocking of our true potential. That is what is most important to God. That's probably not in the forefront of our own minds when we go about our days, is it? Well, the good thing, like I mentioned a minute ago, is that God gives us help. With our own efforts and doing things to the best of our ability, it's that in combination with asking God for help, and that's how we're able to align our will with God's. Because it's what is best for us in the long term. That is something we have to learn and to put into our lives.

Let's turn to a scripture that addresses that fact. Let's turn to **Romans 12:1—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.** So, here we are told to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. This is about sacrificing our own self-will. It is about getting rid of what we want. Our wants alone, that don't align with God, as I just mentioned, don't lead to real fulfillment. Only God's way does.

So, Paul is really having us picture putting our own bodies on an altar, just like they did before with animals that were sacrificed. And the word here for "service" is the same word that was used in temple services for actual sacrifices. But notice that it says it is our "reasonable" service. Again, the word for "reasonable" here has to do with logos, and it's about the mind and our thinking. So, we are to put our bodies on the altar and sacrifice self, as it states, and this is done with our minds.

The next verse goes on in more detail. **Verse 2—And be not conformed to this world. But be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.** So, in other words, don't be like the world. Don't do like they do, chasing after their own self-will. That only leads to destruction and ruin. Instead, we are told to prove or put to test God's will.

God's will is described here in three words. The first is the word "good," and this has to do with what is morally correct. That's why it is described that "only God is good" because He is the only one who knows what is actually good. Why? Because He is the sovereign almighty power that decides and knows. There is no one else like Him.

So, we are to test out God's morality. And with time, if we go by what God says is good for us, we should come to find that it works out a whole lot better for us because it actually leads to growth and contentment.

The second word used here is "acceptable," and this is about being pleasing to God. We want to please God. Before, in the Old Testament, they offered animals as sacrifices, but God said He was not pleased by

them. And so many times in scripture this sentiment is repeated because God is more concerned with obedience to His ways. The ritual alone was empty. What is actually pleasing to God are things such as obedience, our faith, humility, love towards one another, etc., etc. – all of the characteristics that belong to God.

So, when He sees that we are putting these characteristics that He has and His morality into practice into our lives, then He is pleased. This is what is meant here as acceptable.

And then in verse 2, the last word used to describe God's will is "perfect." This is about that which is complete and lacking nothing; it is alignment with God's ultimate purpose and plan. So, in order for us to put God's will to the test, we must first be willing to sacrifice our own self-will. This verse speaks about it as a process; it is a continual growing process. As we know, the word that's used here for "transforming" is the same as "metamorphosis," just like a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly.

So, we make decisions in life. Some we choose because of self-will, and we see the results. And others we align with God's will – we prove it, we put it to the test, and then we see the results again. And that is what the testing is all about, we see which one works better and which one has better results.

In order to align our will with God's will, we have to first get rid of our own self-will. And by that, I mean we have to recognize that we cannot align ourselves with God unless we recognize how weak and puny we are, and that is where humility comes in. And it should be one of our biggest focuses here during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Let's turn over Psalms 51, and we are going to read here about David's reaction to God after he was confronted by Nathan concerning all that David had done with Bathsheba and the killing of Uriah. We aren't going to go through the whole chapter, but it is good to go back and read the whole thing on your own because it shows a right frame of mind that we should have. It shows how David acknowledges that he was wrong, and he requests a restoration of his thinking so that he can have his thoughts aligned with God's again. So, David details an important process here so that he can have a right state of mind.

These Days of Unleavened Bread are about getting rid of sin. And in order to do that, we must first have a right set of mind. If you think about it, there are a lot of times when we need to address our state of mind. I think of a football team that is about to go out on the field and take on another team. What kind of a mindset do they need to get into? I don't think they are normally listening to relaxing music like they are about to walk into a spa. There's no classical music, probably. Of course not. They're probably going to be yelling and chanting and getting hyped up. They are trying to get their adrenaline going. They have to have that mindset to be effective in the game. You could say it'd be the same for somebody that's going out into a physical battle as well.

On the other side, imagine that you are a surgeon about to do open-heart surgery or brain surgery. You are not going to prepare in the same manner as someone who is about to go into battle on a football

field. That is a time when you might actually be listening to something relaxing, maybe some classical music. You probably want to slow down your breathing a bit. You want to be as calm as possible so that your hands can be as steady as possible.

And so, these are just a couple of examples of how you need to get into a proper state of mind in order to achieve something in life. And when we think about the Days of Unleavened Bread, this is also a time for us to prepare. And that's what a lot of what David is speaking about in these verses, because he's concentrating on getting in a right state of mind and having his will be aligned with God's. And when we can do that, then it's much more easy and we can be much more successful in trying to get rid of sin.

So anyway, let's start here in **Psalm 51:10**. Here David says, **Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit in me**. So, David has gone off really far away from God with his actions here, and so he is asking for God to renew a right spirit in him. Because in doing what he had just done, he recognized that he didn't have the right spirit in him, so he asked God to create a clean heart in him.

And this also shows that David is leaning on God. He is not relying on himself. He knows that he is not able to do this on his own; only God can create that clean heart in him. That is one of our first steps to overcoming self-will, actually, admitting that we cannot do it on our own. If you ever think that you can and you don't need God's help, then you are failing, and you are missing the mark completely. Self-will isn't just about looking to ourselves for the right answer. It's also about relying on self to be able to solve our own battles. Clearly, David understands that here.

Let's continue in **verse 11—Cast me not away from Your presence; and take not Your holy spirit from me**. That is exactly what our real fear should be when we sin. We don't want to lose God's spirit living in us. But we also know that God cannot dwell in sin. That is why it is so important we repent as soon as we can, and we get our minds back in the right state so that this doesn't happen.

Let's skip down to **verse 16—For You desire not sacrifice; else would I give it. You delight not in burnt offering**. This is just what I mentioned a bit ago, really. No amount of burnt sacrifices can please God. That is just a physical ritual.

**Verse 17—The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise**. In some ways, this sounds similar to the verses we just read in Romans 12 that talk about presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice. But here we are told that the sacrifices of God have to do with our spirit, our attitude, the way we think.

Here it talks about a contrite heart as well. This is a heart that is crushed. The word for contrite can be used physically or mentally when speaking about a total collapse. And that is how David felt after realizing the severity of his sin. Have we ever felt like that before? Have we ever done something and then afterwards we are just so torn up on the inside that we feel crushed, maybe even sick?

Well, that's how David was feeling. And he is acknowledging that his heart, his wants, his self-will, all led him down this path that he had taken. So, the sacrifice is coming face-to-face with what he is really like, and he doesn't like it. But notice what he says at the end of that verse, "O God, You will not despise." In other words, God will not hold us in contempt or hold it against us, if ... if we have the right mindset. If we sacrifice our self-will and ask God to replace it with His own, then He won't have contempt or hold it against us.

What God truly wants is genuine repentance and humility. Humility is that all-important state of mind. If we have that state of mind and we ask God for help, then we have a recipe for success.

Let's look at an example here that shows humility and pride. On one side is someone who has a humble spirit. He doesn't have any understanding at the beginning, but because of his attitude, he is able to see something spiritual in the end. And on the other side, we have a group of people who are convinced they know. They are fully relying on their own understanding, and they raise up that understanding as if it were the truth. And because of that, their hearts were hardened, and they couldn't see the truth right before them.

So, let's turn over to John 9:1. And as I just mentioned, this chapter shows two kinds of people. You have the humble who admit blindness, and the proud who claim sight. And this Feast of Unleavened Bread we are now in requires a mind that can "see."

**John 9:1—And as Joshua passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?**

**Joshua answered, Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.**

So, we know the story here. There is this blind guy here that they pass by, and Joshua proceeds to spit on the ground and then mix the spit with some clay. And then He gives it to the blind man and tells him to go wash his eyes at the pool of Siloam. And the man does it, and then, for the first time in his life, he can see. So, with limited understanding, the blind man did just as Joshua had told him, and then he was able to physically see.

And then we find out a few verses later that the neighbors of the blind man discovered what happened, and they begin to ask him questions. And they ask him, you know, who did this to you? How did this happen? And he explains that it was by a guy named Joshua. And then, after that, the neighbors proceed to haul this blind guy before the Pharisees, and (well, I guess he's a former blind guy now), explains, again, the whole story to them.

So, let's pick up in **verse 16—Therefore, said some of the Pharisees, This Man is not of God, because He keeps not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a Man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there**

**was a division among them. They said unto the blind man again, What do you say of Him that has opened your eyes? He said, He is a prophet.**

Here, we see not only is the former blind man telling the story of what happened, but he identified Joshua as a prophet. So, for sure, the Pharisees did not like that response. And in verse 16, they already judged Joshua to be a sinner. So, when he tells the story here at the beginning, he says that Joshua did it, and now he's telling the Pharisees that Joshua the prophet did it.

**Verse 18—But the Jews did not believe concerning him that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.** So, now the Pharisees, like it says, they don't believe him. They call in the parents, and they start asking this guy's parents, and of course, they confirm that yes, he was blind and born that way. And it says, too, that the parents were fearful of the Jews, and so they were basically saying, "Look, our son is of age. He can speak for himself. You should ask him." They didn't really want to get involved in their fury there.

And in **verse 24** it says, **Then again they called the man that was blind, and they said unto him, Give God the praise. We know that this Man is a sinner.** And this shows what they were already convinced of. They knew in their mind that Joshua was a sinner. Of course, He wasn't, but the Pharisees were convinced of it as if it were the truth. Nothing this man or his parents, or the neighbors could say, nothing would convince them otherwise.

**Verse 25—He answered and said, Whether He is a sinner or not, I know not. One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.** So, the poor guy is really being interrogated here. His parents were afraid. And he just flat out tells them, "Look, before I couldn't see, and now I can. It's just the facts. You can't really argue with the fact, can you?"

**Verse 26—Then said they to him again, What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and you did not hear.** Ouch. And you know they didn't like that response. So, he said, **I told you, and you don't listen. Wherefore would you hear it again? Will you also be His disciples?** That was a pretty good comeback. The Pharisees were so set in their beliefs and judgments they thought they knew. It didn't matter what the facts were; they could hear them a million times from a million different people. They knew, and they weren't going to change their minds.

It makes me think of how some of the world is right now. You know, people will take a side of an argument. They "feel" that something is right or wrong. They can be presented with facts and arguments that would prove that what they think is true is actually false, but it doesn't matter; there is no way to convince them. Their mind is already made up.

And the Pharisees here, they had already made their minds up about Joshua. That's what the former blind man had told them. He said, "I already told you once, and you didn't accept it. Why should I tell

you the same thing again?” And then he even rubbed it in their face a little bit by asking them if they would also be His disciples. Of course, that was the furthest thing from their minds, but he is just pointing out that fact to them, you know, very loud and clear.

And then in **verse 28** it says, **Then they reviled him, and said, You are His disciple, but we are Moses’ disciples.** You know, you kind of have to laugh at them there because they are acting like little kids, you know. They’re like, “No, we’re not His disciples; we are better than that. We are Moses’ disciples.” Pretty dumb.

You see, the Pharisees couldn’t accept that Joshua was the Messiah for a number of reasons. But one of those reasons stemmed from them having preconceived ideas of what the Messiah would be like and what He would do. Most of it revolved around the belief that the Messiah would be a political ruler who would free them from Roman rule and set up a physical kingdom.

But where in the Old Testament does it specifically say those things? Well, it doesn’t. But that’s what can happen if you speculate and start to have ideas of what could be. Because when the real Messiah came around to them, they were ignorant and filled with pride. They chose to uphold their own ideas, and those ideas didn’t come from God, nor did they come from Moses, whom they claimed to be disciples of. Those ideas and judgments they had against Christ came from their own puny little minds. Their pride blinded them to the truth.

Let’s continue in **verse 29—We know that God spoke unto Moses. As to this fellow, we don’t know where He is from.** So, for the Pharisees, the fact that God spoke face to face with Moses gave him authority. They didn’t see any authority from Joshua. So, when they say they don’t know where He is from, that is what they are referring to. It’s kind of like, this guy doesn’t have a resume, or a CV, or a portfolio, whatever you want to call it.

And by most accounts, it seems like Joshua was a pretty ordinary guy at the time. He didn’t stand out from the other disciples even. So, for a people that were looking for a physical savior that can lead them out from rule from under the Romans, Joshua doesn’t seem to have really fit that description. That is, unless they had humility and they were able to understand and see who He was on a spiritual plane.

But what is crazy to think is that they said, “Well, you know, God spoke to Moses. But this guy doesn’t seem like God has spoken to Him face to face.” So, they are thinking that all the while Joshua is really the embodiment of God and His spirit, and He was actually talking face to face with them!

So, God inspired the words that Joshua was to speak. Joshua did the will of God His Father, and He was there to do God’s work. He spoke on God’s behalf. He fully had the spirit and the logos in Him, and they couldn’t recognize that.

And that's pretty scary, and it only shows how little about God and His ways they understood. Again, they couldn't see it because they were full of pride. They had the wrong state of mind and attitude that is needed in order to be able to accept the truth.

Let's continue in **verse 30—The man answered and said unto them, Why is this a marvelous thing, that you know not from where He is, and yet He has opened my eyes.** So, the blind man is pretty much astonished that their rebuttal is simply "We don't know that much about this guy. You know, who is He?" That's a pretty weak rebuttal. And he is astonished that they cannot see. Pretty ironic isn't it?

The blind man continues in **verse 31—Now we know that God hears not sinners. But if any man be a worshipper of God, and does His will, him He hears. Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind?** So, the man tried bringing the Pharisees back around to the facts, to the truth. He tells them, "You see what happened. It's a marvel, something that surpasses human comprehension." They had never heard of anyone being born blind and then suddenly, by a miracle, have the ability to see. And he says, "God would not allow this to happen unless it was His will." So, because of all of these things put together, there is no other explanation than that Joshua is from God.

And notice in **verse 34** their absolutely disgusting response. **They answered him and said, You were altogether born in sin, and you teach us? And they cast him out.** Now, this comment of theirs stems from a widespread belief of the time that people who had serious physical conditions or disabilities were a result of sin. So, if someone was born with a defect, it was often seen as divine judgment for sin. This is why even the disciples, when they passed the blind man at the beginning here with Joshua, they asked Him who sinned to cause his blindness, him or his parents. And Joshua responded and said that neither had sinned, but rather his blindness was there so that the works of God could be made manifest in him.

So, back to the Pharisees here in verse 34. They totally rebuke the former blind man and accuse him of being born in sin. Basically, stating that he was so full of sin that he was blind from birth. And how dare he, of all people, try to teach them. The poor guy wasn't even trying to teach them, really. He was being interrogated time after time, and he just told them what happened, and he said things that were totally based on their beliefs – things that even they couldn't argue with. Notice they didn't have a rebuttal to anything that he said. The only thing they could do was dismiss him completely as a "sinner" because they couldn't dismiss the facts.

That's something to take note of. Pride can't refute facts, so instead, it attacks character. And that is leaven at work. That's the making of a big ole puffy lump.

That really makes me think today of certain people, when certain facts are given, how they won't even dispute them; they will just shut down, and instead, they resort to name-calling. Today, it's very popular to call others nazis and fascists with zero evidence. It's just what you call people that you don't agree

with, oftentimes. Now, if you were to ask them, “What is a fascist?” they usually can’t even tell you. But they know it’s something bad. And if you can label somebody that, then you can feel good about yourself because you are better than that. The others are morally deficient. And that makes it easy to look down on them and continue propping up your own ideas as correct.

Well, at this time in the Jewish world, the worst thing you could probably call somebody, basically, was a sinner. Maybe even a Roman, too. But they had zero proof of any sins coming from the blind guy. But since he had this physical deformity, if you will, from before, it was easy to write him off as a sinner, and then that way they didn’t even have to confront the truth.

Continuing on in **verse 35**, it says, **Joshua heard that they had cast him out** (speaking of the blind man); **and when He had found him, He said unto him, Do you believe in the Son of God? And he answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Joshua said unto him, You have both seen Him, and it is He that talks with you. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him. And Joshua said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.**

So, this here is a physical event that happened, but it’s totally spiritual as well. Obviously, in verse 39, Joshua is not saying that He came to the world so that all the physically blind people should be able to physically see. This is about being able to see and recognize the truth spiritually.

Think about that story and what happened to the blind man. I think it’s fair to say that he was pretty humble. He had a humble state of mind. Just think about what I mentioned earlier about a belief that physical defects were looked upon as a result of being sin. So, being blind at this time would have come with a lot of stigma attached. As if being blind wouldn’t have been hard enough in and of itself, just imagine people looking at you with such judgmental eyes, thinking that either you or your parents had sinned so much that it caused your ailment. For sure, many looked down on him.

So, Joshua anoints his eyes, sends him to wash his eyes out, and the guy does as Joshua told him and comes back seeing. And then, upon his questioning by the neighbors, the now former blind man tells the people that a man named Joshua is responsible for it. Then he gets taken to the Pharisees, and they ask about the man responsible. He first tells them that He is a prophet. Then they keep asking him the same questions, and the man just comes back stronger and stronger with his response, to the point of saying that the man is definitely from God, and that there can be no other explanation. It’s almost as though their questioning of him helped bring him to the point of being able to finally see Joshua for who He really was.

The blind man clearly had a humble state of mind, and that state of mind allowed for him to keep following the truth even before he fully understood it himself. I mean, just put yourself in this situation. You would be in such shock afterwards; it would have taken some time to process in your mind what had

just happened. I can only imagine what it might be like to never see and then all of a sudden to be overcome with sight. That's a whole lot to process.

And now, by the time he gets kicked out of the synagogue and Joshua finds him, is when he is able to completely recognize Joshua as being the Son of God. This is when his eyes were actually opened in a spiritual sense. The events that occurred, combined with his humility, are what ultimately led him to believe and see. You might say, "Well, sure, he was blind, and now he could physically see, and that's why he was able to see Christ for who He really was."

But all we have to do is look over to the example of the ten lepers that Joshua healed. What happened there? Well, all ten of them had leprosy, a horrible ailment, especially back then, when there was no treatment, and they were completely considered as, or seen as, outcasts of society. All ten of them were healed, but only one of them returned to give gratitude and praise God. So, that really shows you where their minds were after something so miraculous occurred in their lives. And what happened to the blind man could have been similar to the other nine lepers, but it wasn't.

Let's look back to verse 39 again. When it speaks of "those that see not," it is talking about those who know that they don't know. They don't claim to see. They accept that they are in need. They aren't relying on self and self-will. These are those that recognize they are spiritually blind without God and that anything that they understand spiritually comes from God.

They have no problem saying that they know that they don't know, admitting that they are ignorant and don't have all the right answers. At the core, this is about those that are humble. And that is what so much of the Days of Unleavened Bread is all about. Because if we don't have a mind that is full of humility, how on earth are we able to get rid of sin? Identifying sin requires us to admit and see our faults. Tell me, how could you possibly do that if you already think you are doing great and have all the answers?

And even seeing our faults and identifying sin is still not enough. It's a good start, but we must ask God for help in overcoming. That is what the holy spirit is all about. Do we accept the fact that we cannot get rid of sin without God's help? It's not something you can do on your own. We cannot look at things or judge things by our own eyes, by our own judgment. We need to accept that we are blind and that the only things that we can see are because of the help that God grants us.

So, when Christ says He is "come for judgment to the world," it is talking about Him identifying those that have a humble mind that recognize that they are blind. Those are the people that God's spirit can work with. They know they are in need, and the comforter, the holy spirit, is there to help. They are then able to respond properly when they are given truth. They can begin to change. They can actually work to get rid of sin and leaven out of their lives, just like we are commanded to do during the Feast.

Now, as far as the other group that can see, Christ says that He is “come to make them blind.” This is a group that needs to be brought low in order to actually be able to see spiritually. That is exactly how the Pharisees were. They had already formed an opinion about Joshua before the blind man was brought to them. Their opinion was totally wrong, but that didn’t stop them from believing it and judging him, even after they had example after example given to them, things that proved Joshua was the Son of God. Or at the very least, it proved that He was a prophet or someone that they should be listening to.

They tried to tie their authority to have such an opinion all the way back to Moses, and they were reeking of pride. And that pride is what got in their way of seeing the truth. Their pride was their biggest sin; it is what gave them such spiritual blindness.

The Pharisees were more concerned with protecting their self-image – saving face. It was more important that they be identified with Moses than the truth that it was actually the Messiah who was talking to them directly face to face. They were justifying themselves by falling back on Moses, so they did that instead of seeing the error in their thinking.

And we can do that too, although perhaps in totally different ways. But we can justify our thoughts and our ways of being instead of repenting.

They didn’t believe Christ, and that was a sin. Why? Why is not believing a sin? Because it goes against the truth. If you don’t believe the truth, and instead believe something false, then what are you relying on? Where are you putting your faith? If those ideas don’t come from God, then who do they come from? You? Your ideas? How did you come to those conclusions? Is it because you relied on God and asked for help in understanding, or is it because you just “think so,” or you feel moved emotionally in some way or another? If you just think so, you are relying on self, your own understanding, and that’s sin.

Like we hear about during these Feast days, too, pride puffs up like leaven. Pride is, in fact, leaven, and our pride is probably our biggest obstacle when it comes to getting rid of all other sin. Pride is what makes us spiritually blind. And if you are blind, you can’t recognize sin, and that means you can’t get rid of it. And we are commanded to get rid of sin during these Days of Unleavened Bread. That is why it is so important that we get pride in check, and we make sure it is not having an impact on our spiritual growth.

Let’s turn over to Deuteronomy 30:15-20. This is a speech that Moses is giving to the children of Israel as they are camped in the Plains of Moab, and it’s at the end of the forty years in the wilderness. They are just east of the Jordan River, preparing to cross into the promised land under Joshua’s leadership. And this is, essentially, some of the last words from Moses to the people. And it is very much like this for us today, too. We are close to a promised land, a different one, but we have the same choices to make.

**Deuteronomy 30:15—See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil.** This is basically the two trees all over again. So, which one will you choose?

**Verse 16—In that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply. And the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it.** Moses was commanding them to love God and walk in His ways. Is that something we are doing? Or are we still clinging to our own ways and our own ways to walk?

Moses mentions God's judgments. Are we looking to align ourselves with how God judges, or are we doing the judging based on our own eyes? All of what Moses mentions here has to do with getting rid of our own self-will. And that takes humility from our side. Again, having a humble attitude is a state of mind. It is about realistically seeing ourselves for what we really are. And we aren't anything great. Is that something that we fully recognize?

Continue on in **verse 17—But if your heart turn away, so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them, I denounce you unto this day, that you shall surely perish and that you shall not prolong your days upon the land where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it.** Just like what was mentioned at the Feast, if we turn away and don't listen to God, then we are listening to ourselves. We are setting ourselves above God. We are serving self, a competing god who eats from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. So, who are we serving? Whose will are we doing?

**Verse 19—I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessings and cursing's. Therefore, choose life, that both you and your seed may live.** Choose life. It is a choice, and that is a choice we have to make every day.

It makes me think, before I was living in a really remote area and I didn't have any access to fresh bread, so my wife and I, we would bake it ourselves. We made little ciabatta rolls, but they would come out all different sizes. And when breakfast would come around, my wife would tell me to "choose bread." And what she meant by that was to find the right piece of ciabatta bread that was the right size that I wanted so that it could be toasted. Anyway, every time she said, "Choose bread," it popped into my mind, "Choose life." And I thought that just because of this scripture, and with what Joshua said in John about Him being the bread of life. It just had this connection for me in my mind.

And it's something that would run through my mind every morning. And yeah, if you think about it, it's really not a bad reminder. Seems pretty basic though: Yes, of course, choose life. Why wouldn't you? But it's good to think about and dwell on, especially during these days of Unleavened Bread. What does choosing life really entail?

Life is something that must be sustained. That goes for physical and spiritual. It just doesn't continue on forever unless something sustains it. We know we have to eat every day or we die. And the Israelites, they also had to do that, and they had to collect their bread, their daily manna, as we know. And we have to do the same thing like they did in a spiritual sense. We have to choose our bread every day. So, the question is, what kind of bread are you going to choose and eat? Leavened or unleavened? As far as our spiritual lives go, we know that unleavened bread must be our choice.

Let's continue on with the last verse here in the chapter. **Verse 20—That you may love the LORD your God, and that you may obey His voice, and that you may cleave unto Him. For He is your life, and the length of your days, that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.** Verse 20 here is all about choosing unleavened bread. It's about aligning our will with God's will.

How do we do that? Well, as the scripture says, we must love God, and we must obey His voice. It's the opposite of loving ourselves and obeying what our voice tells us. What our voice tells us really is of no significance whatsoever. Listening to our own reasoning, satisfying our own self-will when it is not aligned with God's, that's just not going to get us anything but death.

The next part of this verse says, "that you may cleave unto Him." And this is about seeking God and staying close to Him. He needs to be first in our lives. We need to look for Him for wisdom and guidance. Why? Well, it should be pretty clear by now. Because He is life. So, every day this is a choice that we must make. And the amazing thing is that if we make that choice, we have God's holy spirit that is there to lead and direct us. We have to make the choice and have a humble mind that can be worked with.

Just like the story we read about earlier with the blind man, he had the right attitude and was able to accept Joshua. And then look at the Pharisees. They were so full of leaven and puffed up, so proud. How could they possibly accept anything besides their own ideas? With their attitude, they simply couldn't.

Again, if we have the right attitude, the right state of mind, then we will be prepared for whatever comes our way.

Let's turn over to John 6. Part of this chapter complements what we just read in Deuteronomy. Let's start in **John 6:26—Joshua answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say to you, You seek Me, not because you saw the miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perishes, but for the meat which endures unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you. For Him has God the Father sealed.**

Now, Joshua was speaking to the people here and was referring to what had happened at the beginning of the chapter when thousands of people were miraculously fed by a couple of fish and very little bread. And the next day, when those people had realized that Joshua had left, they had gone looking for Him.

And when they had found Him, He tells them that they were seeking Him not because of the miracle but because they had eaten of the loaves and were filled.

Now, this is something that has a much deeper spiritual significance and ties in very well with the scripture we read earlier in Romans 12:1-2, where it speaks about “proving what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.”

Many people might read these verses here in John and think that the miracles were the most important aspect of the story. But Christ was making the point here that it was actually the fact that they were filled that was the most important part. And isn't that exactly how we are to know what is of the truth and what comes from God? Isn't that how we are able to prove the right way to live life?

Why is it that we seek or should cleave to God and Christ? Is it because we have seen the results in our own lives? Those positive results are far more important than any physical miracle that could be performed. That miracle with the loaves and fish for God, that was really nothing. He is all-powerful, and doing anything in this physical world that would impress us human beings is really a nothing burger for Him. It's kind of like the physical sacrifices. He isn't concerned with those physical things per se. He is concerned, though, about how we think and our obedience to what He commands us.

Continuing on in **verse 32—Then Joshua said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which comes down from heaven and gives life unto the world. Then they said to Him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Joshua said unto them, I am the bread of life. He that comes to me shall never hunger, and he that believes on Me shall never thirst.**

Again, it's not about the physical. The physical is just a means to teach us. The manna that came down from heaven was just a way to show us the importance of sustaining ourselves and that sustenance comes from God. And now, Christ was showing that He is that bread of life that comes down to us.

**Verse 37—All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the Father's will which has sent Me, that of all which He has given Me I should lose nothing but should raise it up in the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which sees the Son, and believes on Him, may have everlasting life. And I will raise him up at the last day.**

We see that God's plan is wholly centered on Christ. His will is that all of His plan for mankind is accomplished through Christ. God works hand in hand with Christ, and we know that God must first call someone. That hasn't been done very much in the past 6,000 years because God's will is that only 144,000 be prepared for this time period. But then, after the 6,000 years are up, God is going to call all of mankind. All that have ever lived will be given the opportunity to choose God, to choose life, to align

with God's will for mankind, and what mankind can become. But God has to give the opportunity first. He has to call someone and draw them. Then it is up to mankind to listen and learn.

That's what these first few steps in God's Holy Days are all about, even starting with baptism, then Passover, and then Unleavened Bread. God shows us that there are two trees to choose from. We can choose our own will, or we can choose to do God's will. We can choose to go after our own plans and ideas or join in with God's plan. And if we choose God, then we see here that the rest of the job is turned over to Christ. He keeps us and then ultimately resurrects us to everlasting life.

So, the first part of the work here is done by God. And then the ball gets passed on to us, if you will, and we have to make a choice every day. And if we choose God's way and are in agreement, then we get passed on down the line to Christ. And we have to continue down the right path, have the right mindset and attitude, and then everything is set, so to speak.

The scriptures here in John speak about Christ not losing anyone that has been given to Him. And that word for lose isn't just about misplacing something. This word here is "*apollymi*," which basically means destruction. So yes, it means to lose something, but not because it is misplaced, but rather because it has been destroyed or brought to ruin. It is closely related to the name of Satan in Revelation when it refers to him as Apollyon, the Destroyer.

So, we see here a real contrast between Satan and Christ, a contrast of two trees. Christ did not come to destroy like Satan did, He came to raise up. It's like so many dichotomies that show how God and Christ are completely opposite of Satan. Just like light and darkness, there are two different ways of being.

Choosing life, choosing to eat unleavened bread, is something that we must first decide before we are able to remove sin from our lives. Self-will, self-righteousness, anything that puts self first in our lives must be set aside because it creates a blindness, just like we saw with the Pharisees. In order to do that, we have to be able to truthfully look at ourselves, and that is where humility comes into play. It's the opposite of leavened bread that is puffed up. It is a spirit that knows it needs help, submits to God, and actively seeks after God and wants to cleave to Him.

During these Days of Unleavened Bread, let's ask God to remove any blindness that we might have so that we can actually see sin and see the areas that we need to work on. We need help to find that leaven that has been hidden in the deepest, darkest corner of our homes.

And lastly, let's make sure that we have that humble and broken spirit so that God can create a new heart in us, just like David asked of God.