

You Shall Remember That You Were A Slave In Egypt

Pentecost

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I'd like to start today in Exodus 23 and I'll start in verse 14. It says:

Exodus 23:14. *"Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year:
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);
16) and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field.
17) "Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord [your] God. (NKJV)*

God has very clearly given us a command to keep this Sabbath as a special occasion to appear before Him in a holy convocation. We are commanded, as we will read, to not only convoke together, to come together to worship Him, but also to rejoice before Him.

Turn over to Deuteronomy 16. As time progressed, God went from dealing with a physical nation with promises of physical blessings to dealing with a spiritual nation, which we call "the Church," with much greater, much higher, much more permanent blessings in the spiritual nature. A much greater calling, that journey that we've all been called to embark on and we are in the process, is inextricably woven into this feast day that we're observing today. Deuteronomy 16 verse 9, it says:

Deuteronomy 16:9. *"You shall count seven weeks for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the grain. (NKJV)*

This describes a method to arrive at the correct day to observe. This counting begins with the event of cutting and offering the sheaf of barley, the first of the firstfruits, to God to be accepted. We all understand very well that that cutting represented the First of the firstfruits, which represented Jesus Christ, and that offering that was freely given on our behalf and accepted by God the Father on our behalf.

Verse 10:

10) *Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the Lord your God blesses you. (NKJV)*

And in verse 11:

11) *You shall rejoice before the Lord your God, ... (NKJV)*

Notice that God commanded His people to rejoice before Him. It's not to just come before Him, but also to rejoice, to come into His presence and to rejoice.

The definition of "rejoice" is *to feel or show great joy or delight*. And that Hebrew word is Strong's 8055, "samach" (saw-makh'). It's a root word, which means *to brighten up to be blithe or to be gleesome; to cheer up, to make or to be glad, to make or to have joy, to make merry, to cause to or to make to rejoice*.

Satan has blinded the world and, in this aspect, the "Christian world" to see the God of the Old Testament as a stern harsh God that's just waiting for someone to get out of step and then to just smash them. God is a "hanging judge" and what He wants is just to wait for someone to step out of line and then smash them—if you dare step out of line!

They further believe that the God of the New Testament, Jesus Christ, came to rescue this world from this "harsh God" of the Old Testament. Yet, we know, brethren, they're one and the same. There is a "harsh god" that Christ came to rescue us from, but it wasn't the God of the Old Testament. God and the one that was the God of the Old Testament was a merciful, loving, patient God and He wanted His people to be happy. And He wanted them to prosper and He wanted to bless them.

If we look around in the world today, physically speaking—and I'm talking through our five senses that God has given us—there is nothing going on in this world that would cause us to rejoice. There is nothing that would cause us to have a bright outlook. We see, as we look around us, man's inhumanity to man. We see war. We see hatred. We see greed. We see killing.

I'm just going to read a scripture. You don't have to turn there. Galatians 5:19, it says:

Galatians 5:19. *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; ... (NKJV)*

What we that have been called now and are seeing and living up very close and personal, we're seeing the end result of all of those works and they're coming together. And, as they do, the pain and the pressure that not only we see the world go through,

but we even feel gets ratcheted up. But, brethren, we can and we should come before God on this commanded assembly and we should rejoice before Him because of what He is doing and because He has allowed us as firstfruits to be a part of restoring and administering and serving those that will be so shattered and without hope as a result of the works of the flesh as they play out.

Deut 16:11. *You shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your gates, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are among you, at the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide. (NKJV)*

God commanded that this was to be a holy convocation where we come together with our families and those that are within our care and to rejoice before Him. There can be no doubt that this is to be a time of feasting and joy. But there's an additional instruction that God gave his people and I want to continue in verse 12.

12) *And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes. (NKJV)*

At first blush, that almost seems like a contradiction. On the one hand, God commanded them, us, to be happy and rejoice and at the same time He commands us to have our minds on our captivity and our enslavement in Egypt. How do we reconcile that? "I want you to be happy but don't forget where you came from." Yet, on this holy day, God told us to do that. Let's examine this subject and see if we can come to a better understanding of why God commanded both. Why it is absolutely necessary that we remember:

- where we came from,
- what can we learn from it,
- what tools God has given us to be able to do both, and
- what does this day have to do with our journey?

If you want a title for the sermon today, it is:

You Shall Remember That You Were A Slave In Egypt

Egypt, as a nation, is inextricably intertwined with Israel. The first holy day season (with the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread) pictures the redemption of Israel by the application of the Lamb's blood on the doorposts and the lintels, the sparing of the firstborn and their journey out of Egypt to the land that was flowing with milk and honey. Egypt is in our spiritual DNA regardless of our physical heritage. It's just part of who we are and even what God wants us to remember.

We understand that as we study God's word. Turn over to Genesis chapter 46. We're very familiar with the account of Joseph and how as a young lad he was hated by his

brothers because he was different. His own family, they called him “a dreamer.” He didn’t fit in with his brothers because he was different and they were jealous of him. He went through many sore trials as we read about that, including being wrongfully accused of attempted rape and imprisoned.

You know the story of how through Him, God caused him to become the second in charge over Egypt. Israel going into Egypt was no mistake. It was part of the plan from, as we say in Texas, “It was part of the plan from the get-go.” Genesis 46 and we’ll start in verse 1. It says:

Genesis 46:1. *So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.*
2) *Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" And he said, "Here I am."*
3) *So He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there.*
4) *I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up ... (NKJV)*

He said, “You’re going to be going on a journey to Egypt. And I’m going to be with you and I’m going to bring you out and I’m going to come out with you.

4b) and I will ... bring you up ... again; and Joseph will put his hand [over] your eyes." (NKJV)

And that means “You’re going to Egypt. You’re going to die there. He’s going to close your eyes and bury you, but I’m going to bring you back out.”

If you read the entire account, you’ll see that God was working at many different levels, and was very involved in the salvation of Israel as a nation, years and hundreds of years before it became apparent to them. God was already bringing about their rescue before anybody knew it or understood it. We’ll come back to the account of Joseph later to make an additional point, but I want you to turn over right now to Hosea 11.

Hosea is a very moving prophecy regarding the nation of Israel and how God loved them and blessed them and showed mercy to them, but they responded with harlotry and rejection of God and rejection of His laws. It’s a very good study that’s so relevant to us today and I would just say in your own study, read the entire book of Hosea and think about it. Not just Israel, but think about us today.

I just want to read one passage and that is, verse 1, Hosea 11. It says:

Hosea 11:1. *When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.*
2) *As they called them, so they went from them; they sacrificed to the Baals, and burned incense to carved images. (NKJV)*

Here God is showing His love for Israel and their rejection of Him as their God, but nestled right in the middle of this is a Messianic prophecy. Look over in Matthew 2. Not only did Israel go out of Egypt and was called out by God, so was Jesus Christ the Messiah. Matthew 2 verse 13, it says:

Matthew 2:13. *Now when they had departed, ... (NKJV)*

And this is talking about Joseph and Mary.

*13b) ... behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."
14) When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt,
15) and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."
(NKJV)*

And I'll just ask the question because we know it applied to Ancient Israel; it applied to the Messiah. Could this prophecy also apply to modern-day Israel, the Church? Has God called us out of Egypt, out of a system that rejects and denies Him and inserts another God with a different set of values? God told us that we must remember that we were slaves in Egypt.

We've been called out of a system to lead a life that was much different, but we've also been commanded to not forget that we've been delivered. Why? Why would God want us to come out and lead a different life, yet never forget our pre-conversion roots? Never forget what we see and feel and experience around us today?

You see, brethren, there is a grave danger in forgetting and, in these last days, it's more serious than ever. I want to do a case study on some that had forgotten their roots, that had forgotten that they were once slaves and let's see how that affected their relationship with God. Look over in John chapter 8. The context of the account is the time that the Pharisees took the woman in adultery to Christ and was trying to trip Him up so that they could accuse Him to the Romans.

Now keep in mind, the Pharisees were very pious. They were very religious to the point that they had it written down to the foot how far you could walk on the Sabbath, how far you could do things, how one should wash their hands, how one should clean their cups. In their minds, they even trumped God Himself and their righteousness in keeping God's laws!

Notice what Christ told them in verse 32. I'm going to break into the conversation. John 8 verse 32:

John 8:32. *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)

"We're from Abraham and we were never in bondage." Did you hear what they just said? They've clearly forgot that they had come out of Egypt, even the physical reading of the Old Testament—and we'll see in many places God reminding them. In their attempt to outdo God, they ignored one of the things He told them to remember—that they were slaves once in Egypt. What was the result of them forgetting? Continuing on in verse 34:

34) Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

35) And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.

36) Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

37) "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

38) I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."

39) They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.

40) But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this.

41) You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father — God."

42) Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.

43) Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. (NKJV)

You see they had become blind and deaf as a result of the fact that they forgot their roots and where God called them from, and that forgetting caused them to be puffed up and self-righteous and hypocritical, and caused them to hate and to reject and to kill God on this earth.

I wonder about the Church today. Can we allow ourselves to forget that we were once a slave in Egypt and were rescued by Christ? It's a question, brethren, that all of us should ask ourselves and examine ourselves regarding. Are we, am I, critical of other people that are still in Egypt, that are still blind, that are still serving their God Satan with no hope of extricating themselves? Verse 44, continuing on:

44) You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. (NKJV)

Do those that are over us (whether it be our bosses, whether it be our government officials, whether it be the magistrates in our towns) do they ever lie to us? Do they steal from us? Do they take advantage of us? Do they enslave us? Look over in 1 Corinthians 6. Do we want to get on a bandwagon and demand that they play fair? That they tell the truth? Do we demand that they keep their promises? If so, perhaps we have forgotten that we were once slaves in Egypt. 1 Corinthians 6 and start in verse 7.

1 Corinthians 6:7. *Now therefore, it is already an utter failure ... that you go to law against one another. [Here it says,] Why do you not rather accept wrong? [Why don't you allow yourselves to be wronged?] Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? (NKJV)*

These are not my words. This is God's words, inspired words.

8) *No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren!*

9) *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,*

10) *nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.*

11) *And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (NKJV)*

If we forget that we were (and in many cases, still are), and demand that others play fair, then we've probably lost sight of where we've come from.

Brethren, the answer, the solution, is not to search for and appoint leaders that are always going to be honest and cannot be bribed and will truly dispense justice. It doesn't exist today. Not in Satan's world! They are of their father, Satan, and are captive to that system. They can't escape even if they wanted to.

Psalms 146 and I'll start in verse 1. It says:

Psalm 146:1. *Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!*

2) *While I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.*

3) *Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. (NKJV)*

Don't look to, don't trust, don't expect, don't come to depend on people. If you want to be frustrated and disillusioned, look to men to give you what you need. I'll guarantee you! Expect them to live up to your expectations of righteousness. Do you want to

frustrate yourself? Do you want to spend a lot of time, counter-productive time? Expect men to live up to your expectations of righteousness. Verse 4:

4) His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; in that very day his plans perish. (NKJV)

We see in our government there are so many times that there are promises made and once that administration is out and a new one comes in, it starts with something different. Once they're done, those plans perish and there is a new one that's in. And the thing that's feeds the system is always hoping that the next one is going to be better because they promised it to us. Brethren, we don't have a dog in this hunt. We're only going to frustrate ourselves. You know it's a very bleak picture on the short term, but brethren, we don't have a choice. We have to bear up because there's a way out. Continue on in verse 5.

5) Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God, (NKJV)

You see if we put trust in men and we put trust in governments and we put trust in bosses and take your pick—bankers and whatever it is, we're going to be miserable and we're going to feel always behind the power curve. But it says, "If we trust in God and we look to God and our hope is in Him, we're going to be happy. Verse 6:

6) Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps truth forever, (NKJV)

He's not going to change His mind! Truth is truth is truth! As it says, somewhere else, "There's not shadow of turning with Him."

7) Who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The Lord gives freedom to the prisoners. (NKJV)

In other words, He will release them from their bondage.

8) The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; ... (NKJV)

It's not us! If you want to frustrate yourself, go try to convert your parents, go try to convert your boss, go try to convert fill-in-the-blanks.

8b) ... the Lord raises those who are bowed down; ... (NKJV)

Not us! Think about the branch that sticks up; it's going to get cut off. It says:

8b) ... [God] raises those [that] are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. (NKJV)

Not the self-righteous, the righteous. And that is, those that come under the blood and the mercy.

9) The Lord watches over the strangers; ... (NKJV)

Those are the pilgrims, the ones that are passing through.

9b) ... He relieves the fatherless and widow; but the way of the wicked He turns upside down.

10) The Lord shall reign forever — your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the Lord! (NKJV)

If we forget that we were a slave in Egypt, the inevitable result will be we will demand more from others that God is not working with than we can possibly do on our own.

And I'd also like to add another thing. Every one of us are on this journey, and we are in different places on our journey. We've come from different parts. We have different areas of maturity. And I would say we need to be careful about even condemning and thumping on one another that are in different places. Now, I'm not saying we ought to be like the Corinthians and wink at sin. Sin is sin is sin. But we don't always need to be telling someone what they ought to do in a situation.

I knew a man one time that tried to tell God how to do things in a situation. Fortunately, God didn't strike this person dead. He was patient and, a year later, this person went to God and thanked Him for not listening to him.

We can start to despise and belittle those that are spiritually blind. And, if we do, I will tell you our eternal salvation can become in jeopardy when we set ourselves up as a judge. The Pharisees thought they had never been in bondage and in doing so, they lacked empathy for others. They started to view themselves as the center of the universe. Luke 18, this is some of your memory work. In verse 9:

Luke 18:9. *So He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:*

10) "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

11) The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men — extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

12) I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'

13) And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'

14) I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (NKJV)

Could that happen to us? Is there a possibility of us falling into that same trap? Are we vulnerable to that? Revelation chapter 3, another one of those verses—in fact, probably on these two, your Bibles probably have fingerprints all over it from reading them. Revelation 3:14.

Revelation 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 vomit you out of My mouth.*

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.*

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)

Are we in these last days in danger of forgetting where we originated before our calling? Christ's own words tell us that there is a great danger of this. We just read it. And just like the Pharisees, we can kick Christ out of His own Church, out of a congregation and come to despise what He's doing.

It's interesting that this command to remember that we were a slave in Egypt was not just on the Feast of Weeks. Even in their keeping of the weekly Sabbath, they were commanded. This is something that should be right in the front of us.

Deuteronomy 5 and I'll start in verse 1. It says:

Deuteronomy 5:1. *And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them.*

2) *The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.*

3) *The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive.*

4) *The Lord talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire.*

5) I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain. He said:

6) 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. (NKJV)

When God gave the commandments, He made a covenant with them that they would walk in His laws and His statutes for the rest of their lives. We did too. We made a covenant with God that we would obey His laws and His statutes for the rest of our lives.

He started those commandments that He gave by reminded us that it was Him that brought us out. We didn't discover it. We didn't figure it out. We weren't ... one day all of a sudden, we found it and figured it out on our own. He ransomed us. It's not our might. It's not our power. It's not our cunning, our planning. It was the great sovereign God that we serve. He brought us out of bondage.

Skip down to verse 12. Notice this.

12) 'Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you.

13) Six days you shall labor and do all your work, (NKJV)

14) But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord [your] God: in it [you shall] not do any work, [you], nor [your] son, nor [your] daughter, nor [your] manservant, nor [your] maidservant, nor [your] ox, nor [your donkey], nor any of [your] cattle, nor [your] stranger that is within [your] gates; that [your] manservant and [your] maidservant may rest [with you] as well. (KJV)

Just as they were to rest and rejoice with us on the Feast! Verse 15, notice.

15) And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. (NKJV)

So that it's not on this day. It's something that we should call to mind when we keep the Sabbath.

We've looked at the negative side of this, but other than to keep us humble is there an upside to it? Usually when God blesses, it's multidimensional. We see what happens when we forget but when we don't is there an upside? Why would God allow us to go through this?

Before we move on, let's solidify a very important concept in our minds. Look over in Genesis 50. We previously read about Joseph and his brothers and what they had done to him, even plotting to kill him. And we know that his trials, including being cast in a well and sold into slavery, it had to be difficult on him because it was his own brothers,

his own family, that had done that to him. (Remember what Christ told His disciples about the ones that would hate them?) Later he was stripped of his responsibilities and thrown into prison for years—in prison for something he was innocent of and unjustly charged!

The Bible doesn't record it; in fact, Joseph is one of the few that the Bible doesn't record anything negative about. It doesn't record it, but I'm sure that he wept tears over the way that he was treated and the way that his brothers had betrayed him. Regarding his sore trial, the Bible doesn't say one word of anger, one word of accusation, one word of doubt during this entire period.

Genesis 50 and we'll pick it up in verse 15.

Genesis 50:15. *When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him."*

16) So they sent messengers to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying,

17) 'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.'" ... (NKJV)

As we go through life in the world and our friends and our family do us wrong and hurt us, our bosses, whatever it is, have you ever thought, "You just wait. Wait till I'm in God's kingdom and I have power. You just wait, I'm going to be avenged of this wrong and you are going to grovel. You just wait"?

Continue.

17b) ... Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

18) Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we are your servants."

19) Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God?"

20) But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, ... (NKJV)

And he even understood:

20b) ... in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. (NKJV)

Now do you think Joseph thought that when he was in the well? When he was in prison? When he went through those things? In the end, Joseph understood. God meant this all for good.

I recall the scripture that says, "All things work together for the good of them that are called." We know at an academic level God is working out a plan to offer salvation to everyone. We also know that we above all people have been called as firstfruits to assist Jesus Christ in administering His government and to be teachers to those that come after us of His ways.

But this journey is hard and it hurts. I also believe that there is a point in our journey that the light starts to come on and we actually start to see that God is allowing us to go through these things now to be able to use those experiences later. Let me tell you. It doesn't start out that way. And one of the keys is we have to remove ourselves from the center of focus of our sphere and re-focus on the bigger picture and put God in the middle.

You see, brethren, Joseph got it! He understood it. The light came on. At some point in our journey, if we're allowing God to work in us, we will change our approach from "What is God doing to me?" to "What is God doing for me?" And, as that continues, we will come to see "What is God doing through me?"

*21) Now therefore, [be] not afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones."
(NKJV)*

Are we going to be able to say that when we are on throne number two and those come to us that have mistreated us? "Don't be afraid. We're going to take care of you. We're going to teach you."

21b) ... And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. (NKJV)

Again, brethren, there is a converted person that gets it. He was actually humbled that God used him—the least, the most despised of his brothers—to save them. And he saw his job as second in command in Egypt was to comfort them and to speak kindly to them. Remember due to his brothers, he spent over half his life in slavery, in servitude, in prison. Yet he saw it as God using him in a powerful way to help those that hated him.

Are we there yet? Am I there yet?

For sake of time, I'll just go back and discuss it. Go back and look at Job's trial. Job accepted what he was going through and he never doubted that God was with him and was allowing this trial. His request, or I guess I could more accurately say "his demand," was not that God should remove the trial. He wanted to know and God to explain to him why he was going through it. In the end, Job realized that God was doing it for him.

And in that very painful process, he came to love and have compassions on those friends that had been accusing him. And in the end, Job with his new perspective was able to not only see himself in relation to God, but also the greater responsibility he had

toward his friends. You see, through the prayers on their behalf in a manner similar to Joseph, he comforted them and he spoke kindly to them. Job then realized not what God had done to him, but what God had done for him. And, I believe, what God had done through him.

Brethren, we should never forget that we were a slave in Egypt. And the purpose for that is to give a humility and compassion and understanding and experience and love for those around us.

Write down these scriptures. God even commanded us to remember this in our everyday lives, in our everyday walk, in business. Here are some scriptures. I won't go to them for sake of time. Look up in your own study: Deuteronomy 15:15, Deuteronomy 24:18, Deuteronomy 24:22. They use the same words, "That you shall remember." And it's talking about in your business and in your everyday life.

If we are to mature spiritually, we must have the perspective that God rescued us from bondage, and in everything we do in life, we understand it to the depth of our being. In fact, it must become part of our spiritual DNA because if we forget (like the Pharisees), we'll forget where our salvation came from and we will start to demand that those that are still blind (that are unable to walk, that are perhaps on a different path than we were called) will live up to our version of righteousness. And just like Satan, we'll start to set ourselves up as a judge and as a lawgiver. And the minute we do that, we are back in bondage. And there can only be one outcome from that rebellion and it's not pleasant.

Let's never forget that our calling as firstfruits is to become experienced, battle-tested compassionate beings who will be serving those that come after us. How could we possibly do that if we haven't traveled down the same road? Experienced the same weaknesses? Fought the same battles? And, most of all, to view God in the great context of not what He's doing to us, but what He's doing for us, and what He's doing through us.

Look over in 1 Peter chapter 4 and I'll pick it up in verse 12. He says:

1 Peter 4:12. *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13) but rejoice to the extent that you partake [in] Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14) If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. 15) But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, [And notice this!] or as a busybody in other people's matters. (NKJV)*

Wow! Murderer, thief, adulterer, evildoer, busybody! Those aren't my words. How much time do we spend in other people's matters? Why is this written so negatively? Could this terrible action have its root in us forgetting that we are slaves in Egypt? I

want to just kind of put that under a microscope here. I've got three different commentaries and I just want to read what they say about this word "busybody in other people's matters."

This is from Barnes' Notes. It's Strong's 244, *alлотριεπισκοπος* (al-lot-ree-ep-is'-kop-os). I butcher that almost as much as I butcher English but anyway it says:

The Greek word used here ... occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, an inspector of strange things, or of the things of others. Prof. Robinson (Lexicon) supposes that the word may refer to one who is "a director of heathenism;" but the more obvious signification, and the one commonly adopted, is that which occurs in our translation-one who busies himself with what does not concern him; that is, one who pries into the affairs of another; who attempts to control or direct them as if they were his own....

Jamieson, Fausset, Brown:

... The second Greek "as" distinguishes the class "busybody in other men's matters" from the previous delinquents. Christians, from mistaken zeal, under the plea of faithfulness, might make themselves judges of the acts of unbelievers....

And he uses the word. It says this Greek 244:

... 'a bishop in what is (not his own, but) another's province; an allusion to the existing bishops of the Church; a self-constituted overseer in others' concerns.

And Adam Clarke, it says:

[But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as ... a busybody ...]
Alлотριεπισκοπος [Greek 244]
The inspector of another; meddling with other people's concerns, and forgetting their own; such persons are hated of all men. But some think that meddling with those in public office is here intended, as if he had said: Meddle not with the affairs of state, leave public offices and public officers to their own master, strive to live peaceably with all men, and show yourselves to be humble and un aspiring.

Continuing on now:

16) Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

17) For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? (NKJV)

In other words, what he's saying is, "Those people are not being judged yet." We're being judged and we need to be judging ourselves.

18) Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (NKJV)

You know, brethren, we are going to suffer, but let's make sure that that suffering is not because of the actions we've taken. Verse 19:

19) Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls ...

And that word [soul] is *your entire physical life including all of your affairs*. Just write this scripture down, Psalm 37:5.

19b) ... commit [your] souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. (NKJV)

Let's ask ourselves how much time do I spend with the Bible using it as a mirror and how much time do I spend using it as a club? You see we're called to study and to understand this as a mirror. We aren't called to go and shove it in somebody's face and say, "You're supposed to be doing this."

When God called Israel out of Egypt, He brought them up Mount Sinai and entered a covenant with them. He gave them His laws and they agreed to abide by them and to become His people. And at that point, the church in the wilderness began. Exodus 19 and I'll start in verse 1. It says:

Exodus 19:1. *In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai.*

2) For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain.

3) And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel:

4) 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.

5) Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.

6) And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

7) So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the Lord commanded him.

8) Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord. (NKJV)

Verse 10:

10) *Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes.*

11) *And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the Lord will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. (NKJV)*

Verse 16:

16) *Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.*

17) *And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.*

18) *Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.*

19) *And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice.*

20) *Then the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. (NKJV)*

And then it goes on to the next chapter where He gives the Ten Commandments to them.

I want to read from just Matthew Henry's Commentary. This is the tradition that we understand. It says:

The time here bears the date in the third month after they came out of Egypt. It is computed that the law was given just 50 days after their coming out of Egypt in remembering of which the Feast of Pentecost was reserved the fiftieth day after the Passover. In compliance with which the spirit was poured out on the apostles on the Feast of Pentecost fifty days after the death of Christ.

As they made that covenant with God, God saw that they had the tools they needed to complete their physical journey. They had a teacher, Moses, who administered God's law. They had a priesthood, who taught them God's ways. They had a guide and a leader which was Jesus Christ in the form of the fire and the cloud. And He was always with them. They had manna to eat. What about us?

We have the same law that God gave to them on the Feast of Weeks, but as we know and understand they were given the physical aspects of the law with physical promises. We're given that same law to apply not only physically but to apply it in a spiritual manner that it has to become part of who we are. It should become part of our very nature. It has to become written in our hearts—the very core of who we are. What did God do to accomplish that? What did He give us for our journey?

John 16 and I'm going to start in verse 4. It says:

John 16:4. *But these things I have told you, ... (NKJV)*

And this is Christ talking to His disciples.

4b) ... that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.

"And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

5) "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?'

6) But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

7) Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper ... (NKJV)

The King James says, "the Comforter."

7b) ... will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send [it] to you. (NKJV)

Why would He say it was for their advantage? He was telling them that they would be better off without His physical presence among them.

Let's consider that. How many of us on our journey ever wished we could just ask Christ what to do? We're in this conundrum. We really want to do the right thing. We want to do it God's way. We just aren't sure how to do that—what that is.

Greg Gaetzman and I have sort of a standing saying when we're wondering how to address a specific issue and we say, "Where's the Urim and Thumim when you need it?" You know if somebody could just tell us!

Brethren, keep in mind God calls us and He wants us to mature into children that have internalized His values. And that demands that we learn how to apply His laws in every aspect of our lives. If all we had to do was just ask "How?" or ask what to do, would we really ever develop a process of judgment? Would we really ever develop a methodology or an understanding?

Let me tell you if you want to stop someone's maturing emotionally constantly tell them what to do and never allow them to exercise their own knowledge and apply it. You're setting somebody up for failure when you do that. The problem is the person will never learn to think for themselves, just to react to someone else's direction.

God's not looking for robots. God gave us His Son first and foremost as a sacrifice for our sins and the ability to purchase us from Satan who we served. Secondly, He came to set us an example of how God would act and react in dealing with all aspects of carnal human society. What we need to do then is learn how to apply this information and example as we go through our lives.

When we were young and we went to school, we learned the, I'm going to say, "the academic parts of life," the three Rs—reading, 'ritin', and 'rithmatic.' Guess I never learned it. We went to colleges and universities and we learned the academics or we served an apprenticeship if it's a trade. We graduated and we thought we'd arrived. "Look at me! I'm an engineer. I'm a doctor. I'm a journeyman, whatever, a lawyer." Only to discover later that it was the practical application that really came after that that really gave us the education. You see we had the rudiments. We could, as an engineer, do a 4a transformer and we could do it by the book ... we could do that, but what did it mean? And it wasn't until when we got into life and we had to do things that we understood.

We can study God's word till the cows come home. And we should. But we learn and we grow when we learn how to apply the knowledge in everyday life. You see we have to become skilled in using God's word. Another scripture to look up later, Hebrews 5:13.

We have Christ with us today, 2,000 years later and scattered around the globe. How would God's work have grown and covered the earth if all the followers were heaped up around a single person in Jerusalem, a single point in time? God was doing much more than trying to convert a few fishermen from Galilee. That was just a start. God was laying the foundation for a family that would grow and spread out and eventually inhabit eternity with Him. And Christ had to go because through the ages He left us His word and He gave us His spirit and He made a promise.

I'm going to re-read verse 7.

7) Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper [the Comforter] will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send [it] to you. (NKJV)

You see, brethren, for His word and example to span the earth and the dimension of time, another element had to be given, an element that would allow His words to sink in and, as His words are exercised in our daily lives over time to change a hard stony, self-centered heart into a soft, workable heart. And that change is required of each of us.

Look over in Acts chapter 2. This is what He gave us. Acts 2:1.

Acts 2:1. *When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

2) And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3) Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

- 5) *And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.*
- 6) *And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.*
- 7) *Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?"*
- 8) *And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?*
- 9) *Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,*
- 10) *Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,*
- 11) *Cretans and Arabs — we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."*
- 12) *So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"*
- 13) *Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."*
- 14) *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.*
- 15) *For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.*
- 16) *But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: (NKJV)*

And then he quotes:

- 17) *'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.*
- 18) *And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.*
- 19) *I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.*
- 20) *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.*
- 21) *And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'* (NKJV)

Brethren, God gave us three priceless gifts. He gave us His Son as a sacrifice, as a guide, and a companion. He gave us His law, both physical and spiritual. And He gave us His spirit, which if you understand it, is the very essence of Him. He gave us part of His mind to dwell in us, to learn how to take that law and how to apply it, to change our heart from something hard to something that's soft and moldable.

Those of us that God has called out of the bondage of Egypt and He is leading us on a journey to a land that we don't even understand at this time. Brethren, we truly are blessed above all people on the earth. This day, The Feast of Weeks, Pentecost, is a

day that shows us that God gave us His law; He gave us His spirit that we could follow Him and allow Him to write that law in our hearts. This feast day is truly a day that pictures God's church, the firstfruits who will marry His Son and begin a family that will continue forever.

Final scripture, Deuteronomy 7. This was written and delivered to God's nation over 3,000 years ago, but due to spiritual implications I submit it's even more relevant to us today than it was to a physical nation. Deuteronomy 7 and we'll start in verse 6. It says:

Deut 7:6. "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

7) The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples;

8) but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (NKJV)

Brethren, we do not know how much longer our journey is. Only God knows. We know that we have to stay on that journey. We need to keep focused on Him. Let's never forget the promises that lie ahead of us at the end of this journey. But equally important let us never forget that God called us and redeemed us by the sacrifice of His Son, bought us from the hand of Satan, the adversary. And, as each of us continues our journey, let's never forget that we were once a slave in Egypt.