

## Making Our Calling and Election Sure (1<sup>st</sup> Day of Unleavened Bread) Steve Durham—April 2, 2026

Welcome, everyone, and greetings. Welcome to the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in 2026. Another year has come and gone, hasn't it? And the events in the world are ramping up, they're getting hot.

Here we are at war with Iran. Who would have thought that? And of course, the other things that are going on are too numerous to mention, but we certainly are seeing evil in the world take place. And so it's so much more **important now that we make our calling and our election sure** and not turn back into the ways of the world, go back into sin, as the Days of Unleavened Bread picture, coming out of sin.

Now, Passover and Unleavened Bread mark the holy day season in 2026, and every year, God has us **renew the new covenant in His blood through the Passover**, as we did yesterday, and then we have the **Night to be Observed**, which is a very high hand. They came out with a high hand. It's very exciting.

It's a very—you can imagine just being there, knowing that they had had—were leaving Egypt, leaving sin. They'd been in sin and bondage for a long time. Now the **Days of Unleavened Bread** are here, and they're headed out the first day.

So, if you want a title for this message, it's **making our calling and our election sure**, being unleavened and staying unleavened. So very important. How do we stay unleavened? It's easy.

You know, we know that when we are baptized and we have God's Holy Spirit, receive the Holy Spirit, and we've repented that we are **unleavened**. We're told that our sins are forgiven at the time, at the end of our baptism. The same way with **Christ, who has died for us, was a perfect, sinless sacrifice without spot or blemish, and His blood was precious**.

His blood was accepted by the Father. His sacrifice was accepted as a **perfect sacrifice, unleavened** sacrifice. Very, very important to our calling to understand that and our election, because we can get off base.

We can get off on our calling and lose out on the election, lose out on eternal life. We can choose to lose out on that. Salvation is not a one-time thing.

It's once and for all. It's a process, and we have a choice. God gives us choices, and part of that is to stay with God, stay close to God, stay in relationship

with God, and not go back, not go back into that sin, into the world.

**Why does God have us remember these days? So that we can go forward toward the kingdom and develop holy, righteous character right now** and realize that we have God is behind us. God has set this up for us and made it possible for us to do just that. And as we do go forward, we **grow in grace and knowledge** all along the way.

And remember not to look back. Do not look back. Don't go backwards.

Micah tells us that in Micah. I'm going to turn to Micah 6:4. He talks about Egypt and being redeemed by the blood of Christ from a land of slavery. Why does he tell us to remember? Why does he tell us that? "For I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of slaves," out of bondage, a type of sin.

It would do well for us not to forget God, Micah says, and that is so true, especially with the times coming down around us, the world coming down around us. We have to stay focused. **We have to stay strong**.

And now is the time for us to really get our act together and be serious about our calling. Now, Moses writes this as well, writes about it in Deuteronomy 6:12.

He tells us to be careful not to forget the Lord who brought you out of Egypt. Don't forget Him. This is a memorial.

This is a time to remember. You know, this first day of Unleavened Bread, all of the holy days belong to God, and we want to remember God, what He's done for us. These days are not our days or an invention of man, but they are the Lord's days, the Eternal's days.

They are **appointed feasts**, and God has commanded us to observe and keep these days. And they're not a burden in any way. So, let's turn to Leviticus 23, as we always do, during the holy days.

They're all listed there. The Sabbath as well is a holy day. So, Leviticus 23:1, we'll start in verse 1 "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, "*Concerning* the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, even these are My appointed feasts" (Lev. 23:1-2).

Now, these are holy. God comes and puts His presence in this day, and we have God's Holy Spirit, all of us, and we come together, and **that makes it a holy convocation** with God here in our midst. We ask for His presence here in spirit to be here.

So, He talks about the Sabbath, and then He talks about Passover, and then in verse 6 of Leviticus 23, He says, "And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD." It's to the Lord. "You must eat unleavened bread seven days."

You take that unleavened bread inside, internally, and we've cleaned our homes where we live, and we are the temple, and that bread, that Unleavened Bread comes into us. Christ is in us, and we walk with Him, and we have that Spirit within us.

So, verse 7, "On the first day you shall have a holy convocation. You shall not *do any servile work therein*, but you shall offer a fire offering to the LORD seven days. In the seventh day *is* a holy convocation. You shall do no servile work *therein*." Lev. 23:6-8.

So, as we always do on the holy days, we take up an offering, and so now let's take a break, and we'll be back after the offering.

(break to take up offering)

So, let's continue. What do the days of Unleavened Bread mean for us today, individually and as a church? Individually, more specifically, because we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, and we really come before Christ on our own. Well, together we bear one another's burdens, and we help and assist one another, but we can't make those choices for people, can we? We have to make those choices for ourselves. We can encourage and inspire and help others along the way, which we should do.

If we love them, and we certainly do, and we will do that where it's possible. So, what do they have to do with making our calling and election sure? Putting sin out, unleavened bread.

Peter talks about this, 2 Peter 1-10. He says, don't fall prey to deception and false teachers in the first part. That's one of the things that make us stumble, and make us lose our calling and our election and get off track. But we'll start in verse 10.

You might want to read 1 through 10. "For this reason, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure;" because of these other things that were going on there that he listed, false doctrines, false prophets, false teachers, deception coming in, creeping in, for gain.

He says, "Be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure;" We see the world out around us. Be even more diligent.

Days of Unleavened Bread mean so much to us, because by putting out that sin, we build a much closer and more loving relationship with the Father and Jesus Christ. We build that holy, righteous character that is *Theirs* through Unleavened Bread, throughout the whole year, daily, but all the way through the year. So that's how we make our calling and election sure.

So, I want to give you several points today that are going to help us do that, I hope. And it's hard to do, it's hard to take and put these points into practice. But

- if we prayerfully do that,
- and we do our study,
- we put God's Word in,
- and we pray to Him,
- we communicate to Him,
- and we ask Him sincerely, from a sincere heart, to help us take those sins out of our lives.

We may not know what they are. We have sins of omission and sins of commission. But we do know God will point them out, and He'll help us with it. So, we can be very encouraged by that.

1. **We come out of the world.** Come out of the world and walk with Him in Spirit and in newness of life. Now, Christ, when He was praying to the Father, in John 17:15, He told the Father to, don't take them out of the world, leave them in the world.

There's a reason for that. Christ was the light of the world. He was an example.

He was showing the way. He was showing the good news of the Kingdom of God, and we are lights as well. And we can't help the world and be a light to the world if we're taken out of the world.

So, He says in John 17:15-16, "I do not pray that You would take them out of the world, but that you would keep them from the evil one," Satan. Keep them from ourselves and keep them from the society around us, but keep them from the evil one. "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."

And He said later, He said, Satan doesn't have anything in me. Here he's coming, but he doesn't have anything in me. That's what we're supposed to say as well.

We should grow to that point where we can hope that Satan does not have anything in us, any sin. We don't give in to the sin in the world and in Satan, that the synagogue of Satan around us is growing. And that everywhere, media, television, out in the world, in the politics, in the health organizations, in finance, all of that, all of that is getting worse and worse.

It's coming out more and more that it is definitely an evil world. So, He says, "come out of Egypt, Sodom and Gomorrah and Babylon. All those symbolize the way of Satan and sin.

And that's what these days picture. In Revelation 18:4, He mentions again for the end time now, for us to come out of her. Come out of her, my people, "And I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, My people, so that you do not take part in her sins and that you do not receive her plagues.'" Very shortly they were coming.

Now, Romans 6, Paul references baptism. And baptism as the children of Israel went through the Red Sea, it was a type of baptism. And when we have our feet washed, it's a type of baptism.

So, in Romans 6:4, he says, "Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life."

As we leave Egypt and we head toward the promised land, as we come out of sin in the world and head toward the kingdom of God, holy, righteous character, being like Christ, imitating Paul, as he said, imitate me as I imitate Christ, we should walk in newness of life. And again, God makes that possible for us. He just doesn't leave us out there on our own.

Once He dies as a sacrifice and sheds His blood and returns to the Father, He just doesn't leave us alone. The redemption comes by the Passover, by His perfect sinless sacrifice and blood, He's made a way possible for us. And He's always there.

He won't leave us or forsake us. He doesn't want any to perish. And all we have to do is call out to Him in prayer, and He'll go before the Father.

The Holy of Holies was opened, the veil was rent, and our way to go to the Father with Him, our High Priest, is made possible. So, He's right there for us. They're both waiting for us to overcome, to want to overcome.

We're going to see some of those points. Now, in 1 Peter 1:18-19 [transcriber correction] it tells us about the precious blood of Christ. He says, "Knowing that you were not redeemed by corruptible things, by silver or gold, from your futile way of living, inherited by *tradition* from your forefathers." And boy, they were steeped in tradition.

And that tradition's here today in the form of our holidays that we have that are all rooted in the pagan system, in Satan's system. It's just a different form of tradition. And then he says in verse 19, "...you were redeemed not by corruptible things... but by the

precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." And that's very important.

He was perfect. He was without sin. Even when sin of the world and sin from people were put on Him, He did not sin.

He carried that sin, but it wasn't Him. In His sacrifice, He lived His life sinless, and He went to the Father sinless, and His blood was precious, and it was poured out, and God the Father accepted that blood. There was no sin in Christ.

**He did not sin.** It was not because of the sins of the world that somehow, He was then sin. No, He was not.

"...also saved by the deliverance from sin through the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which gives us sanctification." Passover redemption, justification, going out of sin. On our walk, we are sanctified.

We're set apart. We are given sanctification through the Holy Spirit, and we're going to see that again. And again, He's giving us a way out of death, freedom from sin.

You know, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, but we have freedom from that slavery and that sin. **Christ gives us a way, the truth, and the life** made that possible. Now, true freedom, true freedom from sin only comes when:

- we acknowledge our helplessness,
- weak, sinful nature
- and turn to God,
- to the sacrifice of Christ,
- and cry out to Him for help.

Have you ever done that? Are we just kind of complacent in our sins and kind of, oh, you know, I'll do that tomorrow, or I really don't have sin, or things are okay and I'm comfortable? Have we ever cried out to God and asked Him to show us our sins and then to work with us daily, praying to Him, help me every minute of the day, help me, help me, help me, and ask Him to clean and renew our minds so that we have a clean mind, a pure mind, so that those things that were past are out and they're gone, and they're never brought back, as God "removes our sins, as far as the East is from the West," and Psalm 103:12. That's what we ask God to do, and He'll do that for you. He will.

And if you're burdened down with a heavy sin, maybe it's generational. Maybe you're great grandfather and your parents, and now you, you suffer the same thing. He can break those cables, those habits that are not a string, but they're a cable, you know, a metal cable that is impossible for us physically to break, but through the Holy Spirit, it's possible.

All things are possible with Christ, and we just have to avail ourselves and ask and make supplication, make prayer, and ask Him for that. I'm getting ahead of myself here.

So, through the blood, we find mercy. **His mercies are new every morning**, the mercy necessary to be redeemed from death and cleansed from unrighteousness. That takes mercy, that takes love and kindness and forgiveness that only comes from the Father.

But now, it also involves action on our part. You know, it's not once saved, always saved. That would be convenient, but it's not that. We have action.

We can choose to do something to take us off the path and maybe even get to a point where we're off so often that we end up blaspheming the Holy Spirit and have committed the unpardonable sin. That's possible. Not likely, but possible.

So, we have a part in this, our action. **Putting sin out is an action**. Actively putting sin out every day, just like we put sin out of our homes and we put sin out of our lives.

**2. Overcoming the sin within.** God has given us free will and choice, and we can choose to obey Him and fight to put sin out and keep it out, or we can give it up and embrace our sinful nature and just be complacent about it and Laodicean about it. And that's the easy way.

It really is. But that is not the way to salvation. That is not the way to the Kingdom of God.

Now, salvation is a gift, but we have things to do. In order to walk with God, we are to put sin out and overcome it. Paul says in Galatians 5:1, you can read all through Galatians 5, he talks about the works of the flesh, the works of the Spirit, the fruits of the flesh, the fruits of the Spirit.

But in Galatians 5:1, he says, "Therefore, stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free," free from sin, "and do not be held again in a yoke of bondage." Don't go back into sin and the ways of this world.

**3. Bring every thought into captivity.** That's an action item. That's something we have to do. We want to have the thoughts and the mind of Christ and the thoughts of the Father.

They're higher than ours, and they bring life, abundant life, life eternal. But the thoughts of the world and man bring evil and sickness and disease and hate, all negative things that are not beneficial to our growth and health.

Second Corinthians 10:3, Paul talks about bringing every thought into captivity. He talks about strongholds. I'm going to talk a little bit about that. He says, "For although we walk in the flesh, we do not war against the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, through the overthrowing of strongholds." You see, it's God who does that. And Satan is the one who is coming after us and causing us to trip up through moods and fiery darts and things that come at us when we don't even expect it.

But God is there to help us overthrow those strongholds, those things that we've had that have been generational, or those things that we do that we can't seem to get over. So, in v. 5, we're instructed to be "casting down." Now, get this, "casting down vain, [empty] imaginations."

You can put the works of the flesh in that word, vain. So, any of those imaginations that we have, that we play with in our minds, that Satan puts into our minds through the TV and the media and different things, "casting down vain imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God." Now, that can be from Satan or that can be from our pride.

That can be from our vanity, our ego. And Christ talked to the disciples about that. You know, don't be exalting yourself.

You don't be like the world. Don't be many lords over. Don't look to have a king kingdom and be a king now.

That time is coming. We're to work on our character and our emotions to be like Christ, be tender and lowly, to be submissive, yielding, humble with a contrite spirit, bring every thought into the obedience of Christ. So, some of these strongholds, we can just name them again, addictions, anger, uncontrolled, where you just get angry all the time.

You just flip the switch and you're angry. Vain imaginations, there's many, many other ones. You can go to, again, Galatians 5:16, "Now this I say, walk by the Spirit. and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these things are opposed to each other, so that you cannot do those things that you wish to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the works of law" (16-18).

We can go on down through there and read. It's good to read Galatians 5. We are to be on guard against these things that cause us to go back into Egypt and sin and put on the fruits of the Spirit and walk with Christ.

“Guard the door of your mind with diligence because out of it *are* the issues of life.” Proverbs 4:23, he goes on to talk about some of the strongholds or some of the things that Satan gets into us and gets us to do and we don’t want to do, but we do them anyway. Or maybe we don’t think about it.

He says in verse 24, “Put away from you a deceitful mouth.” And that comes from Satan. Satan is the father of lies. He’s a murderer from the beginning. He’s a father of lies. “And devious lips put far away from you.”

“Let your eyes look right on, and let your eyelids look straight before you.” Job made a covenant with his eyes. You know, he wasn’t looking around.

He was looking forward. He wasn’t looking and letting Satan get him off guard. :26 “Ponder and think about the path of your feet and all your ways *will be established.*”

Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. And the law is a light, a lamp unto our path and a light unto our feet. (Psalm 119:105). “Do not turn from the right hand or the left. Remove your foot from evil.” Prov. 6:23-27. Right, straight, straight is the way. Don’t go the broad way. Remove your foot from evil.

Paul understood about strongholds and sin within. He tells us in Romans 7:17, he had the same thing that a lot of us have that you can read down through there.

You know, you want to do something right. You want to be right. You want to be in a good relationship with God and pleasing to God.

And we constantly trip up. We constantly sin. We miss the mark.

And Paul said in Romans 7:17, he lamented, he said, “So then, I am no longer working it out myself; rather, it is sin *that is* dwelling within me; because I fully understand that there is not dwelling within me—that is, within my fleshly *being—any good.*” And that’s what Christ said. Why do you call Me good? I’m in the flesh here. Why do you call Me good?

“For the desire to do good is present with me;” I want to, “but how to work out that which is good, I do not find. For the good that I desire to do, I am not doing; but the evil that I do not desire to do, this I am doing.

“But if I do what I do not desire to do, I am no longer working it out myself, but it is sin that is dwelling within me.” Sin dwelling within me. Sort of the same way for us, isn’t it? As we strive to overcome sin within us, again, like I said, we’re not alone.

God will help us in coming out of the world and overcoming our personal sins. We just have to go and ask Him. And also, we’re going to apply the Holy Spirit.

We’re going to follow that lead because He’s given that to us. We can ask Him for that every day. Ask Him when we’re in these trials, every minute of the day to help you.

When something comes into your mind, just say, “Stop, wait, stop. God, help me. Help me put it out. Don’t let me dwell on it. Don’t let me think there. I don’t want to go back there.”

Again, we’re going to go through some of this. He’ll never leave us or forsake us. He doesn’t want anyone to perish.

This is a continual process, isn’t it? Well, it sounds like when we leave Egypt, we’re delivered. Well, it’s a deliverance that happens over and over and over again, isn’t it? It’s a process of acknowledging that we have sin and we need to overcome it. And to do that, the next point is to do that prayerfully, identifying and owning the sin.

**4. Identify and own the sin.** Own it. Don’t point to someone else. Don’t blame somebody else.

Don’t make excuses. Identify the sin within that you have, those problem areas that we have and own them and admit them that ‘I’ve sinned.’ And go to God in prayer and ask Him for forgiveness and help me put them out.

He says in Psalm 139:23, and through earnest and sincere prayer, not just a short prayer, but prayerfully asking Him to help me see where I’m wrong. And then when you find it, then we have other steps to do we’ll get to.

Psalm 139:23, have this attitude, “**Search me**, O God, and **know my heart.**” That’s where the emotions and that’s where the thoughts all reside, isn’t it? It’s in our hearts and our minds. “Try me,” test me, “and know my thoughts, and see if any wicked way is in me; and **lead me in the way everlasting.**” The way, the truth and the life everlasting in the way of Christ.

Walk with Christ. Acknowledge your sins honestly once you have them before God and then confess them before Him. Tell Him, “I have this sin. I need to get rid of it. I don’t want it. Please forgive me.”

Allow the blood of Christ to be shed in my behalf and be justified and seen as righteous as Christ is, imputed righteousness of Christ before the Father. That’s amazing to me. But guess what God the Father does when we come before Him in sincerity and truth with a sincere heart, identifying the sin and confessing it before Him.

1 John 1 tells us that John, who we call him the Apostle of love. They were all loving. They all had God's Spirit. But Christ loved John more, I think. I guess you could say that Christ loved all of us. But He spent more time with John, I think, on those quiet minutes.

And he says in 1 John 1:6-9, "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him," in other words, we're doing all right. We'll have a relationship with God. Everything's fine.

"...But we are walking in the darkness. We are lying to ourselves. And we are not practicing the Truth."

And you can deceive yourself very easily, thinking that you know the truth and you're doing the truth and you're walking in fellowship with Him. But in fact, you're walking in darkness or you're doing some other stronghold that you have and you think you're okay, but you're lying to yourself and you're not practicing the truth.

Verse 7, "However, if we walk in the light as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.

"If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." That's a wonderful process.

It's an amazing process to get sin out, to overcome that sin, and to ensure our calling and election is sure. And if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us. .

The Holy Spirit is very important in all of this. Through our calling and his sacrifice, along with the Holy Spirit, He helps us live to righteousness. He helps us walk the walk.

He grants us that imputed righteousness of Christ upon repentance and forgiveness through the blood of Christ. He makes our calling and election sure. Then once we have that and have confessed it, and He's shown that to us and we own it, we repent.

**5. We repent of our sins**, sincerely repenting, not just... God knows the heart. He knows what our hearts are when we come to him to repent and seek daily cleansing. All the time, whenever we sin, we can go before him.

He is a propitiation. He's an atoning sacrifice. He's long-suffering and patient. He knows our frame. He knows how we were made. He made us.

And He put in us the things that He wants us to have, and He's working with us. He's our workman. We're the workmanship in Ephesians 2:10, that Christ is working and will not quit.

He will never give up. No matter how many times we fail, we come back to Him and repent. He's always there.

Even after conversion, we still find the law of sin working in us, don't we? It's still there and revealing hidden sins that we can repent of. Again, if we confess our own sins, He's faithful and righteous to forgive us and cleanse us, if we stay close to Him. And a couple of ways that, you know, Ephesians 5:26, He sanctifies us and has cleansed us with the washing of the water by the Word.

That's the Bible study that we do, and that word cleanses us. It keeps the sin out. It points us in the right direction.

It helps us to see where we should walk and what God wants us to do. "The washing of the water by the Word; that He might present it to Himself as a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle," just as Christ was, "or any such thing; but that it might be holy and without blame." Even though Satan comes before God, like he did with Job, and he's the accuser, it's holy and without blame.

Then we have to continue to obey the voice of God. And Christ learned obedience through the trials and sufferings that He encountered along the way, and we do too.

And that's why He allows those trials and sufferings to happen. He hears us, and He's there, and it's His will, though, to help us to learn obedience sometimes, and He lets us stay in those trials and suffering. Our calling is a calling of overcoming, and it is one to obey His word as Christ obeyed the Father.

And look in Hebrews 5:7-10, look what Christ did. Look how even Christ learned obedience. "Who in the days of His flesh, offered up both prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death, And He was heard because He feared God.

"Although He was a Son, yet He learned obedience from the things that He suffered. Having been perfected, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him, after He had been designated by God as a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek."

Go to 1 Peter 2:21-22, write that down, and it tells us why we were called.

It tells us that for this reason "you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving an example

that you should follow in His footsteps Who committed no sin; neither was guile found in His mouth.” And He says He learned obedience by suffering, and we are to do that and be an example.

That’s why we’re called. So, we’re also to be imitators of Him. We see too that overcoming is not something that we can do of ourselves.

The really difficult things, the deep sins that are there, that are even the presumptuous sins that we do because of a bad attitude or whatever we have, but the sins of omission and commission, things, all of them, the overcoming is something that we can’t do ourselves. It’s by the power of God, the Holy Spirit that helps us to overcome the sin within and to come out of the world and its evil ways and not go back in. It’s by the inner working of His own power whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself.

It’s possible with the Holy Spirit. Christ tells us in John 14:26 [transcriber correction], you know, God also, I’ll just mention this while you’re turning, 2 Corinthians 1:3, He’s a God of comfort, God of all comfort, sits on the throne of mercy and comfort, and He does that so we can learn to comfort others. He calls the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, a Comforter.

“But when the Comforter comes, even the Holy Spirit, which the Father will send in my name, that one shall teach you all things and shall bring to your remembrance everything I have told you.” (John 14:26). And for John 16:7-8, a couple pages forward, all of John 16, we can read, “But I am telling you the truth. It is profitable for you that I go away, because if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you. However, if I go, I will send it to you.

And when that one has come, it will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment.” And it does the same for us.

That’s why we can’t practice sin. That’s why we can’t live in sin, as John says, because the Holy Spirit convicts us. And we give the world a guilty conscience, and they don’t like that, and they’ll persecute us for righteousness’ sake.

Verse 13, “However, when that one has come, even the Spirit of the truth, it will lead you into all truth.” The Spirit leads us into truth. If you’re having difficulty understanding the truth, ask God to lead you into all truth.

Pray about it over and over again. And He will, because it shall not speak from itself, but whatever it shall hear, it shall speak, and shall disclose to you the things to come. And those that are led by *the* Spirit of God are the children of God, in Romans 8:14.

In Romans 8:26-28, talks about what the Spirit does for us and with us. “Now, in the same way also,

the Spirit is conjointly helping our weaknesses” or our sins or those things are missing to the mark, “because we do not fully understand what we should pray for according as it is necessary, but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groaning that cannot be expressed *by us*.”

So, even our thoughts are communicated to God. And the one who searches the heart comprehends what the strivings of the Spirit are, He hears us in spirit speak, “because it makes intercession for *the* saints according to *the will of* God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, and to those who are called according to *His* purpose.”

Now, you know, I don’t understand this, but some of Israel wanted to return to Egypt, and it says in Acts, they lost heart, and they wanted to turn back. You can read that in Numbers, and they just said, “Oh, we should have stayed in Egypt. You’re trying to kill us out here. We want to go back.”

I don’t understand why people do that once they’ve been given the calling and the understanding, the mystery of righteousness, and all the things, the blessings and the promises that come from it, and the hope that we have. What a wonderful calling this is.

We have to have a heart, a burning desire of that first love all the time. It’s important in making our calling and election sure. It’s important in coming out of sin that we have a burning desire in a heart that goes hard after God, that loves Him.

We have a heart that desires God and a relationship with Him. That’s another point. We want a desire to make it into the kingdom, but we want a desire to love God and love the brethren and love others, love everyone, and hope to see everyone have the opportunity to live an abundant life and know the truth.

That’s what we ultimately desire. We must have a strong desire and a pure heart in order to remain faithful and overcome putting sin out of our lives. We have to endure to the end, don’t we? But it takes heart.

The heart symbolizes the center of the fruits of the Spirit where they reside, the intentions and actions of our heart. If they’re evil, it resides in the heart. If they’re pure in love, it resides in the heart.

It represents one’s moral and spiritual condition. You can just listen and you can tell. After a while, somebody will tell you what their heart is.

It influences our thoughts and actions. Those strivings that make their calling and election sure will have, those that strive, will have a pure heart. Matthew 5:8, it says, “Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

I spoke a little while ago about seeing God. I see you. Blessed are the pure in heart that have their hearts washed with pure water, with the washing of the water of the word, for they shall see God.

The transformation of the heart is essential for spiritual renewal, having our minds renewed, and growth, and overcoming sin that are the roadblocks and the strongholds that keep us from growing in holy, righteous character.

Turn to Ezekiel 36:26-27. And we're going to read something that was written by Paul in Hebrews twice. Different words, but the same concept. Talking about the heart and the spirit that resides in us, he says, "And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. And I will take away the stony heart of out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh."

That's what sin does. It makes you a stony heart. "And I will put My spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My ordinances and do *them*" because of His spirit.

It convicts you of sin, and you have a horrible time if you're living in sin. If you have a problem that you can't kick, you can't get rid of, it's going to make you frustrated. It makes you uneasy.

You can go to God and ask Him, and He'll help you. So, in Hebrews 10:16-17. I think it's also 8:10.

Paul says, talking about this same—he's quoting this Scripture, in a way—"This is the covenant that I will establish with them after those days," says the Lord. "I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds" and their sins and lawlessnesses I will not remember ever again," because they've come, they've identified them, they've asked for that, they've repented, they've come with a sincere heart to worship in spirit and truth, with sincerity, and He forgives them, and He doesn't remember it, as far as the East is from the West.

Having a strong desire to follow after God and a pure heart is essential in staying close to God, and staying the course, and overcoming sin daily, and making it to the kingdom of God, and being a benefit to other people, being a joy to other people, loving other people. You can't do that when you're walking in sin. You're a hypocrite.

I become a hypocrite if I'm carrying sin around with me, and people will know that. God wants everyone to make it to His Kingdom. He doesn't want any to perish, as I said, and He gives us the tools to do that.

We don't want to go back into the world. We want to remain steadfast and endure to the end, and by

overcoming sin that easily besets us, even the presumptuous sins, as I said, the intentional and the rebellious, stubborn sins, they can be repented of. A presumptuous sin can be a single person, multiple people, can be an entire nation.

Deliberate, willful, arrogant, insolent, and fragrant sins are presumptuous sins. He says, David says in Psalm 19:12-14, "Who can understand his errors? Oh, cleanse me from *my* secret faults." Do you have any of those? Do I have any of those? Do I have any secret faults that I keep back? "And keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins.

"Do not let them rule over me," and boy, they can. They can run you right out of the church. You have an offense. You get bitter. You don't resolve it. It grows into a root of bitterness, and then you start spewing it out to everyone, and you get a group, a pity party, and you get people to think the same way you do, and pretty soon you're gone.

They rule over you. "Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression," if you keep back and cleanse me from my secret sins. "Let the words of my mouth and my meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my Rock."

Now, we talked about the Holy Spirit. It's very important. You can't do this without the Holy Spirit.

We must have it, and we must allow it to lead us and to guide us into all truth, as it said. We cannot overcome sin without it and make our calling and election sure without the Holy Spirit. It gives us freedom from sin, doesn't it? 2 Corinthians 3:17 tells us that.

The Spirit also gives freedom. Now, Indianapolis Star and News had on their banner 2 Corinthians 3:17. That's why it sticks in my head. But the Bible assures us that God is faithful, and He means what He says. It says "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" or liberty, depending on which one you read.

John 4:23-24, He's talking to the woman at the well. "The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers," that means there's false worshipers, "the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth;

"For the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner." In other words, He hears them. He doesn't hear the sinners.

A repentant sinner, He certainly does. Well, one who is living in sin, He does not. "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."

He wants a heartfelt approach. We engage God genuinely and sincerely, reflecting the heart and our intentions. And that leads us to worship Him with a Spirit-led worship and allows the Holy Spirit to guide us through the day and also in our worship.

If we avoid hypocrisy with the Spirit of truth and sincerity, that worship then reflects your true self and your beliefs. We have to have sincere love and the truth, with the Holy Spirit. Colossians 1:10. And Israel left Egypt from Ramses, ended up at the Red Sea, went through the Red Sea, and they walked to the Promised Land, and it should have been over, but they spent another forty years.

But they had to walk, didn't they? And God was with them all the way. He was there with them. "That you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work," not our work, it's every good work God puts in us through His Holy Spirit, being fruitful with the fruits of the Spirit "...and growing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints," and that power is the Holy Spirit, "Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" Colossians 1:10-12.

You can read Romans 4:17, it talks about things, calling things what they will be. In whom we have redemption through His own blood, even the remission of sins. By that, we can walk worthily of the Lord through the knowledge of His truth, the true knowledge of the truth, not error.

Walking in the truth will also set us free, won't it? In John 8:32, he says, you don't have to turn there, "and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." Read all of Psalms 119. Free from what? Free from the bondage and slavery of sin, which drags us down, which holds us down, the weight that so easily besets us.

It's important that we have a sincere love of the truth. You can read 2 Thessalonians 2:3, what happens to those that don't, but we'll just pick it up in verse three, "do not let anyone deceive you by any means."

We need to read that again. "Do not let anyone deceive you by any means because that day will not come unless the apostasy shall come first, and the man of sin shall be revealed—the son of perdition," :7 because "the mystery of lawlessness is already working, only there is one Who is restraining at the present time until it arises out of the midst.

"And then the lawless one will be revealed ... Even the one who is coming is according to the inner working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are perishing because," here's why, "they did not receive the love of the truth, so that they might be saved" (2 Thess. 3-10).

Go on and read through the rest of that. Okay, those are just some of the points that help us on our walk, help us overcome sin, help us make our calling and election sure, and Christ is going to make sure that happens if we have the heart and the desire to do so.

Our future in the kingdom depends on it. Again, like I said, there's so many things we could talk about, the strongholds and the things, the stones and the things we stumble over. If we remain faithful in this struggle, which it is a struggle, it's a fight, Paul said, our future is one of an amazing, unimaginable, eternal life or glory with God, with less glory, but still glorious.

Abraham saw the stars. They were a different glory. We will all be one.

We will all be one family, and nobody will be upset about the other person having something or not. You'll be so happy. It'll be perfect for you.

It'll be what God wants for you. It fits you like a hand in glove. We are God's workmanship currently and being molded by Him to develop the very mind of Christ to the fullness of the stature of Christ.

And the goal of our calling and election is the first resurrection. That is where the sure part comes in, making our election sure, where we'll be transformed into spirit beings. So many places, 1 Corinthians 15, Romans 12:1-2, all these things that point to the goal of the overcoming.

And while we're on our way, we're growing in love, we're loving others, and we're helping, we're serving. What can I do for you? How can I help you? What do you need? I love you. Let's get together.

Let's spend time together and share God's Word. It talks about that in Hebrews 10:26. So, by overcoming sin within today, we are being prepared to rule and reign with Christ, helping to finally set this world straight.

What a wonderful thing. On the ground floor of God's government coming in. Let us, therefore, be diligent in this calling, as we've heard, and move forward, not backward.

Let's read Ephesians 2:7. "So that in the ages that are coming, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace (His love,) in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Amazing. Think about that.

We don't have any way of understanding or knowing or fathoming that, what that's going to be, how it's going to be. I sit and think about it sometimes. And when I'm in the woods, I think about it.

I look at the creation around me. And this is just a little bit of what is waiting. Look at all His personality and His character and His love and all the things around us and all the angels and just go on out with that.

So, final Scripture for today. I hope you all have a good and profitable Feast of Unleavened Bread for the next seven days. And put sin out, go to God, ask Him sincerely to help you, ask for the Holy Spirit to help burn up that sin within, and focus on Jesus Christ.

Keep the eyes straight and narrow. Keep them on Jesus Christ. I say that all the time.

Focus on Christ. There's a reason for that. So, Ephesians 5:1-2, I'll end with this. It says, "Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children;" which we are. We will be His children "and walk in love, even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us."

So, have a good rest of the First Day of Unleavened Bread.

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Micah 6:7
- 2) Deuteronomy 6:12
- 3) Leviticus 23:1-2, 6-8
- 4) 2 Peter 1:10
- 5) John 17:15-16
- 6) Revelation 18:4
- 7) Romans 6:4
- 8) 1 Peter 1:18-19
- 9) Galatians 5:1
- 10) 1 Corinthians 10:3-5
- 11) Galatians 5:16
- 12) Proverbs 4:23
- 13) Romans 7:17
- 14) Psalm 139:23-24
- 15) 1 John 1:9
- 16) Ephesians 5:26-27
- 17) Hebrews 5:7-10
- 18) 1 Peter 2:21-22
- 19) 1 John 14:26
- 20) John 16:7-8
- 21) Romans 8:26-28
- 22) Matthew 5:8
- 23) Ezekiel 36:26
- 24) Hebrews 10:16
- 25) Psalm 119:12-14
- 26) 2 Corinthians 3:17
- 27) John 4:23-24
- 28) Colossians 1:10-12

- 29) 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10
- 30) Ephesians 2:7
- 31) Ephesians 5:1-2

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- Deuteronomy 6:12
- 2 Peter 1:1-10
- Psalm 1-3:12
- Galatians 5
- Psalm 119:105
- Ephesians 2:10
- 1 Peter 2:21
- 2 Corinthians 1:3
- Romans 8:14
- Hebrews 8:10
- Romans 4:17
- John 8:32
- Psalm 119
- 2 Thessalonians 2
- 1 Corinthians 15
- Romans 12:1-2
- Hebrews 10:26

SD:hv  
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