

Wise Laws for a Fallen World: Holiday Laws

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. I say this every week, but I mean it every week. It really is a joy and a privilege to worship with you and to be able to preach God's word to you.

Please turn with me in your Bibles to Exodus chapter 23. If you don't have a Bible, please raise your hand and we'll bring a Bible to you that you can use while you're here.

We are at the end of the book of the covenant in Exodus 23 verses 10 to 19 today. I think we've been in Exodus for almost a year now because we had some breaks in between.

And believe it or not, we're actually coming near to an end because the latter half of Exodus goes by pretty quickly. Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word.

Heavenly Father, we have gathered in the name of your son Jesus Christ once again to remember your faithfulness, to remember your promises so that we might live our lives trusting you, leaning on you.

[1 : 40] For we know that you are the one sure foundation who will never let us down. So inspire fresh faith among us this morning as we look at your word.

Speak to us. Remind us of your goodness, your grace, so that we marvel again and worship you with our whole heart.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. If you're able, please stand for the reading of God's word from Exodus 23 verses 10 to 19.

And we'll read for us. For six years, you shall sow your land and gather in its yield. But the seventh year, you shall let it rest and lie fallow that the poor of your people may eat and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat.

You shall do likewise with your vineyard and with your olive orchard. Six days, you shall do your work, but on the seventh day, you shall rest that your ox and your donkey may have rest and the son of your servant woman and the alien may be refreshed.

[3 : 01] Pay attention to all that I have said to you and make no mention of the names of other gods, nor let it be heard on your lips.

Three times in a year, you shall keep a feast to me. You shall keep the feast of unleavened bread. As I commanded you, you shall eat unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of Abib.

For in it, you came out of Egypt. None shall appear before me empty-handed. You shall keep the feast of harvest of the first fruits of your labor, of what you sow in the field.

You shall keep the feast of ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in from the field of fruit of your labor. Three times in the year, shall all your males appear before the Lord God.

You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with anything leavened, or let the fat of my feast remain until the morning. The best of the first fruits of your ground, you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God.

[4 : 05] You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk. This is God's holy and authoritative word. You may be seated. Yeah. In the United States, the Congress has the right to declare a federal holiday, and that's when all the non-essential federal government offices are closed, and the federal government employees get a paid day off.

So for example, we have President's Day coming up, which is officially Washington's birthday, when we celebrate the founding father and the first president of the United States. And then

Independence Day similarly celebrates the U.S. Declaration of Independence from British rule.

And Juneteenth and Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebrate the emancipation of African American slaves and the triumphs of the civil rights leader, respectively. Memorial Day honors U.S. military personnel who fought and died while protecting this country.

That's just a sampling of, it's not all the holidays, but these are not, you know, arbitrary days that some politicians just chose to give some people a paid day off.

These are reminders. They serve as reminders of significant historical milestones and foster intentionally a sense of national identity and solidarity.

[5 : 31] The same was true for the nation of Israel, where the people observed holy days and feasts that were designated not by men but by God. Holy days are, in fact, where we get the word holiday.

And this passage tells us about the seventh year and the seventh day and then about the three feasts, the major feasts, the pilgrimage feasts that the Israelites were supposed to celebrate. And then we're going to talk finally about the one God we are to worship and pay attention to.

So let's first look at the seventh year and day. The first two paragraphs of this passage, verses 10 to 11 and verse 12, each begin with the number six. So if you look at it, it says first six years in the verse 10 and six days in verse 12.

It says in verse 10 to 11, for six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield, but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow that the poor of your people may eat and what they leave the beasts of the field may eat.

You shall do likewise with your vineyard and with your olive orchard. This is an extension of the fourth commandment of the 10 commandments, the Sabbath principle of working for six days but resting on the seventh day.

[6 : 43] For six years the Israelites are supposed to work the land, but on the seventh year they are to let the land rest and leave it fallow, meaning uncultivated.

They're not supposed to work the ground. It's not only the people who need rest, this verse tells us, even the land needs rest. It's supposed to rest and observe the Sabbath.

Leviticus 25, 2-7, which provides more details regarding this command, specifically says that the land shall keep a Sabbath to the Lord. The farming benefits of leaving a land fallow for a time is widely known.

When you leave the land unworked and unfarmed, it restores the nutrients, restores organic matter to the soil. That's why periodically if you have potted soil, you have to replace it so that your plants can keep thriving because it has fresh nutrients.

It also disrupts the pest cycle, the pest's life cycle because they don't have anything to feed on and grow on, so they die off and you have pest-free ground in which to plant. And it also gets rid of soil-borne pathogens like bacteria and fungi and roundworms that infect plant roots.

[7 : 53] The land also needs rest. But this is not the reason that is given explicitly here in this context for letting the land lie fallow. The reason God gives here is in verse 11, that the poor of your people may eat and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat.

You might be wondering, well, if they're not farming on the seventh year, what is there to eat? And the answer is that in the way the Israelites in the ancient world farmed, inevitably there would be seeds spilled during the harvest and there would be some natural growth without any intervention from human beings.

And so there would be crops that they could eat of. And the Israelites were allowed to forage and eat, but they were never to harvest that on the seventh year so that there's enough left for the poor among them to eat and after them even the beasts of the field to eat.

So the same principle applied for the olive orchards with the olives and also the vineyards with the grapes. And it's not only on the seventh year that the poor get to eat because God in Deuteronomy 24, 19 commands this, when you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it.

It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. So even during the normal harvest times, the Israelites were forbidden from returning to collect dropped sheaves in the field.

[9 : 28] They were to leave it so that the poor among them can collect it and eat. So then in the six years of work, as well as on the seventh year when they are resting, God makes specific provisions for the poor among the Israelites.

It would have been tempting for the Israelites to harvest the crops that are growing unsupervised on their land during the year of rest. You know, they could have thought to themselves, well, it is my land after all, and it is growing on my land, so let me just go there and pick the field clean and I

could have the produce for my family.

But that exactly, that attitude is exactly the problem. In that same chapter in Leviticus 25, when God commands the Sabbath year for the land and the year of Jubilee, God says in verse 23, the land shall not be sold in perpetuity for the land is mine.

For you are strangers and sojourners with me. That's an amazing concept. God does not want the Israelites to forget that the land that they're living on is actually God's land.

God gave it to them. God owns it. And they are living on it as sojourners. They're mooching off of God. They are aliens and sojourners in the land. So the Sabbath year for the land is a reminder to the Israelites of this theological reality.

[10:56] We need to remember this about, not only about the ground, but all the gifts, in fact, that God has given us as well. It's easy for us to think, well, I worked hard to earn this money, so I'm going to keep every dollar for myself, but not so fast.

Walden Wall, who wrote a book called Money and the Gospel, says this, one of the great presumptuous sins of humanity is the thinking that we create success and influence and wealth. This is completely false.

The blessings we have, even if we work to acquire them, are all from God's hand. Have you ever wondered why you were born where you were born or how you came to have the talent you have or the intellect or the opportunities or the health or the money?

Everything comes from the hand of God, even if we work hard. So your land is not yours. Your job is not yours.

Your house is not yours. Your car is not yours. Your intellect is not yours. Your talents are not yours. Your health, even, is not ultimately yours.

[12:07] Ultimately, they are all gifts from God. So, we are right to ask ourselves, what do you have that you did not receive? And if then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

If we feel entitled to what we own, we will not be generous toward the poor. But if we are grateful for what we own because we recognize them properly as the gifts that they are, then we can be free to be generous.

But it's not only the poor that God is looking after. Verse 11 adds, and what they leave, what the poor leave, the beasts of the field may eat. There is a clear priority here, lest we forget.

The poor people get to eat from the field first, and only afterward, the beasts of the field are to be allowed to eat the leftover. People created in the image of God are more valuable than animals who are not created in the image of God.

So, we should be more concerned about human welfare than animal welfare. But with that said, it is remarkable that in the law of God, God himself here is speaking, and God himself deigns to address the welfare of the wild beasts of the field.

[13:32] God cares even for the jackals of the field. The God who governs the hundreds of billions of galaxies in the universe and probably more ensures that even the wild beasts have something to eat.

This highlights God's providential care and encourages a generous spirit of creation stewardship among us. I have three daughters, which means I watch many princess movies, which I enjoy more than I care to admit.

And one of our household favorites is a live action version of Cinderella from 2015 with Lily James. You guys might not have seen it because it's not actually on Disney Plus due to some copyright issues.

And in the movie, Cinderella's stepmother and stepsisters are too miserly to share even their meager portions that are left over with Cinderella.

But Cinderella, in contrast, is so open-handed and generous that she even shares her portion, which is the crumbs and the leftover from her stepmother and sisters, she shares that openly with even the mice in her own house.

[14:57] And Cinderella names and feeds those pests of the house, jack and goose, so that one of them gets fat.

And Cinderella sharing food with the mice shows her, it's supposed to reveal her generous and selfless spirit in stark contrast to the stingy, shriveled heart of the stepmother.

We are drawn to generous characters like that. Why? Because she resembles God who cares even for the jackals. And if God so cares for the wild beasts, will such an attentive, loving, generous God neglect us who are made in his own image?

And that's why Jesus says in Matthew 6, 25 to 26, therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink or about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or stow away in barns and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. The God the Father is not the bird's father, but he is your father.

[16:18] Will he neglect you? God is no Scrooge. So see here in these verses, God's generous heart toward you and don't ever think of him as a begrudging or stingy God.

This leads us to the principle of the Sabbath day in verse 12. Again, it begins with the number six, six days. You shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman and the alien may be refreshed.

This is again an elaboration of the fourth commandment. Remember the Sabbath day, keep it holy, working for six days and ceasing from work on the seventh day. There when God gave the fourth commandment in Exodus 20, he gave this specific rationale which is in the background here.

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. So God himself, we need to remember, needs no rest.

God didn't rest because he was tired. We know this because Isaiah 40, 28 tells us that God neither faints nor is weary. He never gets weary. He never faints.

[17:38] He never tires. And Jesus confirms this in John 5, 17 when he tells the Pharisees who are criticizing him for healing on the Sabbath that my father is working even this day.

God the Father works on the Sabbath. He doesn't take days off. However, for our benefit, because we as human beings, finite creatures, need rest, God the Father rested on the seventh day of his creation.

The Sabbath is a reminder that we are not all powerful, that we are not indefatigable or indispensable like we think we are.

When even God rested on the seventh day from his work of creation, do we really have the audacity to say that our work is so important, that I am so important that I can't afford to take a day of rest?

The world will not stop spinning because we stopped working. This rationale for the fourth commandment is in the background here, but a different reason is in the foreground in this verse.

[18:52] Why must Israelites rest and not work on the seventh day, that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman and the alien may be refreshed.

So here the concern that is emphasized is love of neighbor. Not only do we need rest, the people who work for us need rest. The son of your servant woman, the alien, they need refreshment.

This is necessary because if we're working, then other people who are under our charge and care have to work as well, imagine having a manager, I think some of you guys have this, imagine having a manager who never stops working.

You're on vacation, ping, hey, have you done this? Weekends, evenings, early mornings, all hours of the night, you get emails, pings on your Slack, work Slack, have you done this?

You would never be able to rest because your boss hasn't stopped working. You'll be constantly stressed that you're not doing enough work, that you need to be doing more and more work.

[20:03] It's for this reason that we need to think of people who are under our care and under our charge and rest for their sake also so that they may be refreshed.

And once again, God demonstrates his care even for the animals. He says that we should rest so that your ox and your donkey may have rest.

Even farm animals, just beasts, they need rest. And if God is concerned about making sure that the livestock get necessary rest, how much more do you think God cares about your rest, about your well-being, about your refreshment?

The Sabbath was so important for the Israelites that later in Exodus 34, they're specifically commanded not to work even in the busiest months of the agricultural calendar, during the plowing time, in the harvest time.

The most time-sensitive periods in an agricultural society, that's when the ox and donkeys are the busiest working. But even then, you must cease working on the seventh day and rest.

[21 : 10] Even then, you must let your animals rest on the seventh day. That's the seventh year and the seventh day. After addressing those two things, verses 14 to 19 turn their attention to the three feasts that they are to celebrate throughout the year.

And verses 14 to 16 are paralleled by verses 17 to 19. This is important, and I'm going to bring it up again later. Both paragraphs begin with the word three. Three times in the year you shall keep a feast to me.

Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord God. Women and children can come, but the males were required to be there.

Presumably, their wives are holding down the fort home while they represent their households in the temple or before the presence of God. And so this parallel structure between the two sections, verses 14 to 16 and 17 to 19, suggests that the three sentences in verses 18 to 19 actually correspond to the three feasts mentioned in verses 15 to 17.

So first is the feast of unleavened bread. It says in verse 15, As I commanded you, you shall eat unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of Abib.

[22 : 24] For in it you came out of Egypt. None shall appear before me empty-handed. In Exodus 12, God already gave detailed instructions and rationale for this feast.

The seven day of the feast of unleavened bread immediately followed the celebration of the Passover. The Passover day when God struck down the firstborn sons of Egypt as retribution for not letting the firstborn son of God, Israel, go.

And so because of that, Egyptians let the Israelites go in a hurry, fearing for their lives. And so the Passover was when the Israelites sacrificed an unblemished lamb as kind of an atoning sacrifice. And they daubed the blood of the lamb on their doors and the angel of death when he came through to destroy the firstborns, firstborn males of Egypt, spared the Israelites because they saw the blood of the lamb.

That was the Passover day and the Israelites celebrated that annually by slaughtering a lamb and eating it. And the seventh day, seventh day unleavened bread, the feast of unleavened bread immediately followed the Passover and sometimes they're combined and they're called together called the feast of the Passover or the feast of the unleavened bread.

[23 : 38] And this was the rationale for the feast of unleavened bread in Exodus 12, 33 to 34. It says because the Egyptians ushered the Israelites out of Egypt in haste and they left in such a hurry that they had no time to leaven their bread.

They had no time to leaven the bread and let the dough rise. And so that's why they had to eat unleavened bread when they were exiting Egypt. And so to commemorate that, they are now to for seven days eat only unleavened bread.

They came out of Egypt in the month of Abiv, which is now the has reset the Jewish calendar.

That's when the Jewish calendar begins after the Exodus. And that's when they are to celebrate the Passover.

It's the Jewish equivalent of Independence Day where they were freed from the yoke of the Egyptian tyranny. And the command none shall appear before me empty handed is a reference to the sacrifice that participants in the feast were to offer to God.

In fact, this command applies to all three of the feasts because according to more detailed instructions found elsewhere in Leviticus 23, Numbers 20, 29, Deuteronomy 16, each of these three feasts require the offering up of sacrifice.

[24 : 48] And each of these three feasts specifically require the sacrifice of a year old male lamb without blemish. Just like the Passover.

As I mentioned earlier, verses 14 to 16 are paralleled by verses 17 to 19 and both paragraphs begin with the word three. And the three specific instructions given in 18 to 19 correspond to the three feasts outlined in verses 15 to 17.

So verse 18 then corresponds directly to the feast of unleavened bread. And you can see that it's confirmed by what it says because it says offering anything unleavened with the sacrifice is prohibited.

It says you shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with anything leavened or let the fat of my feast remain until the morning. Not letting the leftovers of the lamb remain until the morning is also

parallel to the instruction that God gave to the Israelites about the feast of unleavened bread in Exodus 12.

They were supposed to burn up any leftover instead of letting it remain to maybe rot until the next day to spoil and it has to be thrown out or maybe they eat leftovers the following day.

[25 : 55] If they did that, it would cheapen the sacrificial meal. It would make it seem common and ordinary. And so burning the leftovers kind of blazoned in their mind the reality that this is a holy meal.

This is a sacrificial meal and is offered to God and shared in his presence. So no leaven is allowed and no leftovers are allowed. The second of the three major pilgrimage feasts that the Israelites are to celebrate is the feast of harvest or the feast of first fruits of your labor of what you sow in the field as it says in verse 16.

This feast came at the beginning of the harvest season and according to more detailed instructions in the chapters I mentioned earlier, this feast was inaugurated. It started when the sickle is first put to the standing grain.

So the very first crop of the harvest that you get is the first fruits. That's when you begin the feast.

And you are supposed to bring those first fruits to God as an offering and you are supposed to wave it before him.

And you brought the first, I mean that would have been tempting for them as well because if you are like me and you like to plan for the future, you like to have emergency supplies and savings, well you don't know what's going to happen to the rest of your field.

[27 : 13] What if there's hail, locusts, and the rest of your produce get destroyed? Well here you have the first fruits, maybe if I store this up at least I'll have some in case some disaster happens for the rest of the year.

It would have been tempting to have that mindset but not according to this first. It says God commands us to offer the first fruits, the feast of first fruits, the first fruits of our ground we are to bring to God as an offering.

So after the first fruits are waved, you're supposed to count down seven weeks. And after the seven weeks, so 49 days, on the 50th day, they were to offer more sacrifices.

That's why sometimes this feast is instead called the feast of weeks. Or it's also called Pentecost, which is the way it's referred to in the New Testament because it comes from the Greek word for 50.

On the 50th day, they celebrate. So the feast of first fruits, the feast of weeks, feast of harvest, Pentecost is all referring to the same feast.

[28 : 19] Now by bringing the first fruits offerings, they're giving it as a pledge of trust to God. And the first fruits offering is also to be from the best of the first fruits, it says.

Not the worst of your first fruits. It's supposed to be the cream of your crop, not the crumbs of your crop. As I've been saying throughout our series in the book of Exodus, these laws are not legally binding on Christian as laws because they are stipulations of the old covenant.

And we are under the new covenant, under the law of Christ. For this reason, everything in the Old Testament, including these verses, have to be interpreted through and applied through the lens of Jesus who has fulfilled the whole law, fulfilled all of the scriptures and have brought it to its intended purpose and goal.

With that said, this is still the inspired word of God. And it teaches us about God's character. And it gives us ideas about how we might honor God.

So do you have a desire to honor God in this way? To bring him the first fruits and not the leftovers?

[29 : 38] My mom instilled this in me and my sister when we were growing up from an early age. Whenever we started a new job, she encouraged us to give the entire first paycheck as an offering to God in the church as a first fruits offering.

And she encouraged us to give the first 10% of your income at the beginning of the year. Not beginning of the month, the first 10% to God instead of giving the leftovers.

And before taxes, before the government takes its portion. And this is what Hannah and I have done throughout our entire marriage. And I say this not to boast but to set an example and to show you what this in some limited way looks like.

And we do this not because we have to, but because we get to. Because we want some way to express to God that you are first in my life.

Because we want some way to be able to acknowledge and say to God that everything I have comes from you. You're the giver of every good gift.

[30 : 53] It brings me so much joy and pleasure to be able to give it to God. And God has blessed us abundantly and we have never known any lack.

Do you want to give the first place in your life to God? Do you want to give the best of your life to God?

I've heard some people say after, you know, after I've had a career, have made some money and maybe raised a family. Well, then after that, I will serve the Lord in ministry. Or after that, I will consider going into the mission field.

But why wait until you're old? You might not even live that long. Why not give the prime of your life, the best of your youth to God?

And then trust God to take care of the rest. The third and final major feast the Israelites were to celebrate was a feast of ingathering at the end of the year, most likely the end of the agricultural year because it comes at the end of the harvest around September, October.

[32 : 10] This feast is more commonly called the feast of tabernacles or the feast of booths because during the harvest, Israelites set up booths, tabernacles, tents in the field for the farmers, the harvesters to take shelter in.

So this would be the modern equivalent of our Thanksgiving or other similar harvest festivals throughout the world. And following the pattern we have observed so far, verse 18 gives specific instructions for the feast of unleavened bread.

And verse 19a, giving specific instructions for the feast of weeks, that leads us to conclude following the pattern that verse 19b is most likely specifically connected to the feast of booths.

That's the third feast and that's the third specific instruction given in the parallel section. But the connection is not immediately apparent because the instruction is quite curious. It says, You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

Right? I'm pretty sure some of you guys, when I read that, are just like, what in the world is that? And, well, unfortunately, I don't have an answer for you that is sure, you know, that is perfectly, I mean, I'm not sure that this is right.

[33 : 27] I think it's plausible. In the 12th century AD, Jewish philosopher Maimonides, many scholars follow his line of reasoning that Maimonides argued that forbidding the Israelites from boiling a young goat, a goat kid, in its mother's milk had to do with ancient Near Eastern pagan rituals, fertility rituals, which involved boiling a goat in its mother's milk.

And there's a chance that a ritual similar to that is described in an ancient Ugaritic text. The text is fragmented, so it's not perfectly clear that that's what it's referring to, but it's possible that some pagan rituals involved boiling a young goat in its mother's milk.

And it's plausible that that's some kind of fertility ritual because life, you know, milk represents life and a young goat also represents fertility. This is possible but impossible to prove.

Another possible reason is that there's just something perverse about boiling a young goat in its own mother's milk. The young goat is supposed to be fed and nourished by the mother's milk, not cooked in it.

Plus, it seems so greedy to consume both the mother's goat and the kid and the mother's milk in one dish.

[34 : 52] So this may be yet another command in this passage where God is enjoining the responsible stewardship of creation, being merciful even to the animals.

The way this section of the book of the covenant is structured in parallel format, as I've been mentioning, six years, six days, three feasts, three feasts, they bring the focus intentionally to verse 13, which is the centerpiece, the crux of this passage.

And this is the main takeaway really of the passage. And it says in verse 13, pay attention to all that I have said to you and make no mention of the names of other gods, nor let it be heard on your lips. Not only are the Israelites to not worship other gods, they are not even to mention their name on their lips. Their name should not even be heard on the lips of the Israelites.

And that's really the purpose of the Sabbath year and the Sabbath day and the feasts of unleavened bread and weeks and booths. They are designed to remind them of God's faithful provision for them and reaffirm their exclusive allegiance to him.

[36 : 03] Remember that. This is what God says. Remember that at this point of the Exodus, the Israelites are not yet in the promised land. And yet, almost all of the instructions here in this passage pertain to when the Israelites come into possession of the promised land.

Right now, they don't own any land that they can leave fallow on the seventh year. Right now, they don't have any harvest to give thanks to God for. But God gives these instructions in anticipation of the fact that he will fulfill his promises as if they have already been fulfilled.

Because when God promises something, it is as good as done. God is saying to the Israelites, remember how I provided manna for you daily in the wilderness and a double portion for you on the sixth day so that you can rest and still have food to eat on the seventh day.

Remember that. Remember that. And when you come to possess Canaan, let the land lie fallow.

Give it rest and trust in my provision for you. Remember how I struck down Egypt with a mighty arm at the Passover day and how you were ushered out so quickly from Egypt that you had to eat unleavened bread.

Well, remember that. And when you come into possession of the land of Canaan, celebrate these feasts. Eat unleavened bread for seven days so you will not forget that it was Yahweh who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

[37 : 30] And it is Yahweh who provided this land for you. And it is Yahweh who provided the harvest for you. Not Baal, not Asherah, or any of the other idols of the surrounding nations.

That's the point of these feasts. Pay attention to all that I have said to you. Note the contrast here. Pay attention to all that I have said to you and make no mention at all of the other gods. God demands absolute exclusive allegiance because he deserves nothing less and will not countenance anything less than that.

Who or what are the idols in your life that you look to as your redeemer and provider? In theory, you might say that God is your deliverer.

God is your savior and redeemer. But functionally, do you relate to God that way? Or are you finding your identity in something else or someone else?

[38 : 41] Do you live in fear like you need to save and deliver yourself from your slavery, sin, and death? In theory, you might say that God is your provider.

But functionally, do you relate to God that way? Do you really rest in his provision? Or are you always wrecked with anxiety because you feel that you are your own provider?

Or maybe you're in a codependent relationship and look to your partner as your ultimate provider rather than God.

Jesus has fulfilled all of these holy days and years and feasts for us. And that's why Paul writes in Colossians 2.16, Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

We no longer need to observe these feasts and Sabbaths because these feasts were intended to point forward to the coming of Jesus. And Jesus has already come and he has already fulfilled these feasts.

[39 : 53] He has already fulfilled the whole law. That's why in 1 Corinthians 5.68, Paul references the feast of unleavened bread and the Passover when he tells the Corinthians to purge their church of sexual immorality.

He says this, Do you not know that a little leaven leavens a whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

Let us therefore celebrate the festival not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Because Jesus, the unblemished Passover lamb of God, has been sacrificed on the cross for our sins, for our forgiveness.

And because of that, we have been redeemed from our slavery to sin and death. We ought to celebrate the feast of unleavened bread, not with the literal feast, but by removing the leaven of malice and evil from our lives and replacing them with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Because Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father far above the heavenly places, and because Jesus, after ascending, sent down the Holy Spirit that he had promised to us at, do you guys remember what feast?

[41 : 15] The feast of weeks, feast of first fruits. That's why Romans 8.23 describes those who believe in Jesus Christ as those who have the first fruits of the Spirit.

We have the first fruits of the Spirit. The Spirit of God indwelling us is the guarantee of the full harvest that is coming, of the full inheritance that God has promised us that we will inherit and receive.

That's why it says in that same verse, in Romans 8.23, we who have the first fruits of the Holy Spirit groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Are you groaning right now? Are you grieving right now because of your suffering and affliction? Do you have unanswered questions in your life because you're living in this time between Jesus' two comings?

You can have hope because you have the first fruits of the Spirit. All the answers are coming. The full harvest is coming because you already have the first fruits.

[42 : 33] And Jesus also fulfilled the Feast of Tabernacles. It is no coincidence that Solomon built his temple and dedicated it during the Feast of Booths or the Feast of Tabernacles in 1 Kings 8.65.

The Feast of Booths came to be connected to Israel's wilderness wanderings because while they were wandering the wilderness, they built booths and tents for themselves and they built the tabernacle, the tent of God.

And so Solomon, when he is dedicating the newly built temple, he is very intentionally superseding the tabernacle of old. This is the dwelling place of God. And in the new covenant that Jesus brought about, it says in 1 Corinthians 3.16 that we, God's people, are God's temple and the Spirit dwells in us.

And according to 1 Peter 2, God is currently building us up as a spiritual house, as the house of the Spirit with Jesus Christ as the cornerstone.

Jesus is the one who fulfilled all of these feasts, all of these laws. And he is the rightful object of our exclusive allegiance and attention as told here in verse 13, pay attention to all that I have said to you and make no mention of the names of other gods nor let it be heard on your lips.

[44 : 03] So let's remember God's faithful provision in the past so that we can live with faith and hope in the fulfillment of his promises for the future.

Let's pray together. Father, yes, Father, thank you for sending your son, your only son, Jesus. It's because of him that we know the cleansing, the atoning blood of the Passover lamb and we have been washed clean.

It's because of him that we have the first fruits of the Spirit. And we know that that day is coming when our faith will be turned to sight, when our prayers will be turned to praise, when what is not yet will be reality.

Thank you for gathering us and building us up as a house for your Spirit.

[45 : 21] Oh God, all of these privileges we enjoy because of Jesus and we love him. We want to honor him. We want to give him our very best. We want to show him that he is our first, our only Lord and Savior.

So help us to do that, Father. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.