

23 Times a Day

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon emphasizes the importance of living a truthful life, drawing parallels between the Passover and the need for sincerity in the Christian faith.

Duration: 27:02

Scripture: Matthew 5:21

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of discerning which parts of the Bible apply to us today. He explains that while we can find types and shadows of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, nothing applies to us unless it is repeated in the New Testament. The preacher also highlights the significance of truth and sincerity in spiritual warfare, stating that lies make it difficult for us to fight against the devil. He urges Christians to put on the whole armor of God, starting with the belt of truth, in order to stand against the attacks of the devil.

Transcript

The Lord has laid this on my heart, I believe, and the name of this little message is 23 times a day, which I'll explain at the very end. The most special day when Israel became a nation, really, was the night of Passover. And as you know, the last plague, the 10th plague, that was put on Egypt because Pharaoh stubbornly refused to obey God's command, was the death of the firstborn.

The only way the Jewish people, the Hebrews, would escape that death angel was to do what God said, get a lamb on the 10th day of the first month, examine it, keep it for four days, and on the 14th day, which would be the first month of their year from thereafter, they would slay the lamb, they would consume the lamb that night, and they must stay in the house. But before they ate the lamb, they would take the blood from the lamb and they would put it where? On the doorpost, on the lintels of the door. And God said, and this is where the holiday comes from, when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

There was a meal that was to be eaten and a festival that began that night. Passover came first, or coincided, but was the beginning of a week-long holiday called the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Because of Passover, they had this week-long seven-day feast, seven speaks of completion or entirety.

So it can speak of wholeness, our whole life is wrapped up in sevens. I want you to notice the repetition, odd repetition, which came to me in a new way as I was reading through my Bible, but it led me

someplace else on my reading through the scriptures in one year. Watch this here in Exodus.

This is the day you're to commemorate for the generations to come. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord, a lasting ordinance. For seven days, you are to eat bread made without what? And that's unleavened bread, right, without leaven.

On the first day, remove from your houses, for whoever eats anything in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. In other words, not only slay the lamb, but now get rid of the yeast from your house for seven days. On the first day, hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day.

In other words, the beginning and the end. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat. That is all you may do.

Celebrate the feast of unleavened bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. In the first month, you're to eat bread made without from the evening of the 14th day until the evening of the 21st day.

For seven days, no is to be found in your houses, and whoever eats anything in it must be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is an alien or native born. Eat nothing made with. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread, i.e., bread without yeast.

In the Hebrew scriptures, repetition is always meaning emphasis. Anything that is repeated or a double word, it's the way of emphasis. God says, during that seven-day period, you must not eat any yeast.

Okay. So what's that got to do with us? We're not Jewish. These scriptures were not written for us.

We don't celebrate this. We don't celebrate Passover. We take communion because the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world came.

We don't kill animals anymore. We don't eat lambs. That scripture is totally for the Old Testament.

Always remember this. Anything you read in the Old Testament, none of it applies to us unless it's repeated in the New Testament. No verse in the Old Testament was written to us, was written to Israel.

We're not Jewish. When something is repeated in the New Testament, that becomes the law of Christ or the teaching of Christ or the apostle's doctrine, and that applies to us. Now, many things in the Old Testament are repeated, like don't kill, don't steal, don't commit adultery, and so on and so forth.

They apply to us. Many things in the Old Testament don't apply to us. Dress codes, no eating pork, eating certain kinds of shellfish, celebrating these holidays, all these kinds of things, they don't apply to us, and no one has a right to pick and choose what Old Testament verse they like and say, oh, that one is really strong, and preach it, and then you go, well, wait a minute.

If you're gonna preach that, why don't you preach these other ones? Oh, no, that's not for us. Well, wait a minute. Who says it's not for us? Either it's all for us or it's none of us for us.

So the way to discern that, brothers and sisters, when you read through it, you see types and shadows of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, but nothing applies to us unless it's repeated in the New Testament, because much more is added in the New Testament. On the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus goes way past

the law and says, you've heard, don't kill your brother, but I say, if you're angry with someone and say, you jerk, you animal, you beast, and you're like that, you're guilty of murder. And if you look at a woman, you don't just sleep with her.

If you look at her with lust, you've already committed adultery. So the New Testament is our guide, not the Old Testament. You don't have to be worrying about holidays, and feasts, and all these things.

We read it, we get edification from it, and they give us pictures of things that would happen in the New Testament. I hope that helps people who get confused when they read the Old Testament. What does this have to do with us? Has any of this mentioned in the New Testament? Well, it just so happens it is mentioned.

What the Apostle Paul says is that Jesus dying as the Lamb of God is a picture of the Passover. Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been killed for us. Not every year, but once and for all.

So in a way, Christ is the fulfillment of the Passover. Not many lambs, one Lamb, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Everyone who follows me so far, say amen.

That was Passover, all right? Now this is Christ dying. Now what followed Passover? The Feast of Unleavened Bread. So I get what Passover's about.

What it should mean to me is I remember Christ. I don't celebrate it as a one-day holiday. We celebrate it every day.

But now, is there any symbolic meaning to us about the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Well, there is. Look, 1 Corinthians 5. Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little works through the whole batch of dough? In other words, a little evil, a little bad stuff can mess up your whole life.

You can't let even a little in. You can't make a treaty with any of it. Now, get rid of the old yeast that ye may be a new batch without yeast as you really are.

In other words, be what God made you. Christ saved you. Now celebrate the feast the right way.

For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Christ, our Passover lamb, he's going back now to the Jewish holiday, and he's saying they celebrated Passover. We have our lamb, but way better than some lamb.

We have the lamb, right? And now he says this, verse eight. Therefore, let us keep the festival. What festival? The Festival of Unleavened Bread for our whole lives, not for seven days.

Not with the old yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without the bread of, and truth. Paul says now, come on now, not in order to become a Christian, because you are a Christian, let's celebrate the feast. Passover preceded the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Christ dying for us precedes a life that pleases the Lord. What kind of a life pleases the Lord? A life without any yeast. Eat bread, live a life without yeast.

Be careful of that yeast, because a little yeast messes up the whole loaf. So he says, celebrate now for the rest of your life with unleavened bread, the bread of sincerity and truth. So one of the great changes in our life is that we stop lying.

In America, everyone in America polls show lies 23 times a day. We either tell a lie, we exaggerate into a lie, to get out of a bad spot, we lie. We act a lie by giving off an impression of something that's not true, which is a lie.

And we get involved with lying, which is supposed to be from our old life. And when we become a Christian, Jesus is all about truth. So now celebrate the feast for the rest of your life, not with the old leaven, that old chunk, the way we all used to live, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity, mean what you say, say what you mean, and truth, tell the truth.

That's what they make you do before you get up on the stand, am I right? I swear to tell the whole, and if you don't tell the truth, you can be in contempt of court and get in trouble. The average American lies 23 times a day. And the lies make us tell other lies.

Because once you start spinning a web of lies, there's no end to the lies. And most lies are to cover up something we're ashamed of, which then makes for more lies. Now it's interesting that in spiritual warfare, most Christians don't understand this, when lies are part of us, our life, we can't fight the devil very well because the devil is a liar.

When he gets us lying, he is injecting his nature into our being, into our spirit, into our heart. Now we're acting exactly like him, we're lying. And he's a liar from the beginning, Jesus said.

In fact, when he speaks, he lies. Lies are his natural language. He just lies.

When he approached Eve, he lied. So lying to us is all this stuff, white lies, black lies, this kind of lie. God understands, everyone does it.

That's not the way God looks at it all. So when the Bible says to put on the whole armor of God so that we'll be able to stand against all the attacks of the devil, can I tell you why a lot of Christians can't stand up against the devil? Pastor, Christians can stand up because God is on our side. Listen, stop the slogans.

Just look at the way things are on the ground. The way things are on the ground is what it is. It is what it is.

And all kinds of Christians are losing battle, why? Because they're not able to stand, why? Because they haven't put on the whole armor of God. Why do you think Paul would say it's important to put on the whole armor of God if God was just gonna deliver everyone who goes to church? Well, he doesn't deliver everyone who goes to church. All kinds of people go to church, live in defeat and despair and shame, and end up messing up not only their lives but the lives of their loved ones, why? Because they're not fighting effectively, why? They haven't put on the whole armor of God.

How are you gonna go out and fight if you don't have armor on? And one of the first things of the armor is found in Ephesians six. Therefore, put on the full armor of God so that when the day of evil comes, you'll be able to stand your ground, and after you've done everything to stand, stand firm then with the belt of truth. Buckle around your waist.

Now, the belt of truth is not the word of God because the sword of the Spirit is the word of God. So the belt of truth here is truth in this sense, truthfulness, sincerity, being real, not telling lies, not getting involved with lying things, not lying on your income tax, not lying about, listen, shh, wait, wait. Did I, wait a minute, did I say something? No, no, listen, listen.

You know what, some young person, in fact, it was one of my grandchildren, heard some people cheering when I said something like that and it hurt them, and they came to me and said, you know, Papa, it sounded like the church, you know, they agreed with what you said, but it sounded like they were happy that you're like catching people who lie, but don't they have problems in their life? When we point out something that someone might fall into, we don't go, yeah, yeah, that's church. That's not Christianity. That's like, you tell them, and that's not Christianity.

When Jesus was talking, nobody yelled up at him. You tell them, no, that's church. I don't want church.

I want the love of God, I want truth. Come on, can we say amen to that? I'm talking about different ways that we can lie because we're all tempted to lie, and you've lied a lot in your life. Who in this building hasn't lied or cheated, which is a form of a lie? I lied all the way through high school and college.

I was telling lies. I was in a class in my freshman year in the University of Rhode Island. I recruited there to play basketball, and everyone told me, take R27.

You'll get a B or C if you just show up because the professor, he's in another world. He's looking at Rembrandts and Raphaels and all of that. He just will give you a good mark.

So the first test came. I wasn't even prepared because I was playing basketball, I didn't care. They said, don't worry, we got slips we'll hand around through the room, don't you? So somebody hands me a slip.

I look at it with the answers. They said, pass it on after you get what you need. I pass it on to the guy.

As I pass it on to the guy, the teacher walks right down the aisle as the guy is taking it, and he goes, Mr. Bowen, what's that in your hand? And he goes, puts it right in his mouth. Put the whole piece of paper in his mouth. And he said, Mr. Bowen, I'm asking you, what was in your hand? He goes, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh.

It didn't even bother me. It was a lie. Those weren't my answers.

Why you look at me like I'm the only one who ever lied? You never cheated? You never lied? You're just lying now if you say that you're not lying. My goodness. How many have lied in your life? Come on.

Some of you are gonna lift up both your hands, your feet, your belly, your chest, your shoulders. Well, of course, and God says that you can't fight. How in the world are you gonna fight against the devil when you're practicing something that's his nature? How in the world are you gonna stand against him when you lie every day, when you lie 23 times a day? No different than the world, lies.

You tell lies, you lie, and God is truth, and Satan is a liar, and then you wonder, where's my joy, where my peace? Pray for me. Somebody came to me on the line tonight just to reinforce this, and they got involved in some marriage involving somebody getting their papers. That's a lie.

You marry somebody for their green card? What are you, kidding me? And then you're gonna be a Christian and lift up hands? You're gonna celebrate the festival with unleavened bread when you're doing tricks like that? Oh no, but everyone does it. I can make some money. Come on, we're Christians.

We're not doing what everyone else does. Come on, let's put our hands together. When we work with people, and the true pastors, we tell them, we'll do anything we can to help you, but if you lie to us, how are we gonna help you? You break trust.

Now we can't help you. If you lie to us, then what are we gonna do? But it's easy for us to lie. Some of us have a seared conscience about lying.

You grew up in a house, you heard your mother and father lie all the time. My dad lied 2, 300 times a day about his drinking. He lied.

My dad lied all the time. So now, no one's laughing at anyone. We're all just sitting here saying, God have mercy on us, right? Ah, but there's more.

So this thing about lying, speaking untruth, which we all have, and comes easy to us. You ever get caught just with something? You're just embarrassed because you forgot something or someone, and you just lie. He lied.

I had a friend in college, he lied for no reason. He didn't even have to lie. He just liked to lie.

So now look what the Bible says. Oh, oh, nobody's laughing now, are they? What does it say? Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in. Then people say, I'm missing out on the blessing of God.

I don't sense his spirit with me, and I want him to heal my body. Well, why don't you start the whole thing by just stopping lying? Who knows what that might open up? But there's more. A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will not go free.

They're not gonna go free. Not lying, because God is a God of truth. God hates lying, because God is about truth.

And then finally, oh my, but the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all, their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death. I was shocked by that figure, and I started saying to myself, God, keep me from lies.

Ministers can lie. They can tell stories that are not true. When I wrote my first book, the guy sat down and said, so where'd you go to school? And this was my co-writer.

We didn't know each other that well. So where'd you go to school? So you're at the Naval Academy, Erasmus Hall. So what happened? And I told him what my story was.

Did you know that they had so many experiences of people making up stories? He vetted and checked everything I told him to find out if it's true. And he wrote me an email and said, you know, the more I get to know you, the more I love you in the Lord, because you actually told me the truth. Went to a church recently.

The pastor told me that he has a congregation of about three or 4,000 people in his church. And I went there and the building seats 280 people. He said, yeah, but we have multiple services.

You'd have to have 200 services every Sunday to do that. How about it, brothers and sisters? How about a little heart searching tonight? People who smoke, they're embarrassed they smoke, so they lie they don't smoke. Whenever we do something wrong to cover it because we're convicted, the devil tempts us to lie.

But then the lie makes that you have to tell another lie to cover that lie. Before you know it, you got a whole nest of lies. And all liars, look what the liars are linked with.

Those who practice black magic. People go, those people practicing voodoo in Haiti or in some place in the world or here in New York or wherever, practicing voodoo and demons and all of that. Well, they're gonna be in the same lake with the people who lie.

Those people who live just sleep around, they have no morals, they're all that. Yeah, all the adulterers and all the fornicators will be in the same place of punishment as the liars and the murderers. God hates lying.

Now, why on a Tuesday night God would have me speak about this is the strangest thing. I resisted somewhat because I said, God, this is not any kind of way to lead people to pray or whatever else. The Lord just encouraged me 23 times a day, tell them.

I want them to be different than that, be holy even as I am holy. How many are happy Jesus never lies? Tell me something, what kind of relationship would we have with Jesus? Would we be worshiping him if he was a liar? How would you trust him? How can you trust someone who lies? In the multitudes of words, there doesn't lack sin because the more you talk, the more you have a chance of lying. Someone said it's better not to talk much and just be quiet because then people will think you're smart.

You also have less chance to lie. I don't want to lie, how about you? How many here with me, I want to put away all lying things, all lying, all falsehood. We want to be men and women of truth.

If people can't trust us and we're not gonna speak the truth, then why mention Jesus? Let's close our eyes. I can't remember shame on me ever preaching about lying. I must have preached about it but so many years ago.

God forgive me. God forgive us for every lie we've ever told. Forgive us for any lie we've told today.

Save us from living lies. Save us from pretending to be something we're not. Forgive us, have mercy on us.

I pray that you will get an open door between now and Sunday and that you're gonna fulfill what we prayed about. I want to close just by saying if there's anybody here who would like to come forward, this is so hard for me to say because I love all of you and I would want to protect everybody here because I would want you to protect me. But if there's anyone who says, pastor, I just want to stand in the front, have God help me to just celebrate the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

I want God to take away all the veneer, all the acting, all the junk, all the lies, all the stuff. Maybe you're in a situation now which is a lie. You're just in a lie.

You're living with someone and you're acting like it's your husband or wife and that's a lie. They're not, you're not married to them. Anybody else wanna just come up, you stand right here, we'll get someone to pray for you.

Gently, they're gonna pray gently for you. Father God, we're just gonna sit and stand in your presence. We're not gonna sing.

There's a time for everything under the sun but tonight we want your light to shine on us and as your light shines on us, get rid of anything that's not real in us, Lord. Everything that's fake, everything that's a lie. We act spiritual one way, we act this way and then we know that's not who we are.

So rather have us act like, say nothing, Lord. And you make us into men and women you want us to be. But save us from lies.

For the Lord detests all liars. To stand against the devil, put on the whole armor of God, start with your loins girded with the belt of truth, sincerity. Those of you sitting in the seats, would you just join hands with the person on your right or left if you're sitting and just start praying for the person on the right right now.

Just start praying and say, God, get rid of all the leaven out of our lives. Shake out the leaven, Lord. Shake out the deception, the lying, the hypocrisy.

Just help make us real, Lord, in a society that's totally veneer, Lord. Made up of lies. Hollywood lies, media lies, television lies.

God, make us real. Pray for the one on your left now, the person on your left. They're praying for you.

Come on, someone's praying for you. God, as a church, please, Lord, starting with me, cleanse us from all unleavened malice, hatred, deception, lying, cheating. Make us sensitive to any word that's not true, Lord.

Check our minds before we even say a sentence that might have a lie in it, Lord. Tonight, we put on the belt of truth, Lord. Forgive us for the past, but we start afresh tonight with you, Lord.

Help us, Lord. Have mercy on your people. Have mercy on us, Lord.

The Passover lamb has been sacrificed for us, Lord. Help us to celebrate the feast now, Lord, with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Put on the belt of truth.

You tell us, help us, Lord. Everybody repeat after me. Dear God.

Dear God. Help us to tell the truth. Help us to tell the truth.

Nothing but the truth. Nothing but the truth. All the time.

All the time. In Jesus' name. In Jesus' name.

Help us to wear. Help us to wear. The belt of truth.

The belt of truth. And celebrate the feast. And celebrate the feast.

With truth and sincerity. With truth and sincerity. Let us start now.

Let us start now. Thank you for your blood. Thank you for your blood.

That has washed away every lie. That has washed away every lie. And we have ever told.

And we have ever told. Thank you for your love. Thank you for your love.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

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