

## The True Vine

Our daughter lives in Europe and from time to time she talks to us about the level of morality that exists amongst the young people in Europe; not so much in terms of the sexual morality of the people that she has dealings with, but just the general morality, or amorality of the people.

She has many European friends from different parts of Europe, and she is the only one who looks upon God's Word as being a standard for conduct within life. They sit down, and in the best of European manners, have long philosophical discussions about morality. She says the place where she presently lives is the most immoral place that she has ever come across, because they have no basis for their morality whatsoever. It is a case of "do what you want to do yourself." It is rather interesting hearing a young person talking about these things, being able to see the problems that exist in this world.

These are the Days of Unleavened Bread. One of the challenges for us is to be certain that we are living the life that God wants us to live.

The apostle Paul, in talking to the Corinthians, addressed a problem that existed within the Church. Speaking to them very much in terms of the Days of Unleavened Bread, he told them that they were to purge out the leaven that existed within the Church.

***1 Corinthians 5: 6 Your glorying is not good ...***

They were glorying in their ability to accommodate sin within the congregation.

***6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?***

A story I have told in the past during the Days of Unleavened Bread is one that I will never forget, and probably one that my wife will never forget either. When we first married my wife used to bake all of our own bread. I came home from the office one day, and she was greatly upset. I said, "What's the problem?"

She said, "I've ruined the bread." She had mixed the yeast in water that was too hot. Sitting on the bench in the kitchen, under a tea towel, was a forlorn looking loaf of bread in a baking pan, waiting to rise! It looked sorry because there was no rising in it! Seemingly, the yeast had been destroyed.

For some reason it sat there for a couple of days under this towel in the kitchen. A couple of days later, it had started to rise! There obviously had been some life left in that overboiled yeast, and just a little bit of yeast had led to the leavening of that loaf!

It got baked and eaten, and I can assure you it wasn't the greatest loaf my wife ever made. She would be the first to acknowledge that, but it was an interesting object lesson in just how a little leaven can bring about the leavening of a lump of dough.

So the apostle Paul said, "Don't you know that just a LITTLE leaven leavens the whole lump!"

***7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.***

He carries on and sets the tone of the whole letter by saying:

***8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.***

We find ourselves in a situation that characterises and emulates that which existed in Corinth today because we live in a society that glories in wrong. It doesn't matter which part of the world you are in, it is evident in various parts of the world. You have a society which is not just immoral, it is amoral. It is without morals, without any form of morality, and it glories in it! It thinks it is wonderful. It boasts about it in various ways.

The apostle Paul said that that is NOT the way to be!

How then, do WE live a life that the apostle Paul tells us to live, where we can be the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth?

As he said, we are to keep this Feast. Over the next 7 days we will avoid the eating of leavened bread. Each of you probably have some amusing tales of some of the situations you have found yourselves facing during the Days of Unleavened Bread. I walked down to breakfast in the hotel this morning, and before they even asked me anything, they put toast on the table!

We go through these 7 Days of Unleavened Bread, yet the meaning of it is more than just 7 Days of Unleavened Bread because it is to teach us to live our lives, not just for 7 days, but for 365 1/4 days of the year - in an unleavened state.

Moses told the children of Israel, and us:

***Deuteronomy 16: 3 "You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, that is, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life.***

***4 "And no leaven shall be seen among you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the meat which you sacrifice the first day at twilight remain overnight until morning.***

This instruction was given in terms of living a life without leaven.

We ourselves don't just look upon that as being an historical event that happened 3,500 years ago, but it is something very personal for each and every one of us. Because the challenge is for each and every one of us to come out of our own PERSONAL EGYPT, to become unleavened.

Let's go back and look at some lessons that we can learn in terms of being unleavened, and being able to live the life that God has called us to live.

At the Passover the other evening, we read through John, chapters 13 to 17. In the midst of this, Jesus Christ introduces an analogy:

***John 15: 1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.***

He goes on to explain that we are the branches, and talks of the responsibility that lies upon us as the branches; what we are to do. Why did Jesus Christ introduce this analogy into the discussion of the Passover? Why was it introduced here? It was introduced because this is an analogy of the way in which God has been working with people throughout all of His Word.

Let's see what the Psalmist had to say. Psalm 80 is one of the hymns that we sing. We tend to sing from only the first few verses.

***Psalm 80: 1 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
You who lead Joseph like a flock;  
You who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth!  
3 Restore us, O God;  
Cause Your face to shine,  
And we shall be saved!  
4 O LORD God of hosts,***

*How long will You be angry  
Against the prayer of Your people?  
5 You have fed them with the bread of tears,  
And given them tears to drink in great measure.  
6 You have made us a strife to our neighbors,  
And our enemies laugh among themselves.  
7 Restore us, O God of hosts ...*

In what way was he going to be restored?

*8 You have brought a vine out of Egypt;  
You have cast out the nations, and planted it.  
9 You prepared room for it,  
And caused it to take deep root,  
And it filled the land.  
10 The hills were covered with its shadow,  
And the mighty cedars with its boughs.  
11 She sent out her boughs to the Sea,  
And her branches to the River.*

Here is a portrayal of a vine that has been planted, that has been able to take very deep root and which has been able to develop in a very strong and powerful way, covering the land, providing shelter, providing strength.

*12 Why have You broken down her hedges ...*

Why have You broken down that which was built to protect her?

*12 ... So that all who pass by the way pluck her fruit?*

Pillaging takes place ...

*13 The boar out of the woods uproots it,  
And the wild beast of the field devours it.*

So here we have a situation where the psalmist sees the fact that this vine has been destroyed.

*14 Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts;  
Look down from heaven and see,  
And visit this vine*

Come back and visit this vine!

*15 And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted,  
And the branch that You made strong for Yourself.  
16 It is burned with fire, it is cut down;  
They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance.  
17 Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand,  
Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself.  
18 Then we will not turn back from You;  
Revive us, and we will call upon Your name.*

He concludes by asking for restoration:

*19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;  
Cause Your face to shine,  
And we shall be saved!*

Where does all this start? It starts with the Passover! It starts with God bringing something out of Egypt to do His own great work. As I said earlier, this analogy of the vine is used throughout God's Word. Why does the calamity that is described in verses 12 and 13 come upon the vine? What sort of fruit was produced?

***Hosea 10: 1 (KJV) Israel is an empty vine ...***

The New King James Version states:

***1 Israel empties his vine;  
He brings forth fruit for himself.  
According to the multitude of his fruit  
He has increased the altars;  
According to the bounty of his land  
They have embellished his sacred pillars.  
2 Their heart is divided;  
Now they are held guilty.  
He will break down their altars;  
He will ruin their sacred pillars.  
3 For now they say, "We have no king,  
Because we did not fear the LORD.  
And as for a king, what would he do for us?"***

Here is another reference to Israel being a vine, a vine that brings forth fruit for itself. What sort of vine is that? Clearly a futile vine! In bringing forth fruit to itself, what did it do? It offered it to whoever it wished. It made the decisions itself. It decided who it would serve.

As verse 1 states, they increased the altars. Israel had gone into a state of absolute apostasy. The prophecies talk at length about that.

In a previous prophecy, Isaiah talks to the children of Judah of his days, singing a hymn:

***Isaiah 5: 1 Now let me sing to my Well-beloved  
A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard:  
My Well-beloved has a vineyard  
On a very fruitful hill.  
2 He dug it up and cleared out its stones,  
And planted it with the choicest vine.  
He built a tower in its midst,  
And also made a winepress in it;  
So He expected it to bring forth good grapes,  
But it brought forth wild grapes.  
3 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,  
Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard.  
4 What more could have been done to My vineyard ...***

He prepared the good soil, taking care of it. He got rid of the stones that may have inhibited the root growth of the vine. He provided protection for it so that it wouldn't be damaged, pilfered, or broken down by wild animals. He had done all of those things. He took only the choicest of cultivars, the best, the strongest, the most disease-resistant, but it brought forth wild grapes!

"What else could I have done? What else should I have done? Judge between Me and My vineyard! What else could I have done? I have given it everything that it possibly could have had!"

***4 ... Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes,  
Did it bring forth wild grapes?***

I think you probably have a good idea as to what a wild grape might taste like! You bite it, and it sets your

tongue on edge. You want to just spit it out of your mouth because it is sour, bitter and probably small, dry and juice-less.

***5 And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard:  
I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned;  
And break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.  
6 I will lay it waste;  
It shall not be pruned or dug,  
But there shall come up briars and thorns.  
I will also command the clouds  
That they rain no rain on it."  
7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel,  
And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant.  
He looked for justice, but behold, oppression;  
For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help.***

... anguish because there was no righteousness in the land.

It brought forth wild fruit. It brought forth fruit which was contrary to that which God sought. The fruit that God was looking for was that of justice and righteousness. On the other hand, this vine brought forth oppression and anguish.

A little later in Isaiah we find that God is not going to leave that vineyard broken down in that way.

***Isaiah 27: 1 In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong,  
Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent,  
Leviathan that twisted serpent;  
And He will slay the reptile that is in the sea.***

Then He carries on, once again singing about the vineyard ...

***2 In that day sing to her,  
"A vineyard of red wine!  
3 I, the LORD, keep it,  
I water it every moment;  
Lest any hurt it, I keep it night and day.  
4 Fury is not in Me.  
Who would set briars and thorns  
Against Me in battle?  
I would go through them,  
I would burn them together.  
5 Or let him take hold of My strength,  
That he may make peace with Me;  
And he shall make peace with Me."  
6 Those who come He shall cause to take root in Jacob;  
Israel shall blossom and bud,  
And fill the face of the world with fruit.***

So on the one hand, in chapter 5 we have a vine that is being destroyed, but here we have a picture of that vine being restored, and all of those things that happened to the vine being undone; this time bringing forth red wine. Red wine is the most difficult wine to make. Good red wine requires great skill. It requires good vines. It requires good grapes.

So here we have a picture that is just the antithesis of that which we find in Isaiah 5.

Jeremiah himself talked about how the Eternal planted a noble vine ...

***Jeremiah 2: 21 Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality ...***

It was the right stock.

**21 ... How then have you turned before Me  
Into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?**

"The thing bears no resemblance to that which I planted!"

The problem was that of iniquity, lawlessness ...

**22 For though you wash yourself with lye (KJV "nitre"), and use much soap,  
Yet your iniquity is marked before Me," says the Lord GOD.**

Reading those Scriptures you can understand very clearly why Jesus Christ used the example of the vineyard in Matthew 21, where He spoke a parable:

**Matthew 21: 33 "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country.  
34 "Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit.**

Did they deliver the fruit? No. Because it brought forth fruit for itself, not for its owner.

**35 "And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another.  
36 "Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them.**

... the cycle of abusing the servants of God.

**37 "Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'  
38 "But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.'  
39 "So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.  
40 "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?"  
41 They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."  
42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:  
'The stone which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief cornerstone.  
This was the LORD'S doing,  
And it is marvelous in our eyes'?"  
43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.**

... producing the right godly fruits.

**44 "And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."  
45 Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them.**

They knew the Scriptures. They knew the prophecies that Jesus Christ was referring to. They knew the aspect of that vine being part of God's Word, part of the picture that God uses, very, very clearly.

So when, in John 15, Jesus Christ starts to talk about the vine, He is talking about it against a background of people knowing that they, as a nation had been established as the vine of God, the vine that had been

brought out of Egypt, that had been planted and cared for. Israel started their departure from Egypt at the beginning of the Days of Unleavened Bread. As we understand, their departure carried on for several days, and as the Last Day of Unleavened Bread began, they spent that night passing through the Red Sea.

But they did not come out of Egypt as the people coming out of Kosovo at this point in time are coming out, being driven out. They were led out by the Almighty God! They were delivered. They weren't annihilated!

So Jesus, sitting at the Passover supper with His disciples, introduced this aspect of being the true vine. Let's read what He has to say, in terms of what we have learned from the Old Testament about that vine:

***John 15: 1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.***

The principle parties involved are clearly identified.

***2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.***

One of the things that we are told to do at the Passover is to judge ourselves. It's the hardest thing in the world to do because we always love to judge somebody ELSE. It is easier to judge somebody else.

But God is the One doing the pruning, and if God prunes somebody else, do we know whether it is because they are NOT producing fruit, or whether God is pruning them so that they will produce MORE fruit?

We all go through the experience of having the secateurs applied to us for God's ultimate purpose. We all go through those things.

***2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.***

***3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.***

***4 "Abide in Me, and I in you ...***

This was a very important point to John. You will notice, as we go through this particular section of Scripture, that he uses the term "abide," which is from the Greek word "meno," frequently. In fact, the use of the word "meno" in the New Testament is basically used most prolifically by John in his gospel and in the 1st epistle. "Meno" occurs some 43 times in the New Testament - only 6 of those occasions occur outside of John's writing.

Jesus Christ said, "Abide in me and I in you." This is something we are to do together. Which is the most important? A branch cannot exist by itself. A branch only exists, only has any value of itself, as long as it is connected to the vine.

***4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.***

***5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.***

***6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.***

***7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.***

***8 "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.***

So the sequence is established here. We clearly know who the vine is. We know who the vinedresser is. We know the responsibility of the vinedresser. We know the responsibility that lies upon us. We have to abide in the vine, and it is only as we abide in the vine that we can produce the fruit, the fruit which is to the honour and glory of God. Unless we abide in the vine it is impossible because of the relationship that exists between a branch and the vine to which it is connected. It is not just hanging there. It is connected. It draws all of its sustenance from it. Anything that comes out of it is evident of the life sap that is flowing from the vine into

the branch - the leaves, the fruit, the growth, the development, every element of it is part and parcel of that abiding.

Jesus was in the temple on the Last Great Day. It is interesting to look at some of the accounts that occurred during this period of time. A woman who had been taken in adultery was brought to Jesus to be accused. He told her to go and sin no more lest a worse thing come. That was very reminiscent of what is going to happen in the Great White Throne Judgment. People could be accused, and they will be told to go and sin no more. There is a way of life to live now.

Jesus Christ continued talking to the people about that. As a result of His teaching the people during that Feast period ...

***John 8: 30 As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.***

***31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word (if you remain connected), you are My disciples indeed.***

***32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."***

What is truth? Truth is the basis for any moral claim. Truth is the establishment of absolutes upon which a person's life can then be judged.

He said you will KNOW the truth. The only way of knowing the truth is by abiding in the words that have been given.

The problem that my daughter faces where she lives, is that people do not abide in the words of God. It is a supposedly Christian country, but the only time that people go to church is to be christened, married and buried (patched, matched and the rest of it)! And that's it. Nobody seeks to abide in the words of Christ in any shape or form.

Is any society in this world any different at this point in time? It is not! Jesus said there is only ONE WAY in which you can know the truth and that is by being connected to the vine.

And how are we connected? It is through the words that we have been given.

***John 8: 32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."***

We are free to produce fruit. That, above all else, is what produces freedom. Jesus Christ referred to that a little later on that same evening with His disciples when praying with them before He went out to the Garden of Gethsemane. Praying to His Father, He said:

***John 17: 13 "But now I come to You ...***

"I am returning to you, Father, and we are going to have the relationship that we have had together since before the world began.

***13 ... and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.***

***14 "I have given them Your word ...***

I have given them the instruction, the understanding that they need.

***14 ... and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.***

This world is hostile to the word of God. Paul mentioned that in ...

***Romans 8: 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity (hostile or antagonistic) against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.***



That's the condition of this world.

***John 17: 14 "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.***

***15 "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.***

The evil one is the one who creates the problem within this world.

***16 "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.***

***17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.***

What does the word "sanctify" mean? It is a word that is loaded with theological meaning, but it simply means to be set apart for God's service.

The house of Levi was sanctified, set apart, for God's purpose.

As people who have been called, WE have been set apart for God's service, and we can only be of that service as we abide in Him.

***17 "Sanctify them by Your truth ...***

Where does the truth come from? The truth comes from the Word of God, the engrafted word of truth. We have this opportunity of being grafted into that vine and receiving the sustenance from it so that we can have truth.

***17 ... Your word is truth.***

That is an incredible statement! God's Word is truth. There is an absolute upon which our lives can be built. There is an absolute that produces a change in our lives.

The apostle Paul talks about a similar thing. He talks about the fruit that Israel brought forth for itself, or to itself; that fruit which Jeremiah said couldn't be cleansed, even with nitre (saltpetre). It couldn't be cleansed or made good for anything.

On the other hand, the apostle Paul talks about the fruit that God is looking for in our lives:

***Galatians 5: 16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.***

There is a responsibility to walk a particular life, to walk in the Spirit, to be connected to the true vine.

***17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit ...***

There is a conflict going on. The flesh is hostile to the Spirit of God ...

***17 ... and the Spirit (of God) against the flesh (the carnal mind); and these are contrary to one another (they are totally different), so that you do not do the things that you wish.***

***18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.***

***19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,***

***20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,***

All of these things are fruits of the flesh. These are the bad fruit that God said He saw on His vine. He said, "I'm not going to have that. That is not going to be."

Did God not know that ahead of time? Of course He did. God allowed that to happen as a lesson for all humanity. It doesn't matter how smart you may be as a nation, no matter how favourable things can be for you, you will always end up producing rotten fruit.

It is easy to dismiss the situation in the Balkans at this point in time and say, "Those people will always be like that." But that is the end result of people without the essential ingredient to change human life. We talk about them behaving in an "uncivilised manner," or we talk about "immoral behaviour." Even the most civilised nations in the world will resort to that sort of behaviour, one towards another, if the situation is right.

Given the opportunity, any human being will find themselves in that situation, no matter how "nice" we might be. That's the end result of a world cut off from God.

So Israel was allowed to blossom as a vine in that land where they had every God-given benefit. And what did they produce? Rotten fruit! They brought forth ...

***20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,***

***21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.***

The fundamental need is that humanity's mind be changed. It means that he has to detach himself from himself, and he has to become attached to something else - the true vine. It is only as one is willing to do that, that one can then start to produce the fruit that is described in verses 22 and 23:

***22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,***

***23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.***

Why is there no law against it? Because God wants us to produce these fruits prolifically. He doesn't want these to be restrained in any way. You might say, these are the fruits of REAL civilised behaviour. This is what defines real civilisation, real civility. This is what God is looking for in our lives, and it's the fruit that is only produced as we abide in Christ.

***24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.***

They have participated in the death of Jesus Christ as their Passover lamb. They understand the importance of it and they have died to themselves. They have gone through the waters of baptism. They have put their own way of life behind them. The flesh no longer has control over them.

***25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.***

***26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.***

That is not what we are to do! That is a wrong way of life.

One of the elements that we can take forward from the Days of Unleavened Bread is the fact that we have hope.

***1 John 4: 4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them (this world), because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.***

The One who is abiding in us, as we seek to abide in Him, is greater than the one of this world. One of the things that is so encouraging for us is that, as a result of the sacrifice of Christ, we can come out of sin. We can put this way of life behind us, and we can start to produce the fruit that God looks for.

***5 They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them.***

On the other hand ...

***6 We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this (as a result of this) we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.***

There can be that separation between humanity.

So we have this wonderful portrayal of a vine given in the Passover, a portrayal which is supposed to indicate to us the way of life we are to live; what we are called to live as a result of taking the Passover - a group of people who now abide in Christ, who receive of the word of God, who use that as the standard for truth within their lives, and as a result of that, bring forth the fruit that is to the honour and glory of God.

***John 15: 8 "By this My Father is glorified ...***

What glorifies God?

***8 ... that you bear much fruit ...***

That's the thing that glorifies God! It is the QUALITY of that fruit that God is looking for. Jesus Christ said, by producing that fruit ...

***8 ... so you will be My disciples.***

He goes on and talks about how the chief evidence of that fruit is the LOVE that we can have one to another.

As we said earlier, the Psalmist wrote about the vineyard:

***Psalm 80: 14 Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts;  
Look down from heaven and see,  
And visit this vine***

You might ask yourself, as a result of Jesus' life and death, has this vine been visited? The fact that we are here 2,000 years later being able to read and understand the Word of God is evidence that that vine HAS been visited.

***17 Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand,  
Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself.***

Who is the son of man that is being talked about here, other than Jesus Christ Himself; the One who was made strong, who was able to come as a human being, empty Himself of His Godhead and live and give His life for the forgiveness of sins, so that that vine can be righted!

***18 Then we will not turn back from You;  
Revive us, and we will call upon Your name.***

That aspect of CALLING upon the name of God is a very interesting study if you wish to do that. It's not just a matter of voicing a name. It is talking about EXEMPLIFYING the CHARACTERISTICS of that name - in other words, bringing forth the fruits that are characteristic of that Being.

It's not just a simple thing of using a person's name as we might today. It's much deeper than that, because it is, in fact, the bringing forth of the fruits that characterise that name.

***19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;  
Cause Your face to shine,  
And we shall be saved!***

God has intervened to restore His people through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. His face shines upon His creation! Our presence here today is evidence of that! The hope of the salvation that we have is something that comes about as a result of that. That salvation ultimately depends upon whether we produce the fruits that come from that relationship.

Paul said we were to put out the unleavened bread of malice and wickedness and we are to eat the unleavened bread of SINCERITY and TRUTH. Truth comes from abiding in the word that Christ has given to us. That's the way in which we can abide in the vine. We can receive that strength so that we can produce the fruit that is to the honour and glory of our Father!

*...Peter Nathan*

*For Last Day of Unleavened Bread 2003*

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