

Eastertide

I. The Special Days of Eastertide

- Obviously, Easter Sunday is the biggest.
- The second through seventh Sundays of Easter are also great opportunities for continuing the celebration of our great God's sacrificial atonement and destruction of death.
 - Historically, all seven Sundays were celebrated as heartily as the first. And we'll talk about some interesting ways to do this in a minute.
- Everything from Stewardship Day on April 22nd, Mother's Day on the second Sunday in May, and even International Children's Day might fall within the scope of Eastertide — or even fall on one of its Sundays.
- Before the historical observance of Easter on April 25th, we have Stewardship Day on April 22nd.
- Most people know April 22nd as Earth Day, and I plan to do a full episode next time explaining how Stewardship Day is both similar and different as well as providing different ideas for celebrating God on that day.
- Ascension Day is traditionally celebrated on the sixth Thursday after Easter, however some people observe it on the following Sunday, the Seventh Sunday of Easter. The Celebration of God celebrates Ascension on the 40th day of Eastertide because the Bible says that Christ ascended 40 days after He rose from the dead.
- And then Pentecost is the day right after the 50th day of Eastertide.

II. Worshipping God for 50 Days

- First, we need to remember that God deserves our worship every single moment of every single day from the moment we're born into the eternity of infinitude. We don't get a break from worshipping God. He should always be the preeminent focus of every word, deed, feeling, thought, desire, and belief.
- Human beings don't do sustained *high energy* activities well. That's why we often feel like we need a vacation from our vacations. We go and go and try to cram all of this high-intensity fun into our vacations, and we just end up wearing ourselves out. Yeah, it's fun, but it's exhausting.
 - Also, many people imagine celebrations and feasts and High Holy Days to be taxing because they require our energy in a similar way that vacations do.
 - On the other hand, some people think about the fact that since many American holidays involve taking off work how could anyone survive not working for 50 days? That's not sustainable either.
 - But both of those approaches to this discussion will only lead people down the wrong road. If high-energy breaks from work are how we define The Celebration of God, we really don't get the point.
- First, we must be reminded that God is to be worshipped just as fully in the mundane low moments of every day life as He is in the High Days of celebration. He's to be worshipped while we're working and playing and eating and parenting and everything else-ing.
- Worship is investing in God the worth and value that He's due. So, whether I'm eating a feast or scarfing down a snack, I should be doing so to the honor and glory of God.
- And the same is true whether I'm taking a break from work or smack in the middle of the hardest work week of my life. I need to present myself a living sacrifice in each of those circumstances.

- God is infinite, and we could spend eternity discussing the nuances and beauty of the Resurrection and everything God did and accomplished on that day. However, I do understand that — in our human finitude and the fact that some of us are less creative than others — it can be a struggle. So, let's discuss some options.
- The first thing that should put our mind at ease is that Stewardship Day, Mother's Day, the Ascension, and Pentecost all have a very specific focus. That means that it should be very easy to worship God on those days in unique ways.
- In regard to the Seven Sundays of Easter, we recommend focusing on a different element of the Resurrection.
 - Normally every pastor out there either starts talking about the Resurrection before Easter so he can fit it all in, or he crams a bunch of truth into Easter Sunday, or he only covers a few elements from year to year.
 - With Seven Sundays in Easter (which may or may not have another holiday that falls on it), you pastors have plenty of time to unpack the beauty of the Resurrection without feeling rushed or thinking you have to either cram too much information into one sermon or end up having a year between your points.
 - Now, if after studying Easter, you're still having a hard crafting seven sermons about the Resurrection, never fear, the general focus of this season is life, and the salvation focus is Justification, so those three topics together will give you more than enough to talk about for seven Sundays.
- But what if you're not the pastor, or your church and your pastor don't take this approach? No problem! That doesn't keep *you* and your fellow disciples from studying Easter in more depth, talking about it, and sharing it with others. Your family could plan to fellowship with at least seven different families over the seven Sundays of Easter — one or more families on each of the Sundays. That way you can get together and celebrate the exact same holiday at different times with different people!
- Remember, you and your children or students or friends or church body are not going to do this perfectly. You should not feel like an irredeemable failure if you don't 100% give God the preeminence every day of Eastertide. Yes, that is the goal. Yes, it's sinful self-worship when we don't, and yes we should confess it to God.
- But that's going to be the ebb and flow of our lives. God forgives, and He gives more grace. We're simply striving to love and serve Him better today than we did yesterday. It's a process, and we should be growing in it.