

A Little Leaven

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[0 : 00] And we see that in 1 Corinthians 5 verse 6 that Paul tells the Corinthians.! He says, Leaven! A little leaven!

Leaven is that yeast that makes the whole batch of dough swell and rise and expand into a loaf. Just as just a little leaven makes a drastic change to that substance in the baking dish, it transforms it totally so to a little leaven.

Affects the whole. It makes a massive impact. The context here that Paul is speaking of in 1 Corinthians 5, the context here is of a time of sin.

Of open sin within the church. There was sin in the camp. In this Corinthian church. And leaven is a picture of sin.

And we are keeping the feast here again. We are keeping the feast here again. The bread is without leaven. The cup is without leaven. At the communion time we think about what leaven represents.

[1 : 39] It represents sin. sin. The center of sin is I.

S-I-N. Sin. Sin. The self is in the center. And at the communion time we reflect about ourselves. We examine ourselves. God wants his church, his people, without leaven. Without leaven. Leaven speaks, you could reckon, of worldly thinking, of worldly ways.

Those things we should discard and throw away. In 1 Corinthians 15, 33, Paul says, Be not deceived. Evil communications corrupt good manners.

There's a sense where evil company, evil communications, the wrong company, mixing with the wrong crowd, can corrupt, can have a corrupting effect.

[2 : 41] And some churches want a blending, a softness, a mishmash, a mixture. I read a recent troubling news report and it tells us this.

The Uniting Church in Australia's key national governance body has recommended a change in church policy to allow same-sex marriage. The Church's Assembly Standing Committee.

So this is one of their main committees. It says the Assembly Standing Committee has endorsed an internal report in the Uniting Church that recommends a changing its policy statement on marriage from being the union of a man and a woman to being between two people.

It could pave the way for the Uniting Church to become the first major Christian denomination in Australia to perform same-sex marriages. A little leaven.

Oh, it's just changing some wording. From a man and a woman to two people. It's the leaven. It's leaven. It's the leaven of compromise.

[3 : 51] And it starts, oh, so subtly. Just a small thing, some would think. Accepted and condoned. Then the creeping effect of the leaven. Reaches wider.

That creeping effect spreads and overtakes the whole thing until it's all gone. These things are always under attack in the Church. The Church worldwide.

The Church in Australia. The Church in our community. This Church. We've always got to guard and protect. Doctrinal purity. Biblical substance.

We must stand for the truth. This is the truth. The whole truth. And nothing but the truth. It always has been the truth. It always will be. The truth does not change. The truth does not change.

And teaching can be subtle error. We firmly want to be known as a Bible-believing Church. Because compromise is dangerous. And it's contagious.

[4 : 48] It spreads. And eventually it overtakes. What was once a good church, perhaps in its founding, is far, far from that now. I was sad and too, to hear troubling news about Hope Christian School, just down the road here.

Hope Christian College. And I've got a good, how would I say, I've got a good opinion of Hope Christian College.

I think it started well. It's one of the better Christian schools, in my opinion. But I heard troubling news from someone connected with that school that even Christian school teachers there are being forced to teach evolution.

They have to include evolution on the curriculum. They have to teach evolution to the children in that school. I suppose if they don't, they risk losing government funding.

Government funding, when it boils down to it. If they were to object to that. This is leaven. Isn't it? It's lies. Evolution is a lie.

[5 : 57] What will it be next? A Christian school. Surely, they should have some stand, something that is strong and does not budge.

What will it be next? Morality and truth? What will it be in the sex education classes they'll have to give to the children there? God help us. Truth is forsaken.

And we've sold out. It's like the man who sold out for a mess of pottage. He liked the smell of that soup, that broth, that stew. And he sold his birthright because it was just so appealing to his senses. But do we care about the truth? That must be the fundamental, mustn't it? Do we care about the truth? Do we care about exposing error?

Now some would think, oh, you shouldn't pick on another church. Well, I'm just telling you facts here. That was a news article. Paul says, verse 8, Therefore, let us keep the feast.

[7 : 10] Let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Let us keep the feast with sincerity and with truth.

The world that we live in delights in wickedness. Bit by bit, the leaven takes hold. You know, there used to be a TV commercial that said, look out for the creepers.

You know, have you heard that one? The creepers. When they just creep over the speed limit. I've got to watch that myself. I've got to be honest. But, the creepers, they creep over the speed limit.

Oh, just 5km faster. Just 10. Oh, 15. Oh, no one's looking. 20. They're creepers. It's creeping.

Compromised creepers. Like leaven, it creeps and creeps and spreads and spreads.

And the world delights in wickedness. And churches sometimes make that mistake of going with the flow. Worldly entertainment. Rock and roll. That's what people want. Again, I've seen recently how a good church is moving in this direction.

[8 : 23] Just starting. Just bit by bit. Only a little leaven. And it all starts with just a little.

Just a little. The door is open to jar until there's no stopping it. The pastor is not strong enough to hold back the tide.

And gives way for the sake of doing what's easier. It's easier that way. Everybody else is doing it. There's a wanting to follow the crowd to please the people.

Just a little leaven. People like a bit of leaven. Give them what they want. And before you know it, it overtakes. It's the slippery slope. It's hard to climb up where you once were.

The slope is too slippery. I've seen footage. You might have seen some video of it. It's quite a funny video clip of some comical Japanese game show contestants.

[9 : 20] And they have to climb a slippery plastic slope. And it's covered with soap suds. And it's nigh on impossible for them to climb up that slippery slope.

The direction tends downwards. They get up a little bit and then go back down again. And it's kind of funny but it kind of illustrates the slippery slope. This is what happens to a church where they abandon once evidently sacred music for flesh pleasing and music that is tainted just a little leaven.

When we adopt music that its entertainers will sing at a papal mass. That's what Hillsong do. They sing for the Pope while he holds up a piece of wafer that they worship and say that's Jesus.

We don't do that in this church. We don't worship the wafer. We don't worship the bread. We know it represents our saviour and his death.

We give glory to God. We don't bow down to the errors of the Roman's church and of the Pope of Rome. Yet sadly some will do so blatantly promoting a false gospel as they sing for the Pope at the World Youth Day that the Catholics hold.

[10 : 40] And it all starts with this subtle craving this subtle caving in by the church to such things. That's why we want to guard the music program of this church. What of you?

Is there a little leaven? A little leaven? Only a little. Our Lord gave another meaning of leaven in Luke 12 where in verse 1 the latter part he says Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy.

Here our Lord defines what the leaven is in that context. He says leaven is the leaven of the Pharisees he says is hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy. In other words don't be like the Pharisees who are hypocrites. The Pharisees our Lord says are guilty of hypocrisy.

Now this word hypocrisy it means a play acting of playing a part and they would hold these masks in front of them with a smiling face whereas really it was another face behind the mask and that's the sense of this word hypocrisy.

[11 : 56] it's saying to us be real don't be fake. It speaks of people into theatrics putting on a performance hiding behind a mask our Lord's saying be real be real.

The Pharisees were parading around acting so spiritual holy in the bow looking like bright shiny painted sepulchres but inside those tombs were full of dead man's bones putrid vile deathly full of death they were so bright and showy show offs on the outside but under that falsehood that veneer they were spiritually lifeless.

This is another leaven we should guard ourselves from let's not make a mistake of being a show off and yet not having the real not having the substance not having the spiritual life it's another leaven our Lord says guard yourselves from that and following the occasion of the feeding of the 5,000 our Lord said in Matthew 16 alike to that in Matthew 16 from verse 11 he says because the people were confusing what he was saying talking about the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees as thinking he was talking about the bread that he had just given them in that miraculous way verse 12 he says they understood then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees he says this doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees is leaven in other words the teaching wasn't right so doctrine can act like leaven too where teaching is evidently astray from the Bible in some churches people scarcely open a Bible they'll scarcely open a Bible and the teachings are more like pep talks or like some self-help group or some kind of psychology as a church we want to be making sure that our teaching is solidly biblical it's biblical teaching and so we don't want to give the devil a foothold we want to guard our church and guard our lives too guard your lips guard your life don't give an inch it tells us that we should not give place to the devil don't give an inch what are we to do

Paul says purge out the leaven purge it out in other words get rid of it guard against that corruption now we will not accept any false gospel we want to be known as a church that we care for one another and we care for the truth practical truth truth lived out where we'll give godly correction where it's needed you know I have a duty of protection and people come to me and tell me things and I need that I need that feedback if there's things that are not right I want to hear that we've got to test everything by the scriptures does is it scriptural is it the scripture is it biblical teaching is it biblical doctrine is the sin that needs addressing sin that is not addressed festers it's a spreading effect is there a little leaven Paul in the context of 1 Corinthians 5 there was some blatant open sin going on

God's desire is that we his people are unspotted from the world unspotted so let us keep the feast in sincerity and truth we want to be real and we want to be true we want to purge out all that is false all that hinders and avoid the doctrine of the Pharisees but even more so the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy it talks in the word about unfamed love of the brethren so not pretend love but real love we want to have that real love that being real with one another that loving one another as we must as what is the fundamental are we in Christ the opposite of leaven is what is real and true sincerity and truth in 1 John 2 verse 6 it says he that says he abides in

[16 : 45] Christ ought himself also so to walk even as he walked it's as we get more like Christ if we say we're abiding in Christ we'll walk like Christ we'll talk like Christ we'll act like Christ no matter the context no matter the circumstance no matter the company no matter the situation we'll be fair dinkum Christians whatever our circumstance and no matter how people treat us too for example there's a couple of instances where people were treated badly but they did not retaliate when Shimei cursed David in 2 Samuel 16 verse 10 he was solid he wasn't detoured he wasn't distracted he didn't retaliate when Aaron and Miriam spake against him how Moses acted in

Numbers 12 verse 3 we've got to be consistent Christians we've got to be real practical Christians like Dorcas it says of Dorcas she was full of good works and arms deeds which she did she was full of good works which she did she didn't purpose to do good works and talk about doing good but she did good works we want to have a Christianity that works that is in action it's activated because brothers and sisters the world that we're living in is dark and darkening and how sin is permeating

and deforming our culture such that what is acceptable now so the average Aussie would have been even objected to some decades ago by average Aussies they wouldn't have had a bar of it even the average unsaved Aussie wouldn't have accepted what is becoming accepted today because it's the leaven isn't it gradually changing our culture and in such a culture we are meant to be as shining lights in

Philippians 2 verse 15 Paul says that you may be harmless and blameless the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom you shine as lights in the world that's God's will for us and for this to happen we need to address the leaven we want to be shining lights you know sometimes those light fittings need a bit of cleaning don't they you notice don't look too close you'll see the moths and the flies and the dust you've got to get the light fitting and you got to clean it sometimes we got to hey how's my light shining we need a cleaner there's things that hang on to us and drag us into the thinking and mindset of the world we have to purge it out now the word purge means get rid of you know go and put it on the hard waste I've been thinking lately! had occasion our room was painted lately and had to move some of my furniture around and I saw some clothes there that look I'm never going to wear those things again get rid of it sometimes it's like that in the Christian life isn't it the things that why do you hang on to things that are not useful to you you know probably convicting some people here this morning but we need to purge don't we get rid of remove cleanse purify Paul says purge out some things here now thank God the blood of Jesus has sin removing power doesn't it soul cleansing power more than any other substance no other substance can do what the blood of Jesus can do and that's what we're here for today to remember the blood it's time for a clean up a purging a spring clean to purge out some things and examine yourselves

Paul says purge out therefore the old leaven that you may be a new love fresh unspotted from the world not leavened for even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us this is a time of real worship he says sincerity and truth he says get real with God be sincere and true it's about truth here this morning it's about realities it's about real relationship with God that's why we are here Christ our Passover Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us Thank you.