

A Little Leaven: A Tiny Speck Corrupts Everything | Sin, Compromise, and True Freedom in Christ

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[0 : 00] A little leaven. A little leaven. Just a little bit.

! No big deal. A little leaven. That's how people would think of it.! But a little leaven is a big deal. We're going to go to 1 Corinthians 5 from verse 6 through 8.

It reads, Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.

For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore 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.

A little leaven. A tiny speck that changes everything. Imagine you're breaking some bread and you mix the flour and the water and the salt into this soft dough.

[1 : 17] You compress it. Then you sprinkle in just one tiny, tiny pinch of yeast. A speck. Hours later, something amazing has happened.

The whole lump has puffed up, bubbled and grown. It's much bigger now. That little speck took over. Made a big difference.

That's what the Bible calls leaven, yeast. It's a picture of sin in God's word. Of compromise. Of corruption.

It starts small, but it spreads fast. The problem with a little leaven is that it doesn't stay little. And Paul warns the Corinthians about it.

He says, your glorying is not good. They were proud of their tolerance, even while they turned a blind eye to obvious sin.

[2 : 21] And Paul says, a little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump. They'd gotten arrogant, puffed up, like that dough that had risen and got puffed up with the leaven.

The Corinthians were puffed up. Proudful. Like that dough full of yeast. So what is the leaven? Could there be leaven in my life?

In your life? What small things are shaping you more than you realise? Could it be a wrong attitude?

Could it be something you're following and spending time with that's really not good?

A harmless lie that you tell yourself? There's so many things we think of as leavens. And they seem tiny, but they corrupt your heart, your family, your church, and your witness in the world.

[3 : 25] God calls us to purge out the leaven, clean it out as a sweeping out of a house at Passover time. And so we're going to look at three things about leaven, what it is, why it's dangerous, and what we ought to do with it.

What God wants us to do with leaven. Firstly, leaven, what it is, how it works, what is the leaven in my life? Leaven, you could think, is anything that corrupts your friendship with God.

It's the little things. Notice it's the little leaven. The little things that we might brush aside sometimes. It's sneaky.

You don't always see the leaven working in the dough until you see later. It's sneaky. It spreads. One little sin can affect your whole attitude.

It puffs up like pride. Puffs us up. Making us think that we're better than we really are. And the Lord Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their leaven.

[4 : 38] He tells of them, Matthew 23, he calls them whited sepulchres. So these tombs painted dazzling white, but full of dead men's bones. He tells them, Matthew 23, from verse 27, Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

For ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

They had this appearance of looking good on the outside, but inside they were rotten, full of rotting dead men's bones. And hypocrisy is leaven.

It's acting holy while we're hiding sin. And leaven spreads. One speck takes over the whole. A little leaven impacts the whole lump, the whole batch.

Just that little speck in the mix of dough makes it all rise, changes the whole thing. And leaven spreads. A little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump.

[5 : 48] And in Galatia, false teachers were adding just a little extra, an extra rule, to God's free grace. And we read of that in Galatians 5, verse 9.

Paul says the same things to the Galatians. He says, A little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump. These Judaizers, these false teachers in Galatia, they added just a little, a little extra rule, to God's free grace.

Circumcision. They were dragging Christians back, under the old law. And really, grace plus works, equals no gospel at all. It's a counterfeit gospel.

Paul cried out to the Galatians, in Galatians 5, verse 1, Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Even a small twist poisons the truth. Adding just one human requirement to the finished work of the gospel is enough to create a false gospel. It's the finished work of Christ.

[6 : 59] It's by grace through faith. Not plus human requirements. That's leaven. Leaven is sinful. It's corruption. One rotten apple ruins the barrel.

And God wouldn't allow leaven in the holy offerings in Leviticus 2.11. Leaven was not allowed in the offerings because it pictured sin and decay.

And our Lord warned again the Pharisees, the Sadducees, of the leaven. And he tells, take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Matthew 16.6. So the Pharisees' leaven was hypocrisy. They were faking faith and denying God's power. Looking religious, but they didn't have a real faith.

Hypocrisy. The Sadducees' leaven was unbelief. They denied the supernatural. Both seemed harmless, maybe just a little, but it destroyed faith.

[8 : 03] Hypocrisy, unbelief, the leaven of the Pharisees, the leaven of the Sadducees. Back in Exodus 12, God's people were told at Passover to sweep out every crumb of leaven, every speck of it, no exceptions.

In Exodus 12, it was a prompt to them of their release from Egypt, from slavery, of the old sin of Egypt. Satan tries to make leaven appear to be no big deal.

Just a little sin. Just a little compromise. And that's Satan's strategy. He masquerades as an angel of light. Leaven is a serious matter.

It's no small thing. It's no joke. It is small of itself, but if you ignore it, one little sin can ruin everything. And sin tolerated becomes sin accepted.

And sin accepted soon becomes sin celebrated. Leaven. Consider the dangers of leaven. It spreads, it spoils, it destroys.

[9 : 24] You could think of four ways that leaven is dangerous. Personally, church-wise, cultural danger, doctrinal danger.

Firstly, think about personal danger. Leaven. It doesn't stay put, it spreads fast. And think of it as a person, as an individual just now. Think of yourself and your state, your heart.

There's a personal danger of leaven. It grows inside of us. It starts small, just like a little spark. And then, before we know it, there's a bushfire. Proverbs 4.23 urges us to keep our heart guarded.

Keep thy heart with all diligence and for out of it, it says, are the issues of life. Guard your heart, diligently so. Think of our heart, the things that could be leaven.

A little grudge can grow into bitterness. James 1.14-15 talks about sin as starting small but ending in death.

[10 : 32] We see the progression here. Watch the progression of sin where we see it starts off, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin. And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. You see the progression there. You could think of the progression of sin.

It could be a fleeting thought. Just once, just one little fleeting thought. And then an act. And then we can make excuses.

It's not hurting anyone. And then it becomes a habit. And then a hardened heart. Finally, we're a slave to sin.

Paul calls leaven the leaven of malice and wickedness. So it's on the inside of us, malice and wickedness.

[11 : 29] Hateful things. Wicked things. Not just what you could think of as big sins, but God knows our heart and he sees our heart. He sees the envy, the pride, the sharp tongue.

And leaven can be deep-seated. It's inside of us sometimes that wrong heart before him. And Hebrews 12 warns us about this bitterness that then springs up.

And there's a warning here, looking diligently, lest any roots of bitterness springing up trouble you and thereby many be defiled. Think of bitterness.

It's like a deep-seated, deep-rooted plant. I know in my garden of late there's lots of weeds and I've been getting the whippersnapper out and it's my new toy lately, getting my whippersnapper out and whacking off the tops of all the plants.

But the trouble is whacking off the tops doesn't deal with the weed really, does it? Because the roots are deep down. Really, I've got to get down on my hands and knees and pull those weeds out by the roots.

[12 : 42] And there's a picture here too of the roots of bitterness. We want to get that right out. Don't just whisk it away at the top where people see it. But that deep-rooted bitterness.

Pull out the weeds, roots and all. Amen? That's what we need to do spiritually too. If we've got bitterness of any kind. To keep our garden we must pull out the weeds, roots and all.

And we can think of the heart of men and how easy we can be misled by our own sinful appetites sometimes.

David's one glance at Bathsheba had spiralled into adultery, deception, murder. 2 Samuel 11.

Just one glance, just a little look and where it took him. It's a serious matter. We think of King Saul.

[13 : 42] He excused his keeping of the best sheep. In 1 Samuel 15. 15 God's direction was a total destruction but he wanted to keep some of it for himself.

And there was that bleating of the sheep. He couldn't keep them quiet and he was shown for what he was. He wasn't really obeying God.

It was a partial obedience. It seemed small. Those sheep, well, what's the harm of a few sheep, a few items of the spoil.

and even to justify it by saying it was an offering but it was disobedience. It was a little leaven.

He wasn't really fully obeying God. And then the result, the Amalekites were a persistent enemy of Israel for years to come because of a little leaven, a little compromise.

[14 : 46] God saw the rebellion of Saul. It wasn't a full obedience so really it was a disobedience. And friends, a little leaven, it speaks of a small compromise.

We can make those and it's going to steal your joy. It's going to wreck your walk with God. A little compromise, a little leaven, it's a great huge mistake.

it's just a little thing, is the devil's oldest lie, isn't it? And brother, sister, there's a danger on the personal front, on the individual level.

In our soul, there's danger. And secondly, we can see a danger in the church, a danger that is in the church. 1 Corinthians 5, 6 again, Paul says your glorying is not good, all this boasting, you know, your arrogance, your pride.

He says, no, you're not, the little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump. All of this arrogance of the Corinthians, Paul's talking about the church here, and he says that really, the church is like one loaf of bread.

[16 : 02] You sprinkle that little speck of leaven in the dough, in the batch, and boom, it affects the whole batch, the whole loaf of bread. We are one bread.

One sin, if ignored, can affect everyone. It only takes a little. Brother, sister, it only takes a little, a little carelessness, a little compromise.

Don't ignore it. Don't ignore it. It's just a small thing. That's the enemy's lie. Don't minimize it. If God's pointing his finger at something, it's between you and the Lord to sort it out.

One person's sin spreads like a virus. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. It impacts the whole church. That's what happened in Corinth. They were proud while a man was living in open sin, and nothing was done.

Paul said, yeah, I puffed up, and have not rather mourned. He says, you're prideful, you're arrogant.

[17:10] You know, the Corinthians, the big name, the Corinth church, they thought they were so good. They thought that they had it all together. They had gifts. They had lots of things going on. Maybe it was a prominent church, and it looked like they had a lot of things going right, and they got arrogant.

They got prideful. We can be like that. Any church can be. We can get prideful. Their tolerance weakened the whole church, and it was a shame.

It was a reproach to the Corinthians. Another example we could cite of this little leaven, we could think of Achan, of his hidden sin in Joshua 7, 11.

Israel lost the battle because of Achan. Achan, one man, his rebellion, a little leaven, a little compromise. He wanted to keep something of the spoils of Jericho.

He wanted to hide that spoil. He wanted to hide that which his heart hankered after, and he hid it in his tent. A little compromise, Achan.

[18:20] There was sin in the camp, his hidden sin. Little compromises, they can be costly, people. Think of a little compromise, gossip, it can split friends, pride, it quenches God's spirit.

It's in all of us, it's in me. Sin tolerated today becomes sin celebrated tomorrow. It's a grievous thing. We must stand firm, not slide with the crowd.

So leaven, it's in the individual level, it's at the church level sometimes. Thirdly, we could see that leaven presents at a cultural level too. It creeps in, into our worldview.

We start thinking like the world. Of course, we've covered some of that this morning, about the worldliness, of worldly mindedness. The world spreads its leaven, its tentacles of leaven.

We could think of the world today, Halloween parties, skipping church for weak reasons, following after the latest trends, just being just like the world, just like the one who lives next door to us who doesn't know the saviour.

[19:29] And it can be this cultural leaven. And we know very clearly the word tells us not to be conformed to that. Think of how we're in the world but not of it.

You think of a boat, it's fine in the water until the water gets in the boat. We don't want the world to come in. We want to be a peculiar people, to shine in this world, to be light in this darkness, not for the darkness to encroach upon us.

We can think, brother, sister, the reality is of the constant pressuring, of the constant leavening of the world that is all around about us, movies, social media, we can get numb to sin, and wrong ideas can creep in, into the churches, we can lose our saltiness, Matthew 5, 13, back in the early church day, the early Christians were told, hey, we just want you to do just a little compromise, and you will live.

Just bring your incense, and burn a little bit of incense to Caesar, burn a little incense to the emperor, and just mouth the words, Caesar is Lord, and you'll be safe, you'll be safe to go home, and you'll be easy breezy, just a little compromise, just a little leaven, just a little incense to burn, it's no big deal, but they knew what it meant, Jesus is Lord, not Caesar, and it's the same for us today, we must stand firm, just a little compromise, preacher, come on, just a little, just a little indulgence, just a little to satisfy my flesh, just a little sip of the alcohol, just a little coin in the one-armed bandit, just a little skipping of church, just a little backsliding, and we can all make excuses, excuses after excuses, we can fall into line with Australian culture, wear it purple, when that's the thing, everybody just follows along and goes and marches along to the beat, to the

Pied Piper, wear it purple, look it up and you'll see what I mean about that, join in the Halloween fun, go watch the game instead of going to church, go to the party, tune in to the world's wavelength, read the world's media, just a little, what's the harm in that, preacher, pastor, don't make such a big deal about it, it's just a little bit of sin, it's just a little bit of me time, but a little leaven, it can be dangerous, we see it also on the doctrinal level, a little leaven, it poisons the gospel, it perverts it, like we said before, grace plus, it's false teaching, it's the deadliest leaven, poison, and Paul talks about it in Galatians 1, he tells that we are an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed, when you think one drop of poison, if I had a little dropper here and I plop just a little drop of poison, it poisons the hole, doesn't it?

[22:51] Just one little drop of poison, it kills the cup, grace plus anything isn't grace, it's a deadly fake, it's a counterfeit, and it destroys grace when we preach any other gospel, and Paul warns Timothy to, for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers having itching ears, think of the leaven that's all around about us

now, you tune into the big name popular preachers, popular churches today, false revivals, they're dazzling people with signs and wonders, it's like Matthew 24, 24, false apostles, false signs, and souls are lost because of leaven, because churches have been corrupted, so, and we see a church has its lampstand taken, the very light gets snuffed out, in

Revelation 2, verse 5, because of leavened doctrine, leaven is poison of the truth, so what then, what God's people to do about leaven, what does God want you to do about leaven, really the picture, the message is to clean house and to keep the feast, to clean house and keep the feast, we see 1 Corinthians 5, 7 through 8 tells us, even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast, let's unpack that just for now, to keep the feast, we've heard this morning about the Passover, about the lamb, about Christ as the lamb of God, the spotless lamb, who takes away the sin of the world, he died to clean away our sin, in Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, and it says in him we are unleavened, we made new creatures in Christ, leaven, what are we to do with it, basically destroy it, oh preach it's just a little leaven, actually get rid of it, destroy it, that's the Bible message isn't it, it tells us that we should purge out therefore the old leaven, purge it out, clean it up, destroy it, get rid of it, remove it, eradicate it, we have freedom because of Jesus today, and what are God's people meant to do with leaven, destroy it, get rid of it, and keep the feast, as we read before, let us keep the feast, verse 8 there, it's a celebration of freedom, when you think of it, brother, sister, here tonight, if you know the saviour today, then we've got a reason for feasting, for a festival, for a joy, a songs of deliverance, we've got a reason for a feast, a table spread with grace, there's laughter, there's warmth, there's a breaking of bread together, what a joy it is when you get together, and you eat together, there's a conversation, there's a getting to know each other, there's a communion, there's a togetherness, what about the leaven, it says, keep the feast with the unleavened bread, what about the leaven, what must we do, get real about sin, it talks about the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, it's being real there, isn't it, being real, be genuine, be honest with

God, get real about sin, and so, what God's people to do about leaven, we should hunt it down, like at the Passover time, in Exodus 12 verse 19, what did the people have to do?

They had to get rid of the leaven, they had to search every corner, Exodus 12 verse 19, they had to search out diligently every corner, what about every corner of our heart?

[27 : 05] the Bible talks about examining our heart, examine yourselves whether you be in the faith, really, brother, sister, there's no excuses, there's no accommodating of leaven, Colossians 3 5 says to put sin to death, Ephesians 5 11 says to have no part of the works of darkness, but rather reprove them, recognise the leaven, now you have to recognise the leaven in your life for yourself, whatever that leaven might be prone to be, the besetting sin, to test everything, watch what you let into your mind, brother, sister, the shows that you want to go to, the music you want to listen to, the things you want to read and watch and learn and engage in, the ideas, the friends you want to hang with, recognise the leaven, is it leaven?

Hmm, come to think about it, maybe some of it is leaven. Guard what you allow into your mind and your heart, brother, sister, this is to help you tonight, think of the boundaries you can set before temptation comes, hunt it down, the leaven.

Another thing, protect the truth, we're told to test everything, prove everything, hold fast that which is good, hold fast that which is good, it's good to replace the leaven with the unleavened, to search the scriptures daily, replace that time you would spend on vain things with God things, to search the scriptures daily, to contend for the faith, to avoid foolish arguments, to reject anything that's contrary to God's word, to yearn for the truth, and fill your life with the truth, and the right things of God, to pursue righteousness, to walk in sincerity and truth, to hunger for the scripture, and lay aside every weight, the sin which does so easily beset, what's going to tangle you up, resist it, and leave it alone, and cut it off, and be vigilant, be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil is a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, have a vigilance on the inside, as the Hebrews had a vigilance to search out every speck of leaven, to sweep it out, to search in every nook and cranny, that they wouldn't allow a speck of it, not a minute part, not the least little bit of leaven, salvation, and this is not to earn our salvation, it's because we're saved, we want to please our Lord, and we want to keep the feast, don't we, to know we're saved, we can celebrate that freedom, that liberty that we know in Christ, a little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump, that picture of just that speck, as you're in the kitchen and you're making that bread, it's that speck that makes the difference to that dough, and it's the same with compromise, it's a warning for us, every crumb

matters, every heart corner needs cleaning, the joy, the hope is that we've got a feast, this is not to leave you on a downer here tonight, sure enough there's things

God wants us to deal with, to get things sorted, to get those specks of leaven out, but the emphasis here, hey there's a feast, there's a feast brother, a feast sister, there's a warning against compromise, but there's a hope we have in Christ, to keep the feast, there is a feast to keep, there is a festival, there is a joyful gathering around the table, of pure hearts, of a bold witness, of a united church, think of it for yourself, child of God, what's your leaven?

[31 : 38] You have to answer that for yourself, could it be a grudge that you're holding, a habit, there's things that you're tied to, that you're watching, or part of, this sliding, that you're accommodating, deal with the leaven, don't wait tonight, search your heart, like they searched the house, with the Passover broom, and they had to be very particular, they were very strict, strict, we don't like strictness do we?

Sometimes in the modern church world, oh, we don't like strict churches, strict pastors, but it's because it's between you and the Lord, we need to be strict with ourselves, don't we?

And search out every corner of our heart, because we want him to be glorified, it's not about pleasing the pastor, or having a squeaky clean church where everybody is just perfect, because we know that cannot be, but it's individually searching our heart before our Lord, isn't it?

That we can walk lighter, we can walk brighter, we can be that witness that our world needs, the lost needs to hear the message of the Passover Lamb, the one who is the Passover, it's Christ, who died for our leaven, he can remove every stain of our sin, trust him today, he's the Passover Lamb, your Passover Lamb, trust him, and may God purge his church of every crumb of corruption, and think of it, brother, sister, the joyful resolution here, let us keep the feast, let us keep the feast, with unleavened bread, the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, sincerity means being real, genuine, we're not putting on a front, we're not putting on a performance, it says of sincerity, be real, be real with one another, be real with me, let's be real with God, let's be genuine, let our hearts be open, broken up, exposed before him, sincerity, sincerity, to be real with God, and of truth, no mixture of false, of questionable truth, no mixture of compromise, or just a little leaven, no, none of that, and let us keep the feast, think of it as a picture of the joy of your salvation, we're saved, aren't we?

If you're saved and you know it, we can know it, yes we can, the joy of our salvation, we can know for sure, and it's a call to joy here, it's a call to that freedom that we know in Christ, we no longer celebrate a lamb on a plate, but the lamb upon the throne, the lamb that was slain for our sin, and it's a feast today, it's a feast of grace, every time we gather, it's a feast of his grace, every time we open the precious pages of his word, there's a feast there, we can delight in it, we can be fed by his word, our hunger can be satisfied, as we feed upon his truth, there's joy, joy unspeakable, and full of glory, we've left Egypt behind, let's keep the feast, amen, we've left Egypt behind, we're a delivered people, we're saved, and we're set free from all the bondage of captivity, by the blood of the lamb, there's a picture here of the people of God set free, rejoicing in his salvation, let us keep the feast, with the unleavened bread of sincerity, and truth, let us pray,

[35 : 39] Lord help us, we pray, reveal our leaven, give us the grace to throw it out, Lord help us to feast on your truth, help us Lord tonight to know for sure our trust is in you, not in myself, or any work of our own, Lord only the grace of your giving, only the faith of our trusting, Lord that it be a salvation, surely by grace through faith, only by the blood of the lamb, the sacrifice for our sin, Lord and there's a feast for those who know such a joy, Lord we can have a rejoicing in our hearts, Lord help us to have that feast of that joy, of heaven's foretaste, Lord to know that joy of sins forgiven, of a home in heaven, that celebration of your redemption power, of your redemption work, that finished work of the cross, help us Lord to joy in that every day, and Lord for the meantime as we know eleven, that work of at times hypocrisy or it could be of false doctrine or false views, of our own flesh

Lord, we pray help us to remove it, help us Lord to search our own hearts, search every corner Lord, that we can find that leaven, those things we accommodate, those things we know ought to be rooted out and thrown away, Lord help us to have such a heart, and give us the grace to do it Lord, not that we can gain any merit from such but because worthy is the lamb that was slain, Lord we want to be a people set apart for your glory and praise, help us Lord to have a heart that searches out where there's things that we've been accommodating, that we know is like eleven, it's some besetting sin, it's something that we're cherishing, that is taking your place, taking time from you, Lord help us to realise what it is, and give us the grace to make those choices, hard though

they be, but yet it will make us more free to have that sense of rejoicing, that the leaven is gone, Lord we pray that each one here tonight might know what it is to be saved, to know for sure their sins have been forgiven, that they've trusted you to save them, to forgive their sin, to cleanse their hearts, Lord to be our saviour, we thank you for that, and help us Lord to keep the feast as it were, keep on rejoicing, keep on walking in truth, keep on in that sincerity and truth Lord that will be real with you, will be honest and will search our hearts to be more faithful unto you, give us the grace to we pray, encourage every heart Lord through this week ahead that you'll give us that grace that we need to walk in faith and to walk in victory, in Jesus name we pray, Amen.