

# Celebrating the Christian Passover

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## *1 Cor 5:6-8*

### I. INTRODUCTION.

A. A little boy came running into the house after playing outside.

1. His mother stopped him and asked what was on his right hand.
2. He replied, "Oh, just a little mud."
3. His mother then asked if he was planning on getting it off his hand.
4. He thought for a moment and said, "Sure, Mom. I'll just wipe it off with my other hand."

B. That is the way a lot of kids think they ought to deal with dirt.

1. If you tell my boys to go and wash their hands, they might stick them under the faucet for a second and then dry them; if you tell them to take a bath, you have to emphasize that they need to use soap.
2. I'm confident that at Ohio Valley, many of my students—especially the guys—will wear clothes that haven't been washed in a couple of weeks, especially if they don't smell too badly.

C. Unfortunately, that's the way many churches want to deal with sin.

1. When I was in college, I was on a campaign with the university.
  - a. I was in South Carolina, working with a congregation, and staying with a really nice family—staying with an African-American couple in the deep South, they didn't care too much that I don't like grits, but other than that, we got along just great.
  - b. One night, I was coming back from the meeting with the man with whom I was staying.
    - He had a brown paper sack with a bottle inside of it that he took a swig out of every now and then.
    - It just so happened that the state police had a roadblock set up that evening on the way back to his home. This brother hid his bottle, but, as soon as we were through the roadblock, he took it right back out.
  - c. I went to the professor who had brought us South Carolina and told him what I had witnessed. His advice: Justin, go tell the preacher and let him know of the situation.
  - d. I told the preacher and he said, "Justin, we know Brother Jones is like that. We don't say anything, because we don't want to drive him and his wife away from the congregation."
2. Sadly, I fear that's the attitude of many congregations: Let's not say anything if someone is caught in sin; if we do, we might run him away from the congregation.

D. The Corinthians seem to have been reluctant to deal with the sin of the man's living with his stepmother.

1. There are some scholars who believe that this man and his stepmother were wealthy members of the congregation, and that they may have even allowed the church to meet in their home; others believe that the church just didn't want to be exclusive.
2. It really doesn't matter to a hill of beans why they didn't want to deal with this sin; it's important for our purposes this morning that they didn't.
3. Paul urges the church to deal with sin. In urging the church to deal with this sin, the Apostle tells them to have: NO YEAST & NO WICKEDNESS.

### II. NO YEAST, vv. 6-7.

A. The boasting of the Corinthians was not good, v. 6a.

1. We mentioned last Lord's Day how that we should never boast about sin, for sin grieves God to his very core and caused the death of the Son of God.
  2. While that is true, Paul adds another reason that their boasting was not good:
- B. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? v. 6b.
1. The KJV refers to leaven rather than yeast.
    - a. While the Gr term can refer to either leaven or yeast, the English terms aren't exactly synonymous.
    - b. We all know what yeast is, and leaven was fermented dough that was left over from the last batch that was used in the place of yeast to get the dough to rise.
  2. The exact translation isn't really important, for yeast and leaven both work to permeate the dough and cause it to rise.
  3. It doesn't take much dough or leaven to get a batch of dough to rise; it doesn't take much sin to permeate the congregation.
    - a. Place yourself in the Corinthian church for a moment.
      - You are struggling every day to keep your sexual impulses where they belong in a city with a host of prostitutes and other immorality.
      - Here's a couple that's obviously living in sexual immorality, and the elders don't say a single word.
      - What are you going to think?
        - Might you not think, "There's no reason to stay away from that brothel (of which Corinth had many). The elders don't discipline this couple; what can they say to me?"
        - Might you not think, "I haven't gambled once since I became a Christian. Since there's been nothing done about this couple, surely I can gamble a little bit"?
    - b. It is a simple fact of group dynamics that if someone gets by with something, the whole group wants by with it.
      - If you teachers post your classroom rules in a couple weeks, but you let one or two kids slide on those rules, what do you think is going to happen?
      - If an employer lets one or two employees get by with special perks, what are the other members of the organization going to want?
    - c. Paul is placing this principle in a church context:
      - Imagine that I just decide I can't stand Tammy anymore and I divorce her and I go get me another wife and the elders don't stay a word. Can't you imagine that many here might not view their marriage vows in quite the same way?
      - Imagine that one of you guys gets slapped with a DUI, but the elders allow you to continue to lead prayer and wait on the table without any consequences or repentance. Can you think of the influence that might have on others in this church?
- C. Paul declares, "Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are," v. 7.
1. This whole illustration, of course, comes from the OT Passover Festival.
    - a. The Passover commemorated the passing through of Egypt by God's angel to bring death upon the firstborn of all Israel.
    - b. As part of celebrating that Festival, the Jews were forbidden to eat bread made with yeast or leaven: "For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel" (Ex 12:15).
    - c. Do you realize that the NT never tells us to use unleavened bread at the Lord's Supper?

- I would adamantly oppose the use of bread with leaven in it, and I hope you would, as well. But, why?
  - Simply because Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper during the Passover and there was absolutely no other kind of bread Jesus could have used—period.
2. Paul says, "Just as the Jews swept their houses clean of leaven before the Feast of Passover, you need to purge the sin from your midst."
- a. The principle of removing sin from the community of God's people is a common theme in Scripture.
    - About the anointment of priests, the OT records, "Whoever makes perfume like it and whoever puts it on anyone other than a priest must be cut off from his people" (Ex 30:33)—Moses says, "Don't make any perfume like that special perfume for the priests and don't put it on anyone other than priests; if you do, we'll cut you off."
    - If anyone who was unclean ate of the fellowship offering, he was to be cast out of the Israelite community (Lev 7:20).
  - b. As a community of believers, we need to be cautious that we do not look the other way when a brother or sister persists in sin.
    - I understand talking like this raises many serious questions: "What if the church withdraws from my spouse or my child or my parent? What if the church doesn't act consistently in withdrawing fellowship?"
    - Anytime we talk of doing what the Word of God instructs, we're going to be able to think rationally of a hundred reasons why we just can't do that. Yet, the Book says what the Book says.
  - c. As difficult as it is to speak of purging the sin in a congregation, isn't it harder to speak of purging the sin from our own lives?
    - What sin is there in your life you need to get rid of? Are you involved in sexual immorality, are you greedy, do you tend to slander, do you use profanity, or do you consume alcohol?
    - Let me encourage you to do something this week:
      - This afternoon take an inventory of your life. Examine yourself to see where you aren't what you need to be.
      - Choose one area on that inventory and focus on it this week; each day pray for God's strength to deal with that weakness; each day strive to purge yourself of that weakness.
      - If you need help, I and the elders stand ready to assist you purge yourself of sin and become more and more like Jesus.
    - Will we commit this week to purging out the yeast: to determine to deal with sin in the congregation when it occurs and to deal with sin in our own lives?

### III. NO WICKEDNESS, v. 8.

- A. "Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth."
- B. Up in verse 7, Paul compared Jesus to the Passover lamb and declares that since he has been sacrificed, it's time to get rid of leaven.
  1. The leaven Paul specifically mentions in this text is the leaven of malice and wickedness.
    - a. The Gr term for "malice" refers to the disposition to do evil, while the term "wickedness" refers to the exercise of evil.

- b. Thus, the Apostle tells the Corinthians to get rid their inclinations to do evil and to get rid of their practice of evil.
2. Wickedness and malice has no place in our lives.
    - a. Notice that as Paul tells the Corinthians to get rid of the old yeast and to become the new batch of dough without yeast, he understands that as something already accomplished: “Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are” (v. 7).
    - b. For Paul, coming to Jesus drastically alters who we are.
      - In the next chapter, he declares, “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you *were* [NOTICE THE PAST TENSE]. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:9-11).
      - “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Cor 5:17).
    - c. We are not who we used to be.
      - Did you used to be a fornicator or a gossip or a swindler or a selfish person? Well, you aren’t any more in Jesus!
      - You might be thinking: “Well, Justin, what about me? I’ve come to Jesus, but I’m still struggling greatly with sin” or “Wait a minute, Justin. What about those folks who are baptized into Christ, but continue evil lifestyles?”
      - Granted, there are sometimes disconnects between who people are and how they act.
        - The problem is not in the power of the gospel; the problem is how well we allow it to control us.
          - Notice what Paul declares about baptism: “We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Rom 6:2-4)—we crucified that malice and wickedness by nailing it to the cross of Jesus through our baptism.
          - Scripture urges us to live in accordance to who we are in Christ: in a context of sexual immorality, we read, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body” (1 Cor 6:19-20).
            - Did you notice that Paul says, “Here’s who you are; therefore, here’s how you act.”
            - How many times did our fathers say before we left the house, “Remember who you are”? Paul is telling us the same thing: Remember who you are—those redeemed from sin by the blood of Jesus.
        - Augustine, the fourth-century theologian who began the doctrine of original sin, was a vile, vile man before he became a Christian.
          - He was, before his conversion, a terribly promiscuous individual who frequented brothels and other places of prostitution.
          - One day after his conversion, one of his former “lady friends” met him on the street and called out to him.

- Augustine continued without taking notice of this woman; she called out to him again and again.
  - Finally, in exasperation, she declared, “Augustine, it is I.” “Yes,” Augustine answered, “but it is not I.”
  - That must be our response when we are tempted to sin—“It is not I. I have been bought with the blood of Jesus, and I’m different. I’m not who I used to be.”
  - Will you make a commitment this day to live in accordance with the reality of your being in Christ? If you need help, talk to me or one of the elders after services, we’ll be more than happy to help.
- C. These brethren are the new unleavened loaf of sincerity and truth.
1. Again, sincerity refers to the disposition or motive, while truth refers to action.
  2. I find it quite interesting that Paul refers to the reality of our beings as that of sincerity and truth.
    - a. I’m sure if I gave you a minute or two, you could uncover what stood out at me: throughout Scripture, God is presented as truth, while Satan is depicted as falsehood.
    - b. You recall what Jesus said to the Pharisees—“You belong to our father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (Jn 8:44).
    - c. Yet, Jesus, as God the Son, is full of truth.
      - “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14).
      - Jesus said of himself, “I am the way and the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6).
    - d. As we are full of sincerity and truth, we are like our Creator, our Savior.
  3. Additionally, we need to make the point that as we live in sincerity and truth we act in accordance with who we are—God has made us people of sincerity and truth, and we need to live that way.
  4. Are you living appropriately this morning? Do you need to come to Jesus and live as God intends you to live, as God created you to live?