

Unleavened Bread

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[0:00] Please turn with me in your Bibles tonight to 1 Corinthians chapter 5. One time each year, the nation of Israel was to celebrate the Passover meal.

! They were to sacrifice a lamb and eat with it unleavened bread. David's unleavened bread is bread that doesn't have any yeast in it.

And if you know anything about baking bread, you put yeast in the bread to make it rise. I don't know much about baking bread, but I know that the yeast is what makes the bread rise.

And so if you've got bread without yeast, then you've got flat bread. Bread that hasn't risen. And once a year, the people of Israel were to eat unleavened bread for an entire week.

They weren't even allowed to have yeast in the house at all. No leaven in the house for a whole week. And they partook of unleavened bread. And the purpose of their celebration was to remember, to recall the miraculous deliverance that the Lord had worked for them, bringing them out of bondage and slavery in the land of Egypt.

[1:14] Maybe you remember on that night, thousands of years ago, Israelites were huddled in their homes, waiting to see exactly what would happen.

They had followed the Lord's, perhaps to them, strange command. They had sacrificed a lamb, one per household. And they had eaten the meat, roasted meat and bitter herbs and unleavened bread. But they had done something else. With the blood of that lamb, they had been commanded by God, and they did so they had smeared it on the door frame of their homes. And now they waited in their homes to see what would happen that night.

And as they waited, they waited with their sandals on their feet, their robes tucked up into their belts, and their staffs in their hand.

They were ready to go. The robe, if you tried to run in it, would trip you. And so it's tucked in the belt so they can move quickly. Their sandals were on their feet. They had their tennis shoes on.

[2:22] They were ready to run, ready to go. And they waited. And then at midnight, maybe it was faint at first, and then grew louder, but soon, unmistakably, a cry of mourning went up throughout the land of Egypt.

For every house that didn't have blood on the doorpost had lost their firstborn child. The firstborn in each of the Egyptians' houses was slain.

And so the Egyptians mourned. And Pharaoh said, Go. Get out. Leave. And then the reason for their readiness is apparent.

They need to leave Egypt and do it quickly. And so they get up and they run. In a rush, they gather their things, and they make their exodus from the land. Out from under the tyrannical hand of Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

Out from slavery into freedom. They were free. You see, they had slaughtered a lamb. And when God passed through the land and He saw the blood on the doorposts of their houses, He passed over that house in mercy.

[3:38] Seeing that a lamb had been sacrificed in place of the firstborn son, there was no need to take the life of the firstborn in that house. But whenever He came to a house without blood, where no sacrifice had been made, then in that home the firstborn was slain.

And as we gather tonight, we celebrate the Lord's Supper. And you know the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ on the night when He and His disciples were observing the Passover meal together.

And tonight, we don't remember smearing blood on our doorposts, but we remember something far greater. We remember Christ, who died on the cross, whose body was pierced and His blood shed for us.

He was sacrificed in our place so that the impossible might happen. You see, God has accomplished our exodus. Our freedom.

We too were once slaves, not to the Egyptians, but slaves to sin. And He has freed us from our bondage to sin. To walk in newness of life. Free from sin and its curse.

[4:52] And Paul makes that connection for us here in 1 Corinthians 5. In a context where we might not expect it. We want to see just a few verses tonight.

Really just one verse. And see some things that Paul has to teach us. Making that connection between the Passover and the Lord's Supper. Notice with me just verses 6-8.

Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast.

As you really are. For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. 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. Three things very briefly tonight. Number one, get rid of the old yeast of sin. Number two, you already are without yeast.

[5:54] You already are unleavened. And number three, because Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed. So first of all, a command from Paul. Get rid of the old yeast. Your boasting isn't good.

And Paul is talking here in 1 Corinthians 5 about a man who's been living in the Corinthian church. He's been a part of their church and he's living in wicked, heinous sin.

And the Corinthians are putting up with it. They're tolerating it. They haven't put the man out yet. They haven't disciplined. They're proud of themselves, in fact. That's why it says in verse 6, your boasting is not good.

Oh, we're an open-minded church. We're going to not discipline people that are living in such open, profligate, wicked sin. But Paul says, you Corinthians need to get rid of this man.

Don't you all know that just a little yeast works its way through the whole lump of dough? And kids, it does just take a little bit of yeast. I don't know how much.

[6:52] I should have asked my wife before tonight. How much for a loaf of bread to make it rise? It doesn't take much. Just a little bit of yeast works its way through that whole lump of dough and that lump of dough then starts to rise.

And Paul says, just one wicked man in your midst is not good for the church at Corinth. One man who is unrepentant of his sin. One man who isn't dealing with his sin. Not healthy for your church. You all know that one bad apple in the barrel, eventually the whole barrel full of apples is going to be rotten. You know that bad company corrupts good morals. You know that you shouldn't go with a hot tempered man lest you learn his ways and be like him.

And so the illustration Paul uses is that yeast. Just a little bit of yeast is going to infect the whole lump of dough. And so, sin, unrepentant of, undealt with, cannot be tolerated in the midst of God's people.

And it's not only true at the level of the church, but at the individual level as well. Well, you know that when you've harbored just a little bit of sin in your life, just a little bit of unrepentance and just this area over here, and you begin to see, well, there's no, oh, I haven't faced any consequences.

[8:00] And so you indulge just a little bit more over here. And just a little bit more over here then. And just the littlest sin that goes unchecked can lead to more and more. Just a little leaven causes the whole batch to rise.

And the leaven of sin begins to spread back through the lump of dough of your life. But Paul says that should not be so for the church and for the people in the church because you are to be a new batch, a new lump of dough without yeast, as you really are.

Get rid of the old so that you might be a new lump just as you are. Unleavened bread. Without yeast. In other words, Paul says, be what you are. He's writing to the church at Corinth.

He's writing to Corinthians at Corinth. He says, you are new creatures in Christ. Live like it. You're a new creation. You're a new man. Put off the old man. You're a follower of Christ.

Stop living like you're following Satan and living for him. Now there's some remarkable truth here. Paul says, get rid of the old yeast.

[9:10] Can anybody here take a batch of dough and dig into that dough and find the little particles of yeast that have caused it to rise and separate the old yeast from the dough? No. It's impossible.

You try it sometime. You watch a loaf of bread rise and if your mom lets you, you try to dig through that dough and try to find the yeast. Try to pull it out. Try to separate the yeast from the dough and

you won't be able to do it.

Sorry moms if I've just ruined your bread. But you can't do it. And neither can we get the sin out of our own lives.

It's no more possible for us to go into our hearts and lives and to get rid of the sin that's there than you can get rid of the leaven out of the dough. It's too ingrained in us. It's part of our very nature. We can't do it.

So how is it that Paul can say that you are unleavened? That you who once had that sin and you are now without it. And if you're going back and living like you've got that sin again, you need to get rid of it again.

[10 : 11] How can Paul say that? How can he tell us to do the impossible? For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. And he actually leaves them hanging here.

He says, our Passover has been sacrificed. And maybe for a split second you wonder, are we going back to the Old Covenant, Paul? Our Passover lamb has been sacrificed and then he says it.

Christ. And so, he points them to Christ as the answer for how our sin can be dealt with.

Now we see it. Christ is the fulfillment of those Old Testament practices. And Christ then does two things for us. Two things.

And the first is that he spares us from the penalty of that sin that was so ingrained in us. And that's what we often and rightly think of at the Lord's table. God pouring out his judgment on his own Son instead of us.

[11 : 15] And we rightly think of that. And we're going to pause for a moment and think. But don't forget that there's something else Christ does for us. This first is that he spares us from the penalty of our sin. And so he's our Passover lamb.

Here we are in our sin. Deserving of God's judgment. Deserving his eternal wrath. But instead of receiving wrath, we receive mercy. How can that be? Well, just as a Passover lamb was sacrificed for the households in Israel.

And when God saw the blood on the doorpost, He passed over those houses in mercy. So, our sacrifice has been offered up.

And our sacrifice isn't a lamb, one for your house, and one for yours, and one for yours, and one for yours, and one for mine, and a lamb for each of our houses. That's not the case.

There's been one sacrifice. One. The one Christ Jesus. He suffered and died. He was sacrificed.

[12 : 18] His blood covers us. And He died in our place. And so, imagine for a moment with me tonight, what would you do if God were to pass through our midst this very night?

And the question is, are you covered with the blood, not of a lamb, but are you covered with the blood of Christ? If God were to pass through these very rows of chairs tonight, and to take the ones with Him who were covered in the blood of Christ to be with Him in heaven, and to send away the ones that are not covered in the blood of Christ to an eternity of punishment in hell, would He take you with Him?

Or would He send you away? If you were there in Egypt that night, would He pass by your house, or would He stop, and would you be slain? Are you covered in the blood of Christ, the Passover lamb tonight?

And if you are, then rejoice. Because nothing can touch you there. God's wrath won't reach you there, because He's already poured it out on His Son.

You're safe under the blood of Christ. Are you covered in that blood tonight? You know the work has already been done. You don't have to face God's wrath.

[13 : 43] The sacrifice has been made. All that's left for you is to run to Christ in faith. God, be merciful to me, the sinner. And He will. And you too can be covered in the blood of Christ.

And were God to come tonight, and to take all of those covered in the blood home, you could go to heaven to be with Him. You could right now pray in your heart, and seek forgiveness for your sin, and find it.

And so be covered in that precious blood. And so be safe from the judgment. What a blessed work that Jesus accomplished at the cross. He's our Passover, and so we give thanks, and we remember tonight.

Without that sacrifice, we're hopeless. No hope for us. But instead, with that blood, God has passed over us in mercy. But Jesus not only delivers us from the penalty of sin, He also delivers us from the power of sin.

He hasn't just forgiven us our sins, He's brought us out from slavery to sin, to freedom, to walk in newness of life. Just as God led the Israelites out of Egypt and slavery into freedom.

[14:53] He's done that for us in Christ. And so Paul says, you really are unleavened. You really are free from that slavery to sin. Go and live like it.

And so for Paul and for us, the fact that Jesus is our Passover Lamb doesn't just mean deliverance from the penalty of sin, it means deliverance from its power.

Jesus did what was impossible for us to do. He removed our sin from us as far as the east is from the west. He got into the lump of dough and got out the old leaven so that we're new creations in Christ.

And if that's the case, says Paul, we shouldn't be going back and living like we once did. We shouldn't be going back and scraping up the old leaven and putting it back in us and infecting ourselves all over again.

We shouldn't be living like that old man any longer. No, you're unleavened. You're no longer a slave. Go and live like it. Make sure there's no hint of that old leaven in your life or in the life of the church.

[15:56] It's that important. The unrepented sin in the church must be disciplined. Whatever that old sin that had you so enslaved was, give no quarter to it.

Give no room for it to grow in your heart any longer. Jesus, your Passover Lamb has been sacrificed. You find yourself slipping back into your old ways?

Remember, just a little leaven will work its way through you in a hurry. The Passover has been sacrificed. Get rid of that old leaven. Be done with it, says Paul. You're free from the penalty of sin and you're also free from its power.

Live that way. And so the work of Christ on the cross that we remember here tonight is a great blessing to us in more than one way. Our sins are forgiven and we have peace with God.

And so if Satan ever comes to you, you who are trusting in Christ and tries to heap guilt on you and make you feel the guilt of your sin, you say, a penalty was paid at the cross.

[17:01] Jesus took my sin. God has declared me not guilty. And so nothing you say can make me guilty. And there's great comfort and great confidence there for the Christian that we're free from such.

And if that same devil seeks to lead us back into sin, we say, no, how can I? My Passover lamb has been sacrificed. How could I then go back and live as if He was not sacrificed for me?

I'm a new person. How can I live like I once did? I'm unleavened. How could I go back to being leavened? The old man is gone. The new has come. And that same Satan might come and encourage us to tolerate sin in our midst as a church.

And let it go unchecked in one of our people. No, we love that person too much. We love Christ's church and Christ's name too much to let such go on.

Because our Passover has been sacrificed. We can't run our church and we can't order our lives like He hasn't been sacrificed. And so what we remember when we gather around the Lord's table tonight, is not only freedom from God's judgment, His wrath, which is the greatest of blessings, it's also freedom from that slavery to sin that once held us so tightly.

[18:19] We are no longer slaves to sin. And we remember that because our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. So may God help us to remember this.

To encourage us when we're discouraged. To motivate us when we're tempted to sin. To remember that Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

Remember what He says, get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.