

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture texts: **1Corinthians 5:6-8**.  
Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump *of dough*? **7** Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. **8** Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.
- B. Leaven is used in teaching lessons in the NT in both a positive and negative way. The fundamental fact is that leaven will always have an effect on what it touches.
- C. We are to be, as leaven, in the world. We want to affect it for good.

## I. LEAVEN USED IN A NEGATIVE WAY (1Cor. 5:6-8).

- A. The context here is of the immoral brother. He is having relations with his step-mother.
- B. In this case, to be leavened is to be contaminated with sin. To have the power of leaven means *to have the power to corrupt* (Lk. 12:1; Gal. 5:7-9).  
(Lk 12:1) Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of the multitude had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."  
(Gal 5:7-9) You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.
- C. Leaven works **silently** and **virtually unnoticed**. Satan works this way too (2Cor. 11:14).  
And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.
- D. We are leaven in the lives of others. Ponder the following questions:
  - 1. Is there any activity I am doing that might cause others to fall into sin (1Cor. 8:8-13)?  
But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat. But take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And thus, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble.
  - 2. Is this activity in question lawful? If so, is it also profitable? See 1Cor. 10:23; 6:12.  
All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.  
(If it is lawful but not profitable, why do it?)
- E. Remember, Paul said to remove the old leaven (clean out the sin) (1Cor. 5:7a). It was wrong for the Israelites to eat the Passover lamb with leaven still in the house. It is just as wrong to spiritually partake of X, our Passover Lamb, with the leaven of sin still in us!

## II. LEAVEN USED IN A POSITIVE WAY.

- A. In the parable of the three loaves, the kingdom of heaven is likened unto leaven (Mt. 13:33). Jesus uses leaven, in this context, as something which is good.
- B. Paul emphasized that Xians are to be unleavened when it comes to sin (1Cor. 5:7c).  
...just as you are *in fact* unleavened.
- C. Therefore, as we purge the sin from our lives (the old leaven), we are acquire the new, that being the influence X, and use that leaven to have a positive impact on the world.
- D. That impact is:
  - 1. The gospel is to work gradually, spreading silently.
    - a. Jesus never held public office, never marched in a rally carrying a picket sign, etc.
    - b. Jesus dealt with the world, one person at a time.
    - c. Midst the crowds, the gospels tell of many instances of X ministering to individuals.
    - d. If we are to be the good leaven, we must also work this way.

2. The gospel is to work in making unseen inner changes in people's lives.
  - a. *Real change* comes from the heart (Mt. 12:34).  
For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.
  - b. *Real value* is in the inner soul (Mt. 10:28).  
“And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
  - c. *Real repentance* comes from the mind (Mt. 21:28-31).  
“But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go work today in the vineyard.’ “And he answered and said, ‘I will, sir’; and he did not go. “And he came to the second and said the same thing. But he answered and said, ‘I will not’; yet he afterward regretted it and went. “Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The latter.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you that the tax-gatherers and harlots will get into the kingdom of God before you.
  - d. *Real conviction* comes from the heart (Ac. 2:37).  
Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?”
3. The gospel is to remove social evils, superstition, vice, etc.
  - a. This is not done by law, but by love (Rom. 13:8-10).  
Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.
  - b. The gospel is to have wholesome effects.
4. The gospel is not to be forced on people, or shoved into the public eye.
  - a. Jesus never intended to draft an army to force His will on people (Jn. 18:36).  
Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”
  - b. But wherever Xianity goes, that society is benefited.
  - c. Wherever there are a few righteous souls, the nation is spared (see Gen. 18:20-33).
5. The gospel is to be a slow and steady process of change.
  - a. Inside out, not from the outside in.
  - b. Gentle, constant pressure; not a shove or sudden push.
  - c. God’s word always accomplishes what it seeks to do (Isa. 55:11).  
So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.
- E. We are to be leaven in the lives of others. Ponder the following questions:
  1. Is there any activity that I am doing that might cause someone to be saved?
  2. Is this activity both lawful and profitable?
  3. If such an action is both lawful and profitable, why aren’t we doing it?
- F. Paul said to celebrate the feast (1Cor. 5:8)! The feast is the entire Xian life. We are to exhibit sincerity and truth. This is the leaven of the gospel that will permeate the world!

## CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. We have influence wherever we go.
- B. Will it be for good, or will it be for evil?
- C. What kind of leaven characterizes your life?
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.