

# Get Rid of the Old Leaven

by Erlo Stegen

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*Erlo Stegen emphasizes the necessity of purging sin from our lives to live as new creations in Christ, using the metaphor of old leaven to illustrate the corrupting influence of sin.*

**Duration:** 1:08:12

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:29

**Topics:** "Sin"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of the declining standards in churches. He emphasizes the importance of not allowing sin to rule in our lives and urges listeners to purge out the old leaven. The speaker references Jesus' teachings about cutting off body parts that cause us to sin, highlighting the seriousness of avoiding temptation. He also mentions Job's covenant with his eyes as an example of taking proactive measures to avoid sin. The sermon concludes with a reminder to strive for unity and friendliness in every aspect of life.

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## Transcript

Lord, I pray that you will speak to us. Lord, thank you that you've kept us on all our travels across many countries and that we've come back well. Now we ask you to speak to us through your word and through your Holy Spirit.

Amen. Amen. Uncle Friedl was going to return today, but he's still in Switzerland taking the service there today.

They were going to fly tonight, but they've been delayed because there's a problem with a plane which they're still busy sorting out. So they hope to fly tomorrow. During this past week, from Monday through to Thursday, we had a ministers' conference in Switzerland.

There were about 450 people attending. And I said, well, we don't know what the future holds, but Lord willing, we'll have another conference in two years' time in 2008. And then I said, well, every one of them could invite another minister to come along.

If that was the case, they could expect 900 people for the conference. And then we wouldn't be able to meet at the venue where we were at in Kaltbrunn, but we'd have to move across to Bilton. Because in Kaltbrunn, they were full to capacity.

But we thank God for His working. If it continues going the way it is now, with the signs that one sees, we can still expect great things in Europe. Our text we find in 1 Corinthians 5, from verse 6 to 9. Your glory is not good.

Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The first point here in this text is something very sad. It says it's not good that you glory in yourself. Your glory is not good.

Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. These are words that come out of God's mouth, where God himself says, I'm not happy about you.

They were celebrating the feast of the Passover. They were happy. They were rejoicing.

But God said, I'm not happy about what you are doing. He was unhappy about this state. He said, you shouldn't celebrate Passover in that way.

These past days, almost every day, I spoke about our Passover, about Jesus on the cross. It wasn't the same message over and over, but it was the theme, because it's such a vast subject. When I prayed and asked the Lord what I should speak about today here at Sizabantu, I felt the Lord leading me in this way, and I said, Lord, I'll speak about getting out the old leaven.

Over Easter we spoke about the meaning of Easter and what that means, and in German what the word Easter means. And we said that it means, it's the rising of the sun. And there we don't mean the sun that comes up in the east and after 12 hours it sets again.

Whoever has such a sun in his spiritual life, where that's the state of affairs, he's in a pitiful state. Where a person's spiritual life is such, where the sun comes up, after a few hours it goes down again, up and down. God's sun is the eternal sun, it should shine forever.

Like the choir saying, that I may dwell in the heart of the Lord forever. Like the choir saying, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord forevermore, always, not going in and going out again after a while. We are tired of people who become Christians, they start walking with the Lord, and after a while the spiritual life just fizzles out.

Now a person may say, well we're thankful that the Lord rose and for what he did for us, we celebrate the Passover. But the Lord looks and he says, I'm not happy with how you are glorying, because there's still some old leaven that's left in your life. And he says, therefore remove the old leaven.

Purge it out, in German it says, sweep it out. One of the speakers at the conference, his father was a Jew. Now I didn't speak to him, or ask him about this, but I know that the old Jews, those who stick to their traditions and their rules, at the time of Passover, for a whole week beforehand, they don't touch anything, they don't allow any leaven anywhere around.

They went through their houses thoroughly, removing any sign of any leaven anywhere, even if they had a wooden table, if there were cracks in the table, they'd scratch it out with a sharp knife, just to make sure there's no sign anywhere of any old leaven. In Exodus 13 verse 7 it says, And no leaven bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters. So God doesn't want any sign of that old leaven to be seen anywhere in your quarters, anywhere in your life.

There must be absolutely no sign. So this message is a sad one. There's no rejoicing, no happiness, because God is unhappy.

He says, because there is old leaven, which I do not tolerate. But when God reprimands us, it's a sign that He loves us. He says, if He doesn't reprimand us, it shows that we're illegitimate children.

If He doesn't reprimand us, it shows that we're illegitimate children. So we should search our lives. Test and see whether there's any sign of any of the old leaven in our lives.

Now what is that? That is sin. Sin into which we were born. From when we were small, we grew up in sin.

And the Lord says, there must be no sign of that left in our lives. It doesn't help that we celebrate Easter and the Passover, and yet there are signs of the old life in us. No one should be able to find any of the old in our lives.

We need to be a new lump. Like the word says, He has created everything and made it brand new. Behold, the old things have passed away.

Anger, lies, and all the old things in our lives, those are past. Behold, everything has become new. When we look at Jesus, He is blameless, innocent, without blemish.

He has no fault in Him. He lives in His holiness. But now we who believe in Him should become like Him.

We should be a brand new lump. Whoever looks at us should not find anything in our lives where they can say, oh, that's still of the old. We should be a brand new lump.

Whoever looks at us should not find anything in our lives where they can say, oh, that's still of the old. In no quarter of your life should anything of the old ever be found, no matter what circumstances you are living under. Even if you are under pressure, whatever pressure that may be, or maybe you are exhausted, you are tired, even under those circumstances none of the old must become evident.

No irritability, no impatience, nothing of the old. But if the old surfaces in your life and rears its head, that old leaven, that's going to destroy your spiritual life. Jesus gave His life, His blood, He shed for us.

He gave us His Spirit so that we will be sanctified. According to Zulu tradition, one pays lobola, dowry for one's wife. Now, in that sense we could say that Jesus paid the full dowry for our lives.

He paid everything that was needed to redeem our lives. And then daily we are given God's Word and fed God's Word. We are being given that to drink.

So daily we are fed with that heavenly divine drink and that's why God can expect us to live such a life. Because He paid the full price for us. God wants us to be Christians that are converted thoroughly, 100%, not half-heartedly, but fully.

That's why God wants to deal with every single sin in our lives, that He can sanctify us fully. When you search your life, do you find it to be sanctified and redeemed fully or is there something of the old that was left behind? God's Word says we should be sanctified and cleansed in our whole life, spirit, soul and body. That we don't serve Satan or serve the world but that we should serve Him alone.

Not even your flesh. You've got no right. You are guilty before God.

You can be damned because of it. God wants you to be spotless and not that you carry on with your sins. I was happy when after the minister's conference a doctor came to me.

He said, I thank you for preaching in this way. I'm coming from a church but I notice in our church and our churches the standard has fallen. It's no longer what it used to be and what it should be.

But thank you for still preaching in this way. Jesus Himself said it. If your eye causes you to stumble and to sin, pluck it out.

Rather enter heaven with one eye than to have both eyes and end up in hell. Or if your hand or your foot makes you to sin, rather cut it off. Rather go to heaven with one hand, one foot than to have both and end up in hell.

You say you are saved. You say you are a Christian. But what is it that you look at in the internet with your eye? Those pictures of naked people, pornography and you call yourself saved.

You are a liar. Therefore purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us.

Therefore let us keep the feast but not with the old leaven nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness. Malice and wickedness. The word in Greek for malice is kakia.

Something which is evil, which is rotten, which is wrong, something which is not right. There shouldn't be anything in your life which is seen that is not right. Something which is wrong.

And wickedness. Now wickedness is almost the same thing. But that wickedness is also something which is wrong but it's a wickedness that also becomes visible to others to see.

So it's a wickedness that doesn't just stay inside which is there but hidden. But it's that type of wickedness which then becomes visible for others to see. And then it affects others and hurts others too.

God doesn't allow something wrong in your life. You need to repent. You don't belong to the Lord, you belong to the devil.

You do his things, his works. God does not want anything that's wrong in our lives. God wants all the old things that cling to us.

Things we've dragged along since we've been children and from our childhood on. The things that cling to us. He wants us to get rid of those things.

Now let me go to another point. The apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, spoke very directly to the church in Corinth and reprimanded them. Concerning their immorality.

But when we study the book of Corinthians, we find that not everyone was living in immorality. But we find there was one man and one woman who were living immorally. There was a man who had an affair with a stepmother.

But then God reprimanded the whole congregation, the whole church, saying you are not celebrating the Passover as you should because there's something wrong in your midst. He said, there's someone in your midst who's living in sin and you're tolerating it, you're not doing anything about it. You should get him out of your midst because that little leaven will live in the whole lump.

He said that person who's living in sin in that way should be handed over to the devil, that his flesh should be destroyed and maybe then his soul can be saved. So the church in Corinth was reprimanded, the whole congregation, because there were two people in their midst who were living in sin. He said those people should be dealt with and removed from among your midst.

Otherwise it will spoil everything. He said you're on your way to destruction because of these people in your midst. He said because here is this pair sinning in your midst but you're tolerating it, you're not doing anything about it, you're not dealing with it.

You're not removing them from your midst. Because that little leaven leavens the whole lump, it has an influence throughout. Do you fathers hear that? You with your children, with what they are up to and you tolerating it, that will influence the whole family.

I don't know what it was but they had this attitude, well there's something wrong happening in our midst but let's rather not say anything. Let's not upset the apple cart, let's rather say nothing. There are many such people around who see things wrong, they are wrong, but they do nothing about it because they're afraid of what people will think of them.

The Bible says if someone in the church is living in sin, go to him, speak to him about it, try to help him. If he doesn't listen, take a witness along, someone else to help you and if that fails then you can take him before the whole church. We dare not tolerate sin in our lives or with our lusts and with our desires.

We dare not allow wrong thoughts and even your desires, your motives where you wish for something evil. And as the Lord Jesus was nailed to the cross, crucified, so the sin in our life should be nailed and crucified, finished off. God says you dare not allow sin to rule in your life or lustful desires and lust of the eyes.

On a daily basis we should be taking stock to see whether there's nothing of the old leaven that has crept back in again. In German it's not just dough or leaven, it's sour dough, it's something sour, bitter. Something bitter, so nothing bitter should be found in any of our quarters.

No one around us should even see something like that in our lives, that there will be no disunity and that there will be no unfriendliness. In every life, in every family, in every home, and in every congregation, Jesus says if you have an evil eye, pluck it out. And all your hand, all your foot, rather get rid of it.

Get rid of that, because you may have a hard head, like the head of a ram, but remember one day you're going to meet up with another head, God's head, that is much harder than yours head, and your skull will crack. Remember Job. Job made a covenant with his eyes.



And God honored Abraham because later we find Abraham in heaven. And even Lazarus in his bosom. So God honored this man who at one time in his life said to Hagar said, my son is a scoffer.

He's a bad influence here. He must rather go. And he separated from him.

He didn't keep him. That's why Abraham had authority to charge even his workers. To obey God.

And they did it. He had authority. Abraham had also lived together with his nephew, Lot.

And then there was strife between Abraham's and Lot's servants. And Abraham said to Lot, I don't want there to be disunity and strife here where I live. Abraham didn't keep quiet.

You see, he was alive spiritually. Not like other people. They see things going wrong.

They do nothing about it. They say nothing. They just keep quiet.

See, if you have no life, then you can keep quiet. But if there's life, you won't allow strife and disunity to prevail. He said, my nephew, let our ways rather part than that there be disunity and strife amongst us.

If you go to the right, I'll go to the left. Abraham couldn't understand it. How could there be strife? He couldn't understand it.

He said, how can we live together? And there's disunity. The one says, I want this. The other says, I want that.

Abraham said, we can't live like that. Rather, let our ways part. You go one way, I'll go the other.

But we can't live like this. Paul and Peter were in a congregation. They were some Jews, and they were together.

And then some Gentiles came. When the Gentiles came, Peter withdrew because he was afraid of what the Jews would say. And Paul reprimanded him publicly.

He didn't allow it. He said, Peter, how can you act like this so hypocritically? We will confront you with this punishment. We cannot tolerate that.

You see, Paul was a real man. Peter sinned publicly, so Paul reprimanded him publicly. He didn't even call him aside to speak to him alone.

He said it in front of everyone. He said, God doesn't tolerate this. John writes in his epistle, that's not in the Gospel of John, the other letter.

He says, if people come, and they teach you something different to what we have taught you, don't accept such a person. Don't accept such a person, because he is a liar. Don't accept such a person, because he is a liar.

He is a liar. they say. What shall one say of such a person? Where is your maturity? When will people be able to see what is right and what is wrong when things are just a whole mess? Then I'm not surprised that God is starting to use small children.

Let that old leaven be removed. And if you don't want to part with the old leaven, let that old leaven be removed. There are many other churches that will be happy to have new members.

Maybe they don't mind if you come with your old leaven, but we don't want to tolerate that old leaven in any life. And if your children allow that leaven, you need to take action like Abraham did. Now maybe your husband, your wife has tried, she's failed.

Now I'm trying to wake you up out of your sleep. That old leaven needs to be removed. And if it's in your home, if it's with your children, you need to take action.

Otherwise we'll become the laughing stock of the enemy. They'll say, well those people themselves aren't even united. They're not one.

And then people say, oh it's Sisyphus. They've just become like everyone else. No, well I don't allow that.

Then rather you go and go to those who are like you are. You see it all over, even overseas. Ministers, their own children, they come home, they are just like the world, according to the fashion of this world, but they are minister's children's children.

Jesus wants us to be the light of the world, to be the salt of the earth. But when the salt has lost its saltiness, what shall be done? Then something needs to be done about it. Even here at the school, it's called Domino Savita.

We will serve the Lord. If you don't want to serve the Lord, then what do you want here? Why are you here? If you don't want... I saw some people studying theology some time ago. I said, why? Are these people mad? Studying theology, living in sin.

Even if you study theology, but don't, if you are full of the old leaven, it's an abomination to God. That's why they say today one should even marry gays. When ministers say, well, my daughter has got a girlfriend, and what's wrong with marrying them? It's all a matter of love after all.

You see, you let the old leaven, leave it there, it grows and it spoils the whole lump. If you're a preacher of the gospel, maybe you should go home and just go through your house and your children's rooms. See what is there in their cupboards.

What's the clothing that's there? What are the books that they read? What are the things that are found there? Lest you claim to be a preacher of the gospel all the time, your home is a den. People that come here, they should realize that there's another spirit that rules here, not the spirit of the world. God says you are glorying, but you shouldn't.

It's not good what you're doing because you're allowing the old leaven in your midst. You find children of God in one place, but they're divided. They're in different groups.

And I said recently, sometimes it's a nuisance if you're a bit older, you've heard so many things and you've allowed these things you've listened to, to influence you. And they grow in your heart. That's where children have an advantage.

They haven't been poisoned by all these things that they've been heard. You've listened to so many things and you've allowed those things place in your heart. They've grown.

They've influenced you. They've changed your attitude. If you don't want to part with those things, then rather you go and you join up with those who think like you do.

It would be wonderful if you hear it. Test and search your heart. Is the old leaven in your life, in your home, in your children? Because no way in any quarter of your life or your situation should there be found the old leaven.

We should be unleavened bread. I don't know whether you understand. If you don't understand, come after the service.

We can pray together and ask God to wash your ears, to remove the dirt that you can hear. There is no other way. I said in the beginning, these are words that are from the mouth of God.

If there's a boy or a girl sinning in their midst, Paul says, why do you rejoice? Why are you happy? You should be concerned about that thing and it should be dealt with. In Corinth, there was one man and one woman and they sinned. And Paul said, why are you left out? Why are you so proud? You should have repented in the nations that such a thing could happen among you and that that person should be dealt with.

Have you heard? Have you understood? Can I stop now? I'll be going now. I'll go home and then I'll see what you do about it. Let's bow our heads.

Lord Jesus, I pray that your word will be sharp, so sharp that it gets right to the deepest depths of our hearts. If there's strife, disunity and one going against the other, our Lord, please work through your Holy Spirit that that old leaven can be removed, that we may become a brand new lump. Amen.

And you will never experience revival if you haven't taken that step. In fact, you will be a curse, a hindrance in God's work. Thank you.

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