

The Evil Leaven Of Self

by Sandeep Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection, highlighting that it was not merely for triumph over physical death but to transform our lives daily. It challenges believers to stop living for themselves and to examine their hearts for any self-centeredness or sin that may hinder their walk with God. The message stresses the need to celebrate Jesus' sacrifice by living sincerely and truthfully, rejecting any form of self-exaltation or worldly influences.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:14, 1 Corinthians 5:6, Matthew 13:33

Topics: "Transformation through Christ", "Living a Surrendered Life"

Description

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Transcript

I want to start with 2nd Corinthians chapter 5. It's around this time, if we're not mistaken, thousands of years ago when Jesus died and rose again. And the purpose of Jesus is extremely special to us. But the life that Jesus brought with him was not a set of doctrines, but a life that he summarized by saying, follow me.

So he's not impressed by the niceness of our clothes, or even the words we say. He looks much deeper. He's really looking at the quality of our hearts.

So it's not that there's anything wrong about thinking about Christ's death and resurrection at certain times of the day. What is wrong is if we only think about his death and resurrection only sometimes of the day or sometimes of the year, it should be a daily occurrence. And so we can't go from old covenant where we observe rituals and observe feasts to no covenant.

You have to go to the new covenant, which God says, I own every part of every single day and every part of your body and every part of your thoughts. He goes from some to all, not to none. 2nd Corinthians chapter 5, verse 14 through 16.

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died. And he died for all, so that they who live may no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and rose again on their behalf. Why did Jesus die? Why did Jesus rise from the dead? It tells me in this verse, he did it for me.

He did it for me. He died and rose again for me, for you. What did he do for you? He did it so that we could go to heaven.

No, read what it says there. So that we may no longer live for ourselves. That's very simple, but maybe very different than why we celebrate the death and resurrection from Christ.

Currently, Jesus died and rose again, not so that I could post something on Facebook or sing certain songs at the time of the year. So that very fundamentally, I stop living for myself. Who's on the throne on your life? Are you doing whatever you want? Are you thinking whatever you think? Well, then you are rejecting why Jesus died and rose again.

You may be saying that you accepted that he died and rose again, but you've rejected him. You've rejected his sacrifice. You've rejected his resurrection because the reason he died and rose again, because he had you in mind, he had me in mind and he said, I'm doing all of this because I don't want you to live for yourself anymore.

So when you get into bad moods, when you compare yourself to others, when you get jealous, when you hold on to unforgiveness, we are rejecting the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is extremely special, but the implication of it is we must die to ourselves. We must no longer live for ourselves.

Most Christians celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus because we think it is the, finally, we have triumphed over physical death. But I respectfully and vehemently disagree. Not that that's not true, but the primary reason why Jesus came and died and rose again was so that I could have a different life now.

Now I have to evidence a different life now and the different life now is I no longer live for myself. So how do I know if I'm living for myself? Is it a one-time decision? Is it a prayer I pray? I want to show you this verse in 1 Corinthians chapter 5. This is the verse that the Lord laid on my heart to speak on today. 1 Corinthians chapter 5 verses 6 through 8. 1 Corinthians chapter 5 verses 6 through 8. Previous book 1 Corinthians chapter 5 verses 6 to 8. You're boasting.

Your boasting is no good. I just want to stop there and say you're boasting that Jesus died and rose again is of no good. Do you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? What's the point boasting that Jesus died and rose again when there's still sin? That's what Paul is talking about in 1 Corinthians chapter 5, the previous verses.

And we can apply it to the church and we can firstly apply it to our own lives. What are you boasting that Jesus died and rose again? When there's a little leaven that's corrupting the whole dough. Verse 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. Therefore let us celebrate the feast. Let us celebrate what Jesus did when he died and rose again.

Not with old leaven nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. So God is clearly telling us that we must celebrate Jesus's death and resurrection. We must celebrate that feast of what was talking about the Passover and the old covenant.

We must celebrate it but here's how we celebrate it. Not the way the old covenant did with rituals, not with sinfulness of malice and wickedness but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Here's the picture that comes to me.

I either come to God with leavened bread or unleavened bread. Now here's what leavened, here's the difference between leavened and unleavened bread. You put a little bit of yeast into bread and it becomes leavened and you know what happens to it? It puffs up, it becomes tasty.

Unleavened bread, I've read, I've tasted it a few times when I go to some churches where they offer that unleavened bread. Tastes extremely tasteless. It's like a little bit like cardboard.

Unleavened bread, leavened bread looks better, is bigger, tastes better and God says I reject it. There are so many things we can do to pretty up our lives, to make our lives look better and God says I'm not interested in that because what you're doing when you're bringing up, puffing your life is you're introducing a little bit of the yeast of self and so when I come before God, I have to ask God, God is there any bit of self in me? If there's a little bit of self in me, just a little bit of yeast, here's what's going to happen over time. It's going to fill the whole lump of bread.

May not happen today, may not happen tomorrow but it will happen. So how much of self is allowed to co-exist in the lump of bread? Lump of dough? How much? Dear brothers and sisters, have you seen the wretchedness of that little yeast? Just a little bit of self, just a little bit for myself. These few decisions, I get to decide whatever I want to do.

This little bit of money, I get to do whatever I want to do. This chunk of time, I get to do whatever I want to do with it. We against entertainment? Are we against enjoying the things that God's given us free to enjoy? Of course not but I have to keep asking myself, Lord, am I a self? Has self come in? A little bit of yeast will ruin the whole bread but look at this lump, it's so beautiful, it's so baked so nicely and God rejects it and I have to ask myself, Lord, am I a flat bread or am I raised even slightly above the ground? Do I want just a little bit of recognition, just a little bit of affirmation? I'm not like the prosperity preachers who want to boast about all they do and they fly around the private jets.

That's not a huge big bread but I just want a little bit and I think the worst thing is I think I'm better than them. A little bit of yeast ruins the whole lump of dough. I have to see the wretchedness of this yeast or self.

There's this parable that Jesus spoke in Matthew chapter 13. It applies to us as a church too. It's just a one verse parable, Matthew chapter 13 verse 33.

Read this carefully, Matthew chapter 13 verse 33. He spoke another parable to them, the kingdom of heaven is like leaven. Look what he says here, he compares the kingdom of heaven to leaven which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened.

Now again, I would not have understood this if I didn't have a teacher and from what my dad has taught me, the leaven is this picture of the world and the woman is not the true church. It's the Babylonian church and Jesus was explaining this is what's going to happen to the church. It's going to be like this dough.

I intended it to be a flat dough but here's what the Babylonian church, she comes in and in Revelation chapter 18 it says Babylon the great because she has been a harlot. The true churches of Jerusalem who's unleavened, not raised at all, plain, a spirit of reproach over it and Jesus is warning us saying look this is what it's going to end up to this church. Not from God's standpoint but from earthly standpoint.

The Babylonian spirit of mixing in the world with the truth comes in and puts a little bit of leaven and slowly starts to puff up where the church stops becoming a family and becomes an organization with CEOs and board members and all kinds of organizational principles of leadership. Becomes huge until the whole dough is leavened and we have to ask ourselves dear brothers and sisters as we're sitting in New Covenant Christian Fellowship, as we are sitting among a church that wants to be unleavened, what does God see? He sees something that started out as dough among all of us who have accepted the name of Jesus Christ but then he's looking within and he sees some people who've allowed yeast to come in and you know how he sees it? All the unleavened bread is just flat so a sister there, a brother there, a child there, unleavened and then some other sisters, some other brothers, some other children raised up. Yeast, different levels of which the yeast has taken effect in this bread that was dough was supposed to be flat.

Why did God want us to be flat and tasteless? Because he's coming to add to the supper. He's bringing the lamb. It's not lamb and leavened bread, it's lamb.

He is the sacrifice. He brought himself. That's what the old covenant people did in the exodus.

They had to kill the lamb and they came with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. You can read about that. Where's the flavor coming from? Where's the real meal? Where's the juicy part of the meal? The lamb.

And that's what God wants the church to be about. Where the nourishment, where the pleasurable part of the meal, where the pleasurable part of the church is the lamb of God. Where his sacrifice, where his punishment that he took, where his resurrection life is what shines.

And we are content, dear brothers and sisters, we rejoice, we eagerly desire to be unleavened bread, hating any desire within us to be raised up.

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