

“Purge Out The Leaven”

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“Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.” - Exodus 12:15

1.

- The children of Israel had left Egypt and were wandering around in the Wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. As they traveled, they came into the region of a people known as the Moabites. Their presence brought fear into the hearts of the people of Moab. In order to try and deal with this threat, a false prophet named Balaam had been hired by Balak, king of the Moabites, to curse the people of God. But Balaam couldn't curse God's people. Every time he tried, God turned the curse into a blessing. Since the cursing didn't work, Balaam then proceeded to counsel king Balak to put a stumbling-block before the Israelites. In other words, put something in front of them that they will trip over and fall. The stumbling-block was twofold: First of all, get the people to join you in pagan worship, and secondly, get them to commit sexual immorality with the women of Moab. Balak took this advice and unfortunately, this wicked plan worked.

- As we read, please take note of the man named Phinehas. His actions and God's response.

Numbers 25:1-13

1 And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

3 And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.

4 And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel.

5 And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor.

6 And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

7 And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand;

8 And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.

9 And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.

10 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

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11 Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.

12 Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace:

13 And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.

1. When the enemy cannot destroy the people of God from without, he will try and destroy from within.
2. This sin in the camp, brought about God's anger and God's punishment. A plague broke out that destroyed 24,000 people.
3. When the son of one of the leaders in Israel openly and defiantly flaunted his immorality, Phinehas zealously arose and ran him and the women through with a javelin.
4. God honored Phinehas for the zeal with which he exercised this discipline within the camp.
5. Because of Phinehas' actions, God stopped the plague from continuing to infect and destroy others within the camp.

2.

- The people of God were moving in victory to possess the Land that God had promised them. The walls of Jericho had miraculously fallen and God had given them a great victory. And yet, on the heels of such a great victory came a terrible defeat.

Joshua 7

1 But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel.

2 And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.

3 And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few.

4 So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai.

5 And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

6 And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

7 And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

8 O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

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10 And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

13 Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.

14 In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man.

15 And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.

16 So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken:

17 And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarahites: and he brought the family of the Zarahites man by man; and Zabdi was taken:

18 And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

19 And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.

20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it.

23 And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord.

24 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

Joshua 8

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1 And the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land:

1. What should have been an easy victory at Ai, was a terrible defeat.
2. The problem was that there was hidden sin in the camp. The sin of one, can bring about defeat for the entire camp.
3. Once God revealed where the sin was and it was confessed and confirmed, then the discipline was applied.
4. Following their leaders, the entire camp executed the discipline.
5. Once the discipline had been carried out, the people were able to move forward in victory again - defeating their enemies and possessing the promises of God.

3.

- Jesus had died, been buried, and on the third day risen again. He had spent forty days revealing Himself to His disciples before He ascended up into Heaven. He had instructed His disciples to go into all the world to preach the gospel, but before they were to do this, they must go to Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit to empower and equip them for this great task. On the day of Pentecost, after ten days of waiting, the Spirit of God came in a powerful way. In Acts chapter 2, we see that Peter preached that day and 3,000 souls were added to the church. In Acts chapter 3, we see that a lame man is healed in Jesus name and Peter is given another opportunity to preach the gospel. Thousands more respond. The church was growing numerically as well as spiritually. We read of the love and care that was being practiced among the believers and the dedication and commitment they had for the work of God. It was here, at the point of such victory in the church, that sin entered the camp.

Acts 5:1-14

1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

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*10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.
11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.
12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.
13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.
14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)*

1. When the enemy cannot destroy from without, he will try to corrupt from within. - There was great persecution from without that was only strengthening the church. Therefore, Satan moved within the camp to sow the seeds of hypocrisy and lies.
2. The Holy Spirit revealed this secret sin to Peter and harsh punishment came upon Ananias and Sapphira.
3. The result of this judgement was that great fear fell upon all the church and the church continued to grow mightily.

4.

Revelation 2:18-23

*18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;
19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.
20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.
21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.
22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.
23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

1. In this letter, Jesus commended the church at Thyatira for many wonderful qualities. (vs. 19)
2. The problem in the church was that they **allowed or tolerated** a so-called “prophetess” to teach and seduce the people of God to commit sexual sin and idolatry.
 - a. Sufferest = to allow, to permit, not to restrain, to let alone
3. God had been patient and given time for repentance, but they had failed to repent and so He was going to bring a judgement of sickness and tribulation upon them for there sin.

5.

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

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2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:

10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

1. This was not gossip or hearsay, but fact. (vs. 1)
2. **WHAT WAS THE WRONG RESPONSE?:** The church knew of the sexual sin and was actually filled with pride and even glorying over the fact that they tolerated and accepted this man who was living openly in it. (incest)
3. **WHAT WAS RIGHT RESPONSE?:** The church should have been mourning over this sin and removing it from there midst.
4. Leaven is a picture of sin. Just a little sin that is tolerated and accepted among the people of God will corrupt the entire group. It is therefore to be purged, or removed.
 - a. Purge = to cleanse out, or to clean thoroughly
5. **HOW?:** They were to separate themselves from this man. They were not to keep company with him and not even to sit down and eat a meal with him.
6. This instruction is not for how we deal with those in the world, but for how we deal with those that are calling themselves fellow Christians. We are called to judge sin within the camp and let it be removed either through repentance or discipline.
 - a. REPENTANCE = When a person purges out the sin in their own life.
 - b. DISCIPLINE = When the church purges out of their fellowship a professing believer that will not repent of confirmed sin. This is a purging that each individual believer is responsible to carry out.
7. This is the most loving thing to do for both the entire church and the individual living in sin.

“Withhold not correction from the child: for [if] thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.” - Proverbs 23:13-14

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***“He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.”
- Proverbs 13:24***

“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.” - 1 Corinthians 11:30-31

It is heat which kills leaven.

8. The church at Corinth was obedient in caring out this discipline and the man repented and was restored back into fellowship.

6.

Matthew 7:1-5

1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

1. The entire point of what Jesus is saying is not that judgement should never take place, but that it should be done properly, carefully, and without hypocrisy.
2. We are not to judge by our own standards, but by God's standards.
3. We are to judge ourselves first, and only then will we be able to help point out and pull out the speck in our brother's eye.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” - Galatians 6:1

Response:

- Purge out the leaven in your own life.
- Men, are you allowing sin to be tolerated in your home under the false guise of “love.”
- Church, are we allowing sin to be tolerated within the church under the false guise of “love.”
- Humble yourself and trust that God knows better than you when it comes to dealing with others that are living in sin.