

## **DON'T EAT THE BREAD**

Signs must communicate accurately or they'll communicate erroneously. Take these signs as an example:

- In a NY restaurant: "Customers who consider our waitresses uncivil ought to see the manager."
- At the Sisters of Mercy in Baltimore: "Trespassers will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law."
- In a Florida maternity ward: "No children allowed."
- On a Maine shop: "Our motto is to give our customers the lowest possible prices and workmanship."
- At a number of military bases: "Restricted to unauthorized personnel."
- In a clothing store: "Wonderful bargains for men with 16 and 17 necks."
- On a shopping mall marquee: "Archery Tournament -- Ears pierced"
- In the window of an Oregon store: "Why go elsewhere and be cheated when you can come here?"
- In a PA cemetery: "Persons are prohibited from picking flowers from any but their own graves."
- On the grounds of a public school: "No trespassing without permission."
- On a Tennessee highway: "When this sign is under water, this road is impassable."

The Bible is full of signs. However, the signs in the Word of God are good; clear. This morning I want to talk to you about one of those signs. It simply says, "Don't Eat The Bread." In fact, the Bible tells us not to eat the bread numerous times in both the Old and New Testaments. What bread, you ask? Bread baked with yeast in it – otherwise known as unleavened bread. Recently Pastor Greg Stone was here and he talked to you briefly about such bread. This morning, I want to pick up where he left off.

### **TO BEGIN WITH, I SIMPLY WANT TO GIVE YOU SEVERAL VERSES THAT TELL US NOT TO EAT THE BREAD.**

The Old Testament notes: Exodus 12:15, **"For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel."**

Exodus 12:19, **"For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses. And whoever eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is an alien or native-born."**

Exodus 13:7, **“Eat unleavened bread during those seven days; nothing with yeast in it is to be seen among you, nor shall any yeast be seen anywhere within your borders.”**

Then in the New Testament we find: 1 Corinthians 5:6, **“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....”** Verse 8 adds, **“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.”**

### **LET ME GIVE YOU SOME BACKGROUND HERE**

The Passover' meal was and still is eaten on the eve of the first day of Passover. Passover is the Jewish celebration that commemorates the Jewish exodus from Egypt under the direction of Moses somewhere around 3,5000 years ago. It is a major event on the Jewish calendar. Think giant party.

The Passover meal is referred to as the "seder." In Hebrew, the word "seder" means "order." Today it is not uncommon to hear a Hebrew person use the term "beseder". That simply means OK. It is their way of saying, everything is "in order." Like creation, Passover communicates to us that God is a God of order.

The meal has...

- An order of questions.
- An order of blessings.
- An order of preparing and presenting the various foods.
- An order to the telling of the Passover story.

In Matthew 26:17-19, Jesus sent His disciples to make preparation for their last Passover meal together. We commonly call that meal that Jesus shared with His disciples The Last Supper.

What kind of preparations were necessary? Actually, the preparations for Passover could be quite involved and could go on for several days preceding the holiday. I want to highlight one part of this whole preparatory process -- cleaning of the house. We are talking serious house cleaning here. Some believe that this is where the rite of spring cleaning got its origins. Just a thought.

Anyway, as I said, the cleaning had to be thorough. The cleaning was required because they had to get rid of every last crumb of bread; the very last traces of anything that had yeast or leaven in it.

After everything had been thoroughly cleaned, then, on the day prior to Passover, the father and his sons would make one last sweep through the house. This time, they would use a candle and a feather. The candle was so they could see into the dark corners of the cabinets and the feather was to be used to reach even the tiniest hidden crumb. When the very last piece of bread was found, then the father would take the crumbs out and burn them.

Then too, please understand, that throughout Israel, for the whole feast period of Passover and Unleavened Bread, grocery stores would not sell leavened items of any kind. All this is in response to the command, **“For seven days no-yeast (leavening) is to be found in your houses. And whoever eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is a stranger or native-born ... Wherever you live you must eat unleavened bread”** (Exodus 12:19, 20).

### **NOW I WANT TALK TO YOU FOR A WHILE ABOUT YEAST.**

Yeast, or leaven, is a powerful fungus that can cause a lump of dough to rise into bread, ferment liquids into alcohol, or cause painful infections.

In addition to that, I want to point out...

#### **1. YEAST HAS THE ABILITY TO REPRODUCE ITSELF**

According to the book, *Joy of Cooking*, bread yeast has been around for the past 6,000 years. Again, I point out, the Passover has been celebrated for the last 3500 years. Yeast has been around for a long, long time.

While there are about 160 known species of yeast, baker's yeast is the one most often used in the kitchen. Yeast is tiny: Just one gram holds about 25 billion cells.

One reason for it's ability to hang around is, it is a living being. Yeast, you see, is a simple, one-celled plant. It reproduces by dividing into two young yeasts ... fast! Given the right temperature, water and enough sugar to eat, yeast can reproduce in five minutes or less!

**(BALLOON ILLUSTRATION)** As yeast feeds and divides, it gives off carbon dioxide and alcohol. The effects of this process can be seen as I will have some yeast help me blow up this balloon. Again, the yeast is able to do this due to it's expelling carbon dioxide -- expelling gas.

A very similar process happens as bread rises. The carbon dioxide from the

yeast fills thousands of balloon like bubbles in the dough. Once the bread has baked, this is what gives the loaf its airy texture

## 2. YEAST PERMEATES

Again, according to *Joy of Cooking*, there are 200 billion yeast cells in an ounce of yeast.

Due to it's uncanny ability to reproduce itself in such a short time, just a quarter ounce package of active dry yeast is all it takes to make a one pound loaf of bread rise.

In 1 Corinthians 5:6 Paul teaches, **“Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?”** Galatians 5:9 (*The Message*) adds, **“It only takes a minute amount of yeast... to permeate an entire loaf of bread.”**

## 3. YEAST IS NEARLY EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK

As you can see, I have a wide variety of items here on the table. Each one of these items has one thing in common. They all have some type of yeast or yeast extract in them.

In addition to these things, yeast can be found in most fruits such as grapes, pears, apples, melons (especially cantaloupes) and oranges. These fruits are loaded with mold and yeast on the outside skins. As a result, you should never cut through the peel into the meat of an melon, apple or whatever without first washing or peeling it.

Vinegar, by the way, comes from the French word for sour wine and is used as a preservative for mustard, catsup, olives, mayonnaise, dressings, pickles, horseradish, spices, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce. Vinegar is even used in some household cleaners and plastics.

Mushrooms and cheeses of all kinds contain specific types of molds or yeasts. Other yeast-containing milk products are buttermilk, sour cream, cream cheese, ricotta cheese, ice creams, powdered milks and milk itself.

Tea, pepper, coffee, coffee substitutes, many spices and tobacco acquire molds or yeast in their drying processes. Beer, ale and malt liquors rely on the fermentation process thereby producing yeast. Even soda fountain drinks contain sugar yeast. The point is, again, yeast is nearly everywhere you turn.

Imagine how difficult it would be now to rid one's house of all traces of yeast. It would be quite a challenge. I dare say that it would take more than a candle and a feather to find every trace of it in a house today.

I have not checked this out. However, I understand that if you set out some bread dough on the counter, there will be enough air-borne yeast that will settle on the dough to feed it and make it rise. Again, yeast is everywhere.

### **3. IN THE BIBLE, YEAST IS A TYPE OF SIN**

Exodus introduces yeast or leaven as one of the two great Old Testament symbols for sin. Can anyone remember what the second such symbol is? The disease called leprosy.

Before I continue, I want to take a couple of minutes and just give you a primer on sin. I am not going to share any deep truths here, just some basics.

#### **1. Sin is an offense against God.**

As I have said a number of times before, Sin is a clinched fist, and it's object is the face of God.

In Psalm 51:4 David confessed to God, "**Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight....**" *The Message* puts it this way, "**You're the One I've violated....**"

In Acts 5:4 Peter said to Ananias, "**You have not lied to men but to God.**"

#### **2. Then too, Sin is committed against man or against one's neighbor.**

In the Ten Commandments God said,

- **"You shall not murder.**
- **You shall not commit adultery.**
- **You shall not steal.**
- **You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**
- **You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor"** Exodus 20:13-17.

#### **3. Next, sin is against one's self.**

Most people would admit that sin would be against God or perhaps against one's fellow man; but the Bible says that when a person sins, he is destroying himself or sinning against himself. Notice Proverbs 8:36 (*The Message*), "**But if you wrong me, you damage your very soul; when you reject me, you're**

**flirting with death.” Proverbs 6:32 adds, “But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself.”**

The new morality says that consenting adults can commit fornication – sex outside of marriage -- whether male with male, female with female, or man with woman regardless, just as long as they are not hurting anyone and the act is consensual. On the contrary, according to the Word of God, fornication is sin against the physical body. 1 Corinthians 6:15-18 states, **“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, ‘The two will become one flesh.’ But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.”**

In short:

- Sin is basically **rebellion** against God, His laws, His Word, and His will. One of the terms used in the Old Testament for sins is the Hebrew "pasha," which means "to rebel." This rebellion stems from selfishness. Man rejects God's will and makes self-will the supreme goal of his life.
- Sin is **disobedience** to the law of God.
- Sin is **unrighteousness**. **“All unrighteousness is sin”** according to I John 5:17.
- Sin is **falling short** of or missing the mark. In Psalm 51:4 the term used for sin is "chata," which means "missing the mark," in the sense of an arrow missing the target or just falling short.
- Sin is **wickedness or a perversion** of what is right. Sometimes a giant oak tree can be seen growing straight into the air, and beside it is a deformed, twisted tree. This term implies that man's nature is like the deformed tree; it is bent, twisted, and perverted.
- Sin also means to **commit iniquity** or to do wrong. In Romans 3:10 Paul wrote that none is righteous. All have sinned – committed iniquity. No one does what is right all of the time. This does not imply only gross sins, like robbing a bank or murder; but it can be telling a half truth or a white lie, not treating others properly, cheating on income tax --the whole realm of wrong doing. It is doing wrong when one knows to do right.

As I pointed out a few minutes ago:

- Moses said get rid of the leaven (sin).

- Then Jesus repeatedly warned His disciples, to “**beware of the leaven....**”
- The Apostle Paul then added in 1 Corinthians 5:7 (*The Message*), “**So get rid of this yeast.**”

Some specific sins that were likened to yeast in Scripture include:

- False doctrine,
- Hypocrisy,
- Pride,
- Maliciousness,
- Wickedness.

### **NOW I WANT TO APPLY THIS TO YOU AND ME**

Why? Because, like yeast...

- sin has the ability to reproduce itself,
- sin permeates,
- sin is everywhere that one looks.

### **AGAIN, SIN HAS THE ABILITY TO REPRODUCE ITSELF**

Someone once wrote: “In effect, sin deceives us, enters us and dominates our existence. Sin enslaves us and takes us over as drugs enslave an addict. Sin is like a deadly virus that enters our human nature and takes control of us, using us for its own purpose. Sin reproduces itself within us and destroys our self. And the evil behaviors that result are the symptoms of our inner defectiveness.”

Let me put it this way, the same as yeast divides and multiplies, in similar fashion sin reproduces itself. We can see this acted out in the lives of the Old Testament kings. Basically the fellows fell into one of three classifications:

#### **Some were good – think King David**

The thing that made a good king good was how he regarded the Lord and His Word. Their goodness also depended on how they dealt with the idols that were in the land. Notice 2 Kings 18:1-5, “**In the third year of Hoshea... Hezekiah son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father David had done. He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him.**”

What made him great? He trusted God. He destroyed the idols.

**Then there were some kings who were part good, part bad.**

Take Jotham King of Judah for instance. Second Kings 15:33-35 points out that **“He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father had done. The high places, however, were not removed; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.”**

**Next there were some terrible kings.**

Look at Jeroboam. He was evil to the core. He built shrines for his idols. He instituted pagan holidays. He rebelled against the Lord. Notice this record, if you will:

- His son Abijah reigned for three years. The Bible says, **“He committed all the sins his father had done before him.”**
- Next came Nadab son of Jeroboam. He reigned for two years. **“He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, walking in the ways of his father and in his sin which he caused Israel to commit.”**
- Then we find Baasha. He reigned 24 years. **“He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, walking in the ways of Jeroboam and in his sin, which he caused Israel to commit.”**
- Zimri likewise committed evil in the eyes of the Lord by walking in the ways of Jeroboam.

I could continue but I won't. I think you get the point. Generation after generation, the kings followed the evil example of Jeroboam. His idolatry resulted in their idolatry.

In a couple of weeks, we are going to look at some modern day idols. We are going to see first hand how the evil yeast in the media is reproducing itself in our children and grandchildren just as Jeroboam's sin was reproduced time and time again, generation to generation.

If there is no restraint upon sin, then sin will automatically grow. If sin is accepted, then sin, not righteousness, will rule.

Note what Scripture says: it takes only a little leaven, not much, for sin to grow.

### **NEXT, LIKE YEAST, SIN PERMEATES**

I want you to notice 1 Corinthians 5:1-2, 6-7 with me please: **“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?”**

**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....”**

The passage is pretty clear. A man in the church, probably a leader, had been in an incestuous relationship with his own mother (possibly step-mother). Anyway, the people in the church had allowed this evil to continue on unchallenged. In turn, the apostle Paul tells the church to get rid of the leaven – the sinful man. Kick him out of the church until such time as he repents – which he did later on. If he wasn't dealt with, then his sin would have inflected (permeated) the whole body of believers.

Just the same as the Jews were to go throughout the house and look for even the tiniest crumbs that might contain yeast, so it is that we should go throughout our homes, our lockers, our hearts, our everything, and search for any trace of sin and then to get rid of it – every bit of it.

I am sure that many of you would attest to the fact that cleaning a whole house is not light work. Moreover, looking for leaven can be very difficult. However, we should seek out even the crumbs of sin – wherever they might be hiding.

That means all sins, not just certain categories of sin. That also means that we should call upon the Holy Spirit to come and reveal to us all the sin areas of our lives so that we can identify them, repent of them, and stop committing them.

I want to remind you, that when the father had collected all of the leaven, he would then take it out and burn it. What this graphic symbol teaches us is that sin can't just be shoved aside - it has to be totally destroyed if one is to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, if one is to know the favor of God.

## **SIN IS EVERYWHERE THAT ONE LOOKS**

1 John 5:19 (*The Amplified Bible*) warns us that **“...the whole world [around us] is under the power of the evil one.”**

Let me amplify on this:

- Sin reaches beyond this old world. Sin caused the downfall of up to one-third of the angels in heaven.
- Romans eight and Genesis 3 shows the tragic effect that sin has had on even creation itself.
- Then too, Romans 5:12 tells us that **“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men.”**  
**“All we like sheep have gone astray”** (Isaiah 53:6).

**“There is none righteous, no, not one”** (Romans 3:10).

Literally, sin’s impact has been felt everywhere!

I want you to think with me of completely shutting yourself off from any sinful influences whatsoever.

- Think of the influence of media.
- Evil thoughts and temptations that come at you from the devil himself.
- Friends, loved ones, classmates or fellow employees.
- Who can count or consider all of the ways that evil comes to the child of God? How long do you think you could last apart from such influences? A week? A day? An hour? A minute? How long?

Again, sin is everywhere.

### **WELL, I MUST CLOSE.**

I want to do so with this important observation. If we allow the old leaven, the old sin in our lives and churches, it shows that we have little interest in a clean and pure life. It shows God that we care little for the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. The point is forceful, and it is a warning. Therefore, we must purge out the old leaven. We must not eat the bread!

1 Corinthians 6:9-11, **“Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”**

The answer to sin is to be washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord. Receive Christ, in other words. Would you like to do that his morning?