

Scripture: The Parable of the Woman and the Leaven Feb 22nd 2026 Bob Metcalf

Text: Mt 13:33 NKJV *“Another parable He spoke to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”*

The Moral of the Parable: The pure meal of the kingdom of heaven in its present form has been entirely influenced and permeated by teaching by the false church.

This parable is one of the most difficult parables to interpret, and most controversial.

Leaven is forbidden in both **Feast of Passover** and **Feast of Unleavened Bread**.
While leaven is permitted in the Feast of Pentecost and with the Sacrifice of thanksgiving.

But Leaven was acceptable with but only with a blood sacrifice!!

Leaven in the N.T. 5 major references

1. *The Leaven of the Pharisees* was hypocrisy and the doctrine of externalism.
Luke 12:1 Pharisaical righteousness was external, not internal. Christ warnings to the scribes and Pharisees was strong in Matt 23 because of their hypocrisy.
2. *The Leaven of the Sadducees* was denial of the supernatural, the bodily resurrection.
3. *The Leaven of Herod* which was the lusts of worldliness
Mark 8:15
4. *The Leaven of Corinth* was sensuality and carnality in its numerous forms **1 Cor 5:1-13**
5. *The Leaven of Galatia* was legalism, ceremonialism and fleshly License **Gal 5:9**

What then is the spiritual meaning and significance of these things concerning leaven?

The definition of Leaven according to **Strong’s Concordance** is *“that which swells up; a yeast cake, as swelling by fermentation; that which pungent, tastes sour, or causes fermentation.”*

-**Leaven or yeast** works silently, secretly, steadily, gradually spreading its influence and power through the whole lump of dough until all is affected. Leaven *“puffs up”, “makes sour”, or “ferments”*.

-**Leaven in Scripture** is symbolic of evil, of sin, of human fallenness, of false doctrine, of hypocrisy, of unbelief in the supernatural, of carnality, of Judaistic legalism of dead works.

Paul speaks of those in the Corinthian Church who are *“puffed up”*

Paul uses the word *“Puffed Up”* 6x with the Corinthians.

1 Cor 5:1-8 “It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father’s wife!

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

³ For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.

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

⁵ deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

⁶ Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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 Corinthian Church was told to purge out the leaven in this unrepentant member lest the whole lump of believers at Corinth become affected or puffed up by this leaven.

1 Cor 4:6 “that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.”

1 Cor 4:18 “Now some are puffed up”

1 Cor 4:19 “of those who are puffed up”

1 Cor 5:2 “and you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.”

1 Cor 8:1 “Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies”

1 Cor 13:4 “Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up”

2 Cor 12:20-21 “For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults; ²¹ lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which **they have practiced.**”

Deliver in Greek “to give into the hands, to hand over”

Purge in Greek “to cleanse out, clean thoroughly”

The Bible says, “Them that are without” God judges.

Only when the practicing offender was “purged out” could God deal with him.

1 Cor 5:9-12 “I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.

¹⁰ Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. ¹¹ But

now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person. (What is Paul talking about here?)

¹² For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? **Do you not judge those who are inside?** ¹³ But **those who are outside God judges**. Therefore “**put away from yourselves the evil person.**”

Vs 12 NLT “It isn’t my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning.”

Deliver, Purge, Put away,

“Them that are **without God judges**”

“Them that are **within the church judges** or disciplines”

What kind of person is this that gets judged?

One who refuses to repent and continues practicing the evil they do.

Pro 30:20 “This is the way of an adulterous woman:

She eats and wipes her mouth and says, ‘I’ve done nothing wrong.’”

There is an attitude of literally “puffed up” with pride and arrogance toward God.

The purpose for discipline is to restore to fellowship!

As the Bible clearly says here...

Unleavened bread is sincerity and truth

Leavened bread is malice and wickedness.

Evil doctrine that was put into the pure meal of the Word of God!

Jude 1:4 ⁴ I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God’s marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives.”

Jude 1:12a “When these people eat with you in your fellowship meals commemorating the Lord’s love, they are like **dangerous reefs** that can shipwreck you”

(These are they who are **hidden rocks** in your love-feasts when they feast with you) ASV version

Hidden Leaven:

The woman took the leaven and **hid** it in the three measures of meal.

The gospel of the Kingdom is not hidden leaven.

-The very word “*hid*” means to conceal in, to incorporate with”

-The root of the English word “*cryptic*” is to conceal by covering”

-The gospel is not hidden; otherwise it is hidden from those who are lost.

The Whole Meal Leavened as we have seen, leaven is yeast, which means, *“swelling by fermentation”*

It causes the dough to swell up, to puff up.

It works silently and secretly, gradually influencing the whole lump of dough.

Only fire can arrest or stop the action of leaven.

The Three Measures of Meal finally became totally influenced by the action of the hidden leaven by the woman.

And as they say *“a little leaven leavens the whole lump”*

The Practical Application; Over the course of history, since the beginning of the church, a false church has risen and the subtle leaven of false doctrine has influenced the whole of the pure word of God.

The woman points to the Harlot Church.

She corresponds with Jezebel **Rev 2:20** and the Great Harlot who rules over many peoples in **Rev 17:5**. She is the one who has something to hide.

It is the leaven of false teachings and corrupt practices.

The true church, the Bride of Christ has nothing to hide.

We think of all the great doctrines of the Bible and can see how the false church has corrupted those doctrines.

-The authority of the Bible has become leavened with the authority of man.

-Justification by faith leavened with justification by works

-Biblical traditions leavened with the traditions of the church and man.

-Water baptism by immersion with sprinkling.

-The priesthood of the believer leavened with a clergy/laity.

-The Gifts of the Holy Spirit leavened by human talent.

-The Fruit of the Spirit leavened with personality of educated men.

The Reformers of the past endeavored to *“purge out the leaven from the pure meal of God’s Word”* over the years, but there is still much work to be purged in order to get back to the pure Word of God.

The true Church, will have a pure Word and not be corrupted by the leavening influence of false teachings and false practices!

Now, we come back to ...

What was the reason God permitted leaven in the **Feast of**

Pentecost in the *New Meal Offering*?

“New” because the regular meal offering had no leaven in it!

But the new one does!

Num 28:25 ASV “And on the **seventh day** (Sunday) ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.

Vs 26 “Also in the day of the **first-fruits**(Sunday), when ye offer **a new meal-offering** unto Jehovah in your **feast of weeks-Pentecost** (Sunday), ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work;”

(note; not this is not on Saturday, but Sunday)

New Meal Offering: Why?

The reason God permitted leaven in the Feast Pentecost was His recognition of sin and imperfections in His people, in the Church born in Pentecost, in the Spirit-filled believer, in this “*Pentecostal Church*”.

This is also seen in the church at Corinth, and the churches in Galatia, as in every church on the face of the earth.

No born again, or spirit filled believer is sinlessly perfect, even though they Holy Spirit dwells within.

Leaven in the wave-loaves speaks of this imperfection.

But the “*two leavened wave loaves*” (believing, yet imperfect Jews and Gentiles) are accepted in Christ who is our “*unleavened bread*” (the sinless one) and our “*blood sacrifice*” (for cleansing our sin).

The wave loaf had to be offered with a blood sacrifice, ‘*Jesus shed blood*’

Lev 23:16 “Count **fifty days** to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD.

Lev 23:18 “And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs”

Lev 23:20-21 “The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. ²¹ And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.”

Fullfilled in Christ Himself, forever!

Heb 9:12 “he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.”

Heb 9:14 “how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”

Heb 13:20 *"Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant,"*

The leavened is then accepted in the unleavened.

The imperfect is accepted in the perfect One, CHRIST!

-Jesus is our Passover Lamb

-Jesus is our Unleavened Bread

-Jesus is our Meal Offering

In all things, He is sinlessly perfect.

There was no leaven or sin in Him because of who He is.

The same is true of the "Thanksgiving offering"

-All our Praise,

-All our worship,

-All our thanksgiving

-All is accepted through Christ's perfection "unleavened" in His precious blood of redemption.!

-The Father has made us "accepted in the beloved"!!!

Eph 1:6 *"To the praise of His glory, of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the beloved"*
He calls me beloved! He calls you beloved!

These are the only two occasions in which God permitted leaven, but such were ONLY ACCEPTABLE to Him through the unleavened bread offered with and sacrificial blood.

Every other reference to leaven in Scripture is clearly seen in evil manner.

*"Them that are **within** the church judges or disciplines"*

1 Cor 11:25-32 *"In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.²⁷ Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*

²⁸ **But let a man examine himself**, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. ³⁰ For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. ³¹ For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

2 Cor 13:5 *"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.*

Practicing sin that affects the whole loaf?

