

Little Foxes

by Keith Malcomson

This sermon emphasizes the danger of little things, using the analogy of little foxes, a little slumber, a little folly, and a little leaven to illustrate how seemingly insignificant issues can have a significant impact on our lives. The speaker warns against hypocrisy, compromise, immorality, and false teachings that can subtly corrupt our faith and character, leading to spiritual destruction if not addressed.

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Scripture: Matthew 16:6, 1 Corinthians 5:6, Galatians 5:9, Proverbs 6:9, Ecclesiastes 10:1

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Description

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Transcript

Please turn with me to the Song of Solomon here tonight, chapter two. If you find Proverbs, then Ecclesiastes, then the Song of Solomon, that's where you're going to find it here tonight. And we're on a series, The Little Things of Scripture.

Last week, I laid the foundation showing the importance of little things. Your life can be destroyed because of a little thing. Your marriage, your work life, your home, your church, your children.

Great tragedies come out of small things. People have had car accidents and died because they neglected small things. Someone looking at a mobile, driving down the motorway or down some country road, and just for want of looking at their mobile, checking Facebook, answering an email as they drive, an illegal act.

But it's far worse than an illegal act. It's not just an illegal act, it is a stupid act. That for one second, you not only endanger your own life, but others.

A little thing could cost you your life. And so last week, we began to look at, for the want of a nail. Aren't you glad my teacher, when I was a kid, taught me that? Lots of things I never remembered, never learned from them.

Didn't learn maths very well, didn't learn the alphabet very well, didn't learn my tables very well. But I did learn that for loss of a nail in a horseshoe, an entire kingdom was lost. But let's go a bit further here.

And my message tonight is little foxes. And you'll see what I mean by this as we go here. Reading from verse eight, Song of Solomon chapter two, reading from verse eight.

The voice of my beloved. Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young heart.

Behold, he standeth before our wall. He looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice. My beloved speak and said unto me, rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.

For lo, the winter is past. The rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth.

The time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes gave a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

My dove that art in the cliffs of the rock, in the secret place of the stairs. Let me see thy countenance or thy face. Let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is calmly or lovely.

This is my text tonight, this first 15. Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines. For our vines have tender grapes.

My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feedeth among the lilies until the day break and the shadows flee away. Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, our young heart, upon the mountains of Bethar.

Let's pray here together. Father, we do love you. We do thank you for your word.

And as we look at these little foxes, I pray that you, by your Holy Spirit in this room, will speak into every heart. Everyone listening online here tonight, I pray that you speak to them by the power of your word. Lord God, that there be a searching to the deep things of the heart, the little things of the life, the thoughts of the mind, the words of the mouth, the actions of the hand, the directions of each step.

Lord God, I pray that your Holy Spirit will apply the word as I preach it openly, publicly, audibly, that your Holy Spirit will apply it inwardly, hiddenly, secretly to the hearts. You know each person, and you know what they need. And Father, I do pray that you warn us, that you show us the seriousness, the danger that little things can hold.

In Jesus' name, we love you, Lord Jesus, and ask for your blessing tonight. In Jesus' name, amen. As we come here tonight to deal with little foxes, really what I want to show you tonight is the danger of little things.

And other messages, I'll deal with some very positive things about little things. There are encouraging things about little things. But here tonight, in dealing with little foxes, I want to show you the danger that is contained in little things.

If you ignore this, neglect it, treat it as nothing, get a wrong view of the danger of little things. If you don't understand, there are great and serious and grave dangers in little things. If you don't understand that, you're on dangerous ground.

So I will encourage you in other messages, but this is a warning tonight, a warning about little things, not from me, but the Bible, not from me, not from a preacher, but from God to you, to I. I know this message is for all of you. I don't need to know about your life. Our friend here who is in with Ian, I don't need to know anything about him, but I know that God knows everything.

I don't know anything about his life, but I know this message is for him because it's for all of us. It's for every person online. Even if someone watched this in six months' time, I know it's for them because it's for all of us.

I'm not beyond this. I need to hear tonight, even as I preach, I'm taking heed to this, the danger of little things. Know for a second before I go into this, some people in the church and in life focus on the large things to the neglect of little things.

They're caught up with the big things, the important things, the things that are big in their eyes, and they neglect the little things. That's one danger, but there's also another danger. Other people focus on the little things.

I mean, they become scrupulous. They become obsessive about the little things, and they ignore the bigger things. Let me prove it from the words of Jesus Christ.

Jesus actually gave a warning about becoming dominated, fixated with little things in the Christian life, where you ignore the big important things. And so, although I'm dealing with little things, and I want you to focus on them, and I want you to hear the danger, I don't want you to do that to the neglect of other important things. You see, if you're someone who is scrupulous, you're dominated, you pick up on all the little things in other people's lives, a little thing, and yet don't deal with the big things in your life, I've got something to say to you as we go into this message.

Listen to what Jesus says in Matthew 23, 23. He says, woe unto you. In other words, I'm giving you a serious warning.

You're in a dangerous place. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees. Who were they? They were religious experts on the Bible.

The Pharisees were very defiant about their life. I don't do that. I'm not going to do that.

I don't believe that. Oh, that is not my conviction. Who were the scribes? They were scholars.

They knew the Bible. They knew it inside out. They knew every letter, every command, every instruction.

They knew it. They were experts in it. And yet, listen to what Jesus says.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. He calls them hypocrites. I mean, they are students of the Word of God.

They listen to the Word of God incessantly. They talk about God and the Bible, and they pray. They pick up on little things.

They know everything. And yet, Jesus, you're hypocrites. What is a hypocrite? They're an actor.

They're an actor. They put on a show. The word for hypocrite here is what they used to use in ancient Greece for a man acting on the stage who put a mask on to play out a part in a play in Athens, in the city of Athens.

And everyone would listen and be in awe of this man in the mask playing a character. Well, you know what Jesus said. He's given a warning to religious hypocrites.

They are expert in the Bible. They know the Old Testament better than you will ever know it. And yet, Jesus said, you're a hypocrite.

Oh, they didn't know all the little things they did, but they're hypocrites. Why are they hypocrites? Why did Jesus call them hypocrites? For you pay tithe of mint, anise, and cumin. These were all small herbs.

In fact, they were so small. I mean, they're little bits of herb. It's all chopped up very tiny.

And he says, you scribes, you Pharisees, you are hypocrites. Why? Because you tithe us. See, the Bible commands that you tithe.

Whatever comes to you, you tithe of that. You get 10 of anything. You go, before you do anything else, you say, that one is for the Lord.

And so Jesus speaking to them, he said, you're hypocrites. You tithe on these little things. You're cutting out.

It's like salt or pepper. And they're going, nine for me, one for you, Lord. And they're tithing out the pepper.

And going, no, I don't want to take one pepper too many. I want to make sure the Lord has it. Jesus is actually addressing this.

And he says, you're a hypocrite because you will tithe the little bits of herb. But you have omitted, neglected, and ignored the weightier matters of the law. Do you see what he's saying? He's saying, you've got an eye that is pinpointing little tiny things, and yet you omit big things.

And he goes further to explain this. He says, you're neglecting the weightier, bigger things like judgment, righteous judgment. When to judge, when not to judge someone.

How to judge? Judging biblically. You don't even practice that. You're tithing out your pepper and your herbs.

He goes and says, what about mercy? Do you remember what mercy is? You hold back what you ought to give someone. You ought to get angry with them and say, I'm going to forgive. I'm not going to get angry.

That's mercy. That's the big thing. That's the important thing in your life.

Are you caught up with the tithe? Going, I don't want to touch anything. I need to make sure God's got his pepper pill. But yet you're not showing mercy.

Do you know what you are? You're a hypocrite. You are a downright religious Pharisee and hypocrite. If you focus on all of these little things, but not on important things like faith.

Faith is another major thing. Having faith in God. Now Jesus said, these ought you to have done.

You should tithe your mint. You ought to have. It's a biblical thing.

It's a right thing. This little area of you picking out little things, you should have done that. You should have an eye for little things because little things are important.

But you shouldn't have left undone the bigger things, the important things. So do you see this with Christ? He's getting a balance here. When we focus on the little, don't neglect the big.

When we focus on the big, do not neglect the little and say it's of little consequence. No, let's do both together. Let's have it all together.

Because if you neglect the big important things and you're there saying, yeah, that's right and that's wrong and we ought to do this. And yet you neglect whole realms of teaching and of lifestyle. You're a hypocrite.

Let me go a bit further. It's the next verse after this. Matthew 23, 24.

Listen to what Jesus says again. I love the teaching of Jesus. I love it.

You know what? The church ought to pay more attention to the teaching of Jesus Christ. I am convinced after a very long Christian life, most Christians do not take serious the words of Jesus. They do not put into operation the words of Jesus.

I mean hundreds of simple statements. They call themselves a Christian, but they are not operating in it. They are ignorant of it.

Because many things that Jesus says are little things, little commands. And I believe Christians ignore them. And they major on the big doctrinal issues.

And all of these little statements, they're utterly ignorant of them. Listen to what Jesus says in verse 24. You blind guides, ye blind guides, would strain at a nap and swallow a camel.

There's one church I vowed, if ever I get back to, I'm going to preach on this scripture. And you'd understand why I say that. There's a reason why I want to preach on that scripture.

Here are these same Pharisees and scribes. And you know what they're doing? They're straining at a gnat. You know what a gnat is? A little creature.

And the creature falls in their drink. And these very religious Jews, you know what? They see a little fly, a little gnat fall in their drink. And they're going, oh, I'm not going to drink that.

I want to be pure. I want to be ceremonially clean. And they're there screwing up their face at this little gnat in their drink.

Jesus doesn't miss the mark, does he? He goes right in and he shows us because this is what they're doing. He says, you're blind. Oh no, I'm not blind.

I can see the gnat in my drink. No, you are blind. You know why? Because you're all caught up on this stupid fly in your drink and you're making a fuss.

Have you ever seen anyone in a family situation make a fuss over nothing? Maybe this Christmas time you saw. And someone getting irate over nothing. You are the person straining at a gnat.

And yet you swallow a camel. In a family situation, if you see the person who always strains, look at the fly in my drink. I hope none of you, this happened the past week, or you're going to think I'm preaching at you.

I'm just telling you what Jesus said, okay? I know nothing. But if you're straining at the gnat in your drink, Jesus says, but you're blind because you swallow a camel. Have you ever seen anyone swallow a camel? I haven't.

But Jesus is making a point here. He says, you're screwing up your face at this little fly in your drink. And yet you're so blind you'd swallow a camel, the same person.

Do you see a problem with this? That you could strain over, you're straining to look and find. You can hardly see the fly, but you're straining. Yeah, there's a fly in there.

But you're blind. You open your mouth wide and swallow an entire camel. Jesus is making a real point.

You're blind. You're hypocritical. You're lopsided.

You're fanatical about the small. We'll want to use scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, for you may clean the outside of the cup and the platter. Oh, I think this.

I think that. How is your mind and your heart and your attitudes? You see, you can conduct yourself, putting certain things in place in your religious life, and yet inwardly you're rotten. Inwardly there's attitudes that stink.

Jesus said inwardly you're full of extortion and excess. You're full. You're thinking of money.

You're greedy. You're covetous. You're trying to use your Christian life to ease your conscience about your lust for money.

You're filled with this. I wonder what you're filled with tonight. I wonder what fills your life.

And yet outwardly you go, oh, I'm going to make everything clean. Or let me give you another example. Matthew chapter 7 verse 4. Jesus, remember the story Jesus gives there of two men and how to judge.

It says in Matthew 7, 4. Or how will thou say to thy brother, let me pull the moat out of thine eye, and behold, a beam is in thine own eye. He talks here about two Christians in the church, followers of Christ. One of them has a little moat, a little splinter in his eye.

That's a terrible thing. It's a small thing. It's a small thing.

It's a tiny little splinter. You can hardly see it. And this brother has it in his eye.

In other words, there's an irritation. There's a problem. He's got something wrong that's affecting how he sees.

But here comes this other believer, and he says, I'm going to help you. But he's got a big beam. You know the beams that used to hold up the roofs of houses? That's what the word here.

And this man has a big beam in his eye. And if ever you get a splinter in your eye, you do need help. You do.

You've got to rectify that. You need someone to help you who can maybe see it and you can't see it. But you don't want someone with a beam helping you.

Can I encourage you, don't let a man with a big beam in his eye. Again, Jesus is exaggerating, but yet he's not spiritually. You see, I've never seen this physically happen.

A man with a splinter and a man with a beam in his eye. I've never seen that physically, but I have seen it spiritually 10,000 times. I have seen all through my lifetime people with big major problems that are affecting their eyesight and they're in there poking around and other people saying, you've got that wrong and you need to change that and you're believing wrong here and that's a wrong teaching.

I think you need to turn it around a little bit. You see, it's not wrong to try and help someone with their splinter. They need it.

They do need it. It's not wrong to judge or to point something out to a brother or to say that's a wrong teaching or to say this is wrong in your life. That's okay, but not if you've got a beam in your eye.

You see, as soon as someone comes to me and begins saying, Brother Keith, I disagree with you or that's wrong or I think, you know, the first thing I do, I look at their life. You see, maybe it's right what you're saying, but if you don't sort out your own life and you want to correct me, we need to stop right there. Jesus actually teaches you're not in a place to judge anybody else and we get that.

We get people, they run around everywhere. They see every cobweb. You could clean your entire house and they come to visit and they see that one cobweb way up there that you missed, but they don't even consider the hours that you spend cleaning.

There's something wrong. So do you see the danger of little things? You could become consumed over little things and you're not seeing the big picture. You don't have everything in perspective and you're over here dealing with this and this and this and this and Jesus saying, I didn't ask you to deal with that.

I asked you to deal with this. You see, if you're dealing with lots of things in your Christian life, but not with the one thing that the Lord's trying to deal with you, you're wrong. You say, but I'm dealing with all these other things, but the Lord, the Holy Spirit is saying, I want to deal with this.

This is important. I'm crying out to you. I'm speaking to you and you're over here saying, but I've got my pennies in order.

Do you see the importance here that yes, so I'm just trying to bring balance. Don't become so fixated with little things that you miss the big things like faith and mercy and grace and kindness. Oh, that we emphasize kindness.

Oh, that God would raise up in this church and all over the nations in the church, people who are filled with kindness, who have the ability to show kindness in the church. Where are they? Someone who says, I've got a ministry of kindness. Do you know, wherever I've gone, I've met people who say, do you know, I've got the gift of discerning of spirits.

I carry it around my pocket. Soon as someone walks in the door, I go, ha ha. They say they have it.

Soon as they tell me that I blur out and go, they don't have that. I know I've met other people, honestly, everywhere. And they say, do you know, I've got the gift of healing and I blur out again.

I've never once in my life met someone who said, do you know, I've got the ability, the ministry, the gifting, the calling to show kindness. Never once in my entire life. Why do you think that is? Because showing kindness to others is going to cost you dearly.

To go up to someone and say, I've got the gift of healing. Those people always want to go back to them afterwards and say, you prayed, you said. So I'm just showing you again, having things in perspective.

We are here looking at the little foxes. Look at this verse again, Song of Solomon chapter 2, 15. And it says, take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoiled the vines for our vines or have tender grapes.

I'm just going to give you the whole context of Song of Solomon. That was in my notes, but I'm not going to do it because I'll lose my message tonight. I'm already running out of time here.

So I've got several messages online explaining the Song of Solomon. So I don't want to give the context, but let me home in on this first. This is about the Shulamite in the vineyard, given responsibility to protect it, to look after it.

We're told in the Song of Solomon that she was sunburned because she's in the vineyard looking after the vines and the grapes. And here in this chapter 2, 15, she's given a clear command, take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines for our vines of tender grapes. This is my first point here tonight, the little foxes.

We see here the little foxes can cause a lot of damage. The Shulamite in this story who is in love with the shepherd, not with Solomon. Solomon and the shepherd are two different people in the Song of Solomon.

Solomon is a type of the religious world, an apostate Christianity. The shepherd is a picture of the type of Christ and he is in love with the Shulamite. But where is she? She's working in the vineyard.

She is sunburned. Her hands are rough. Her feet are bare.

And you know what? She's given a task. She's a picture of the church of the bride of Christ. She's a picture of this church, the Shulamite.

She's laboring in the vineyard. And you know what the command is? Take us the foxes. That statement means catch the foxes.

She's given a calling here. Catch the foxes. You're to seize them.

You're to catch them. You're to hold them. You're to confine them.

You're to cage them. She's looking after a beautiful vineyard. It is the end of winter.

Springtime is coming. The birds are singing. Winter has passed.

That's what we just read here. It's a beautiful time where everything is growing. And you know what the church is to have? Is to have fruit in the midst.

Spiritual fruit. The nine fruit of the spirit. Love, kindness, etc.

All of this should be grown. It's a time for fruit to grow in your life. It's a time for beautiful things to come up.

You hear the birds. Everything is sunshine. Everything is beginning to grow.

But it is a vineyard. And she has commanded, catch the foxes. You see, there's little foxes in this church.

Can you see them? Can you see them? There's little foxes in your family, your home. There's little foxes that are nibbling away on your individual life. I'm talking about the Christian life.

There are little foxes. Why is there a command? From Christ to the church, catch the foxes. You must catch the foxes.

And he goes further. He says, the little foxes. Notice it's little foxes, not just the big foxes.

The thing that's going to do real harm in the vineyard is the little tiny foxes. The little foxes that are cuddly. Have you ever seen little foxes? They're beautiful.

And they play around and they scamper around. And you think, they won't do any harm in my vineyard. They're only little foxes.

They'll do no harm. They're not aggressive. They're not going to attack me.

Do you know what little foxes do in a vineyard? They go in under the vines and they begin to nibble right at the source of things. They begin to chew. And they begin to dig holes down into the roots.

And they begin to nibble at the fruit before it blossoms. And so little foxes will destroy a vineyard. The Shulamites looking after it.

And she's told you better catch those small foxes. Oh, but they're only little cuddly animals. Look at them having fun.

Aren't they beautiful? I think I'll post it on Facebook. Don't you see the foxes in this church? Little foxes, little things that can nibble away in your life. And you think they're innocent.

You think they're insignificant. You think, but they're only small and harmless and they won't do any damage. And that little thing can actually destroy fruit in your life or in this church.

Little foxes can do an awful lot of harm. The little foxes that spoil the vines. Something that you think is nice and beautiful and cuddly and entertaining could actually spoil the vines and destroy your life.

Something little in your life that you ignore. Don't we see it across Limerick? People with addictions. They just start with a drink with the skies.

Their life is destroyed. How many lives have we seen destroyed? People coming into this church saying, I want God. And they destroyed their life with little things.

Sent them to hell. Utterly destroyed. It says, for our vines have tender grapes.

Notice the time. We've come out of winter. We're entering spring.

It's a whole time of blossom. That's a very vulnerable time. When the grapes and the vine is young and immature and there's the early fruit and it's beginning to blossom, you better be very careful.

You better be very careful a year or two years into your conversion. You better be very careful. There's little foxes.

If they get in amongst that fruit, they'll destroy it. Attitudes of heart. Neglect.

Oh, I'm saved now. I don't need to worry about all those things. I'm saved by grace.

I'm justified. I have imputed righteousness, and it doesn't matter where my thoughts go or my words or my actions or my attitude. You know what? That's a little fox, and it'll destroy your entire Christian life.

Oh, I believe in once saved, always saved. I don't believe that you can damage your spiritual life. Then you're a fool, because I tell you what the old Puritans certainly did, and the old reformers certainly did, and they warned people about the danger of a low view of sin or attitudes or the little foxes.

I'm showing you here tonight the danger of little things, little foxes that will come in and begin to eat the fruit of your life. Not big foxes, but little foxes. Do you realize it can take years to grow a vine and a whole bunch of little foxes coming in could destroy it overnight? It could take you years to recover from a time of not bothering to catch the foxes.

Jesus commands you, the shepherd commands the Shulamite, catch the foxes, the little foxes that will damage the grapes, the fruit, the vine. You better take the words of Jesus serious, because He loves you, He cares about you. Don't hide behind a theology or a doctrine.

You obey the little commands of Jesus Christ. You see all these commands I'm saying of Jesus in the New Testament or here in the Song of Solomon, and you say, oh, those are all little things. I know I'm saved.

I know I'm going to heaven. I believe in God. And you neglect these, you'll do it to your own detriment.

It's a very serious thing. That's my first point is the little foxes. Second of all, a little slumber, a little slumber.

Read them from Proverbs 6 verse 9. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? Oh, I'm not a drunkard. I just take a drink now and again. There's no danger.

I can handle it. I can manage it. I can control it.

There's lots of things you think you can control that are controlling you, and that you're warned about in Scripture, and you better have the attitude and the thinking of Scripture. Scripture says, flee them. You say, no, I'm okay.

Do you know how dangerous that is? How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? Someone who's always falling asleep is a sluggard, a lazy person, and you better sleep when you're ill or recovering from COVID. You better get a lot of sleep, so don't come under conviction there. I was sleeping late this morning.

When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet, and notice the littles here, yet a little sleep, a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep, so shall thy poverty come as one that travelth, and thy want as an armed man. Do you know what it's saying here? Just a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands. Have any of you said the alarm goes off, and you're going to work, or you're going to a prayer meeting, or you're getting up for whatever, and you say, just five minutes, and it turns into an hour.

I'm sure that's never happened to you. Just five minutes, a little sleep, a little slumber. That five minutes is going to make a world of difference.

Just five minutes, pause, and then it goes again. You press pause, so five minutes becomes an hour. Some people have messed up a job because of that.

Just a little sleep, but you know what the Scripture's talking about is something far more serious. It's talking about a spiritual sleep, or a social sleep, where you're living a condition of life. You could actually be in your life a lazy, neglectful person.

Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow, next year, next year, next year. You never get to it. You never do it, but it's worse when it's in your spiritual life.

Just a little sleep, just a little sleep. You know what it says here in Proverbs 6, just previous to this, in verse 6, go to the ant thou sluggard. Remember last week we dealt with the ant, four little things, an ant.

See how God teaches us from animals? That means God has put certain things in animals to teach you because he keeps referring, go to the ant thou sluggard, consider his ways, and be wise. You'll get a bit of wisdom if you study an ant, which having no guide or overseer or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer and gathereth her food in the harvest. Let me show you in the Bible how a slumber is dealt with very often from cover to cover.

You see, little foxes are dealt with frequently. See, let me come back to what I said. Do you see the little foxes? Because they're in here.

If you don't see the little foxes in this church, you're blind. They're here. They're here.

They're running around. It doesn't matter how good the church is or bad the church is, how spiritual or carnal. Foxes naturally invade the vineyard.

Do you see them? Do you see the danger? You better. The second one, a little slumber is a real danger. Listen to what Jesus taught in the New Testament, Matthew 13, 24, the kingdom of heaven is like.

So he's going to give a story to explain this spiritual kingdom that we're a part of now. He wants you to understand it. The kingdom of heaven that we're a part of now, invisible, spiritual, the kingdom of God, Christ ruling in hearts is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field.

So notice here, he's a good man. He's in the kingdom of God, and he begins to sow good seed in his field. But, the next verse, 25, but while men slept, there's always consequence for sleep.

If you fall asleep spiritually, if you put God on the back burner and say, tomorrow, or I'll get saved later in life, or I can think about God before I die, you'll be too late. Sleep is a very dangerous thing. What happens when you sleep? Everything becomes unconscious.

Everything stops. You're not working. You're not functioning.

You're not thinking actively. You're not aware. You fall asleep.

There's some people you could drive a truck through the room, and they still sleep. They fall into such a deep sleep. It's amazing with some of these folk.

When I was in the army, the things we used to do to guys who fell asleep when they're drunk, you'd be shocked at. You'd either tie them to the bed, put some of that lighter fluid, and I never done this. It was other guys, okay, just so you know, and you'd put a line of lighter fluid, and you'd light it, and then shout at them, the poor guy.

Do you know it's a dangerous thing to fall asleep? Some people I wouldn't fall asleep in the same room with, I can assure you. It says, this man sowed good seed, was going to bear a good harvest. Talk about the spiritual work of the kingdom.

But while they slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and then went on his way. But when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. The wheat and the tares look similar, but some are weeds.

There's the wheat that's real. There's the tares. And this farmer's looking, going, where did this come from? It says then that his servants came on to him and said, sir, didst thou not sow good seed in the field? From whence then hath it tares? And he said unto him, an enemy has done this.

The wheat represents real Christians. The tares represent false Christians, not sinners, not sinners, false Christians who look like the real, grew with the real, in the same environment, like to be with the real. And they grew up together, looking similar, saying they believed the same.

But you cannot tell until the day of judgment or the day of harvest comes, and then they get separated. But do you know what he said? An enemy sowed these. You know, churches have fallen asleep and they've got filled with tares.

Churches have fallen asleep and ended up with a pastor who's a tare, a false teacher, a false preacher, a deceiver, a liar, and an abuser. If you dare fall asleep in this church, there'll be consequences. You know what? The word of God will not go out of this church anymore.

And we will not be able to do what we once done. And you'll say, how did this happen? Someone fell asleep. I believe many churches have fallen asleep.

Or what about Matthew 25 verse 5? While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. The wise virgins and the foolish virgins, they all slept. What a dangerous time.

It's dark. It's nighttime. The bridegroom's delayed his coming.

Jesus hasn't come yet. And you fall asleep. There's consequences.

Jesus says in Matthew 26, 40, we read about him taking the disciples into the garden of Gethsemane. He's going to get betrayed that night by Judas. His soul is in travail.

Remember? And he goes into Gethsemane and he said, you disciples, you 10 disciples, I need you to come and pray. In fact, he said more. He said, pray here tonight in this garden.

Pray lest. In other words, if you don't pray, if you fall asleep, there's a consequence. What did he tell them before they began to pray? He said, pray lest you fall into temptation.

He's giving them a warning. If you don't pray tonight, do you know what's going to happen? One of you is going to deny me. All of you apart from one is going to scatter from me.

You're going to be scared, hiding behind locked doors. None of you will be with me. Peter's going to deny me three times.

Oh, I'd never deny you. If you fall asleep, you will. You say, you say, I'd never do that, Lord.

Never. And then spiritual sleep comes and you're sleeping in the night of betrayal, the darkness of night when the devil is coming with power. You don't even know what you're dealing with.

Oh, I'm saved. So was Peter. So was Peter.

So were the 10, the 11. Do you see how dangerous? And we're told that as they began to pray, he cometh unto his disciples and he finds them asleep. And he said unto Peter, what? Could you not watch one hour? Christ is in agony of soul.

He's praying to the Father and saying, can this cup pass from me? Three times he prayed. Can this cup, this cup of being crucified for the sin of the world, dying and taking the sin of the world on me, of feeling like my Father has forsaken me, feeling the darkness of the wrath of God. Can you not pray for me one hour? And he comes back and they're all snoring.

And he stirs them, he wakes them and saying, can't you pray for just one hour? And then he comes again. And again, it says he found them sleeping again for their eyes were heavy. Do you know how dangerous it is? Now, what about in Jonah chapter 1 verse 5? But Jonah, remember God said, I want you to go to Nineveh.

I give you a command to go to that city and preach. You know what he done? He went the opposite direction and he went down to Joppa and then he went down into a boat and he paid his price. See he's going down and he went down into the lower regions of that boat.

And you know what he done? The Bible says in Jonah chapter 1 verse 5, he laid down and was fast asleep. Then the next verse, verse 6, so the ship master came to him. A great storm comes.

God sends a storm to his ship. See he's running from God. He's not going to obey God.

God's calling him to go preach. And he says, I'm going to Tarshish to Spain. I'm getting my Ryanair flight to Spain.

And as he does, the captain of the ship comes down into the lower parts of the boat. Listen to what he says. What meanest thou, O sleeper? Oh, I'm not a sleeper.

Yes, you are. You're sleeping. You know, when you're not doing the will of God, you want to fall asleep to pretend it's not happening.

It's one of two things you do. Either you fall asleep and just try to blank it all out or you go and get drunk. Nowadays they fill themselves with drugs or all medications.

The doctor, do you know in Ireland, I said to Candace, look at this article in the Irish press. Now they're saying it's legal now. Isn't that wonderful? You can give your dog all this medication for depression because of the lockdowns with everyone going back to work.

Your per dogs are going to be so depressed. Aren't you glad that Ireland so cares about your pets that this year it made it legal that you could fill your dog with antidepressants because it's mooning around the house. We're in a sorry state as a world.

And you know what? I believe that's, that's there because you know what? They want you all medicated through the roof, dependent on medication. And just let me throw one in by the way. Candace was just saying an article there out of Israel, one of the most faxed countries in the world.

Now they're saying most of those that are getting COVID, most of those, the majority, they're faxed. They're all faxed up and they're still all getting COVID. And now they're beginning to say those who are most faxed are the carriers and the spreaders of COVID.

But anyway, don't let me get there. Stay away from that. Or what about in judges 16? Do you remember how Samson, the anointed of God, that could slay a thousand Philistines with the jaw of an animal? They could carry off city gates and carry it down the hill.

They could put the entire enemy in fear. They could deliver the nation. Do you remember how he got defeated? In churches 16, it says that a woman called Delilah made him sleep upon her knees.

Samson, you're going to regret falling asleep on Delilah's knees. Maybe you don't do it physically. Maybe you do it socially or spiritually or mentally.

Delilah is real and Delilah is a spiritual thing. This great anointed, gifted, powerhouse of God is going to fall asleep. There were warning signs getting closer.

All the signs were there. Remember how she said, she started crying, please tell me what the secret of your strength is. It's because I love you.

You don't love me if you don't tell me. And he got worn down. So he says, well, you know, if you bind some bands around me.

He lied to her and she brought the soldiers in. All the warnings were there to warn him. How dangerous.

And yet he tells her the truth that it was his hair. And he falls asleep on her knee and she goes and cuts off his hair. He loses his strength.

He loses his eyes. He loses his anointing. He loses his testimony.

What a disaster. What an absolute disaster. You need to be very, very careful what you do.

Extremely careful. He regretted falling asleep on her knees. It says that when he awoke out of his sleep, he said, I'll go out as at other times before.

I can play around with sin, but I can carry on my Christian life as if nothing ever happened. Samson said that. And he shook himself and he wist not or he didn't know that the Lord was departed from him.

Also in the Bible, we have warnings about a little slumber. Third of all, a little folly. Ecclesiastes chapter 10 verse one.

Listen to what it says. A little folly. Dead flies cause the ointment of the apocry to send forth a stinking savor or smell.

So does a little folly. Not a big amount of folly. A little bit of folly.

Him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor. So look at it. This person who has a great reputation, they're known by everyone for their wisdom and their honor.

And the Bible warns you can destroy that with a little bit of folly. Just a little bit of folly. What is folly? It is silliness or foolishness.

Oh, come on, Malcolmson. There's nothing wrong with a bit of folly. Then what's this Bible, what's this verse about? Is this a joke? Is this a mistake? Is this an exaggeration that it says a little bit of folly can destroy the reputation of a man who's known for his wisdom and honor.

And he gives an example here. He gives a picture. It is a bit like dead flies getting in the ointment of the apocry.

What's the ointment of the apocry? You see, the apocry are experts at making oils. You know over this past couple of years how with Candice and others and they've looked at oils, frankincense and myrrh. Isn't it remarkable a year ago she cost so much that she cracked her rib.

She was in agony. That will take several weeks minimum. She was in agony.

She couldn't bear the pain. She was shaken. She'd cost so much to crack that rib, and yet she applied a bit of oil within three days.

No doctor will give you that. That myrrh, that frankincense applied. That's remarkable.

You see, in the Bible times there were experts who used oil. They knew how to mix the oil either for fragrance. It took time.

It took knowledge. It took expertise. And it could make a beautiful fragrance or it can have healing properties.

And they took great skill, great time, years of learning to create this oil. And they would create this bottle of oil. And they mixed it and prepared it and put it together.

And they crushed all the right herbs to be in there. And he's saying this beautiful bottle that could bring healing and fragrance and smell. Do you know what could destroy it? Dead flies.

You've taken all of that work, all of that time, all of that preparation, all of that that zeal and intelligence. And yet if you leave the lid off, a whole bunch, here they come, a whole bunch of flies and die in it. And then it'll stink and you've destroyed your oil.

One day, just leave the lid off that. Be careless. Forget about it.

Say, oh sure, don't worry about the little flies. Your oil's going to get destroyed. And you know what it says, dead flies in that ointment and it sends forth a stink.

Do you realize that someone who has a reputation for wisdom and honor, the reputation, the word reputation means a valuable shining forth. Everyone who looks at it said that's valuable. That's important.

We can see their reputation. It could be destroyed. A little bit of folly, silliness, stupidity.

Some men have acted, they went and committed adultery. Do you know what Proverbs says? A man who commits adultery is like a man goes and eats a bit of fruit and wipes his mouth and says no, no, no. Do you know what it says? He'll get himself shamed.

They'll never be removed. If you commit adultery against your husband or your wife, that will never be removed. It can be forgiven.

You can be restored. The other person can forgive you, but you can never remove that blood. Do you see how a little bit of folly could destroy your reputation? Isn't it true that many great kings, I mean the best, known for their faith, their fighting, their integrity, their trust to God.

Men like David in one night, a bit of folly. What about Solomon, the same? Jehoshaphat or Josiah, men of great reputation, one night of folly, you need to be very careful. It says in Ephesians chapter 5 verse 3, but fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not once be named among you as become as saints, torn to Christians, neither filthiness.

Remember he's mentioned fornication, sleeping around sexually. Don't let it once be mentioned among you. Neither filthiness, but notice the next two, foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient or necessary, but rather given of thanks.

What's foolish talking? It's in our Bible. Don't even let foolish talking be named among you. What is the definition of talking? Do you know Northern Ireland, the north of our island? I believe Northern Ireland, the great sin of the church amongst others, but I consider this, it's a small thing, a little thing, and yet I believe it's destroyed the church in Northern Ireland.

You see, when I was growing up, great preaching, evangelism everywhere, great Bible teaching, remarkable functioning of the church, and yet I always noticed that foolish jesting is going to be the downfall of the church, not the big sins. That one sin, I believe, has destroyed the church in Northern Ireland. I'm fully convinced of it.

What is foolish talking? It is silly talk. The Greek, it means buffoonery. It means to lay forth or to pour forth dullness of mind, stupidity, heedlessness, to be block-headed, pouring all your block-headedness forth or your absurdities.

Do you know what he says? Don't let it be mentioned among you. Oh, brother, you're going too far now, am I? It also says jest, and that means well-turned words, your repertoire, your witticism, your revelry. Do you know Thomas Walsh, that great preacher from this city who lived in Limerick, preached on these streets? Thomas Walsh, do you know once, not many people know this, he took John Wesley to task and rebuked him for his likeness and his foolish talk.

Thomas Boston, another great preacher at a later stage, a revivalist in Scotland, was greatly known for his humor or his great wit. He had a brilliant wit. Nobody could compare.

But do you know what he done? He subdued it. He made a choice in his life, and instead he evangelized an entire valley where by the time he finished his ministry, every single home had a prayer meeting, had a worship service. I'm talking about real things.

Let me finish on this point here. Lastly, a little leaven. I don't have time to go far.

I've got three minutes and I've got a page and a half. A little leaven, little foxes, a little slumber, a little folly, little leaven. Do you think God considers little things unimportant? Do you see how dangerous little things can be when you ignore them? Fourthly and finally, a little leaven.

What is leaven? Leaven is a little bit of yeast. In the New Testament, we are given five warnings of five different kinds of leaven, and we taught on this before as well in our series on the Bible. I went in detail on this leaven.

But see, leaven represents either doctrine or a lifestyle. And here's the key. You only need a little bit of leaven to leaven the whole lump.

You could have a lot of bread dough, and when you put that leaven in it, it goes through everything. It affects everything. Leaven has a dramatic and radical effect upon the dough.

It changes its whole appearance. It changes its substance and character. It changes its size so that the loaf is now filled with hot air.

You know there's a lot of people, there's a lot of leaven around. There's some people with an awful lot of air within them. Too much leaven got in there.

It has an appearance of having more substance than it really has. Do you ever compare how they made bread in the old days? And you get bread now, and it's light and fluffy, and we like our white bread. But that old coarse brown homemade bread, boy, that's real bread.

This white fluffy stuff that you like to toast, that's not real bread. It'll kill you. But do you know what? In our New Testament, Jesus warns about the leaven of the Pharisees or their doctrine.

You know what it was? Hypocrisy. If that gets into your life, it'll destroy you. A teaching, a doctrine, that's wrong, this is wrong.

I'm doing this. We're doing this. What about your heart? See, a little bit of leaven.

Let the leaven of Pharisees, the doctrine of Pharisees get in your heart, and you'll be back to square one where we started tonight. You'll be a hypocrite. You'll be an actor.

You'll be judging everyone else, and yet you're an absolute mess yourself. The leaven of the Pharisees is dangerous. Or second of all, what about the leaven of the Sadducees? They're religious.

They do all the talking. They come in, but they deny the supernatural. They spiritualize things to an extreme.

The resurrection is literal. It's going to happen. They make it spiritual.

That's very, very dangerous. They don't believe in angels. They don't believe all the Bibles inspired.

They choose the five books of Moses, and the rest is just stories and parables, and we don't believe in Jonah getting swallowed by a whale. We don't believe in a literal six-day creation. We believe it could be millions of years.

You're a Sadducee. Oh, no, I'm not. You're a liberal.

You're a modernist. You have just taken on the doctrine or the leaven of the Sadducees, and it destroys your entire Christian life. Oh, I don't believe.

Just because I don't believe in a literal six-day creation, stop right there. You've been destroyed. He also warns about the leaven of Herod, the doctrine of Herod.

Do you know Herod used to come out and listen to John the Baptist and to Jesus? Do you know he loved to hear John the Baptist preaching repentance and dealing with sin, and Herod would come out with his chariot and sit there and tremble and say, I love this. But remember, because that relationship and that immoral dance, and he says, I'll give you anything you ask to have my kingdom. Give me John the Baptist's head, and he was very sad.

He wasn't a wicked man that wanted to destroy the preaching. It's just compromise, immorality come in, and it would cause him to take the head of one of the greatest preachers of that era off. Then in 1 Corinthians, we have the leaven of the Corinthians.

You know what that was? Where you will tolerate someone committing fornication who's called a Christian, leavening sexual sin, but you're proud because you tolerate their sin. You're puffed up. Paul says that in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 and chapter 6, look at the leaven.

He warns about a little bit of leaven. Don't you know a little bit of leaven? Leaven is the whole lump. What do you mean? That person you're tolerating, you're proud, you're gracious.

Our grace is so big we can tolerate all this sin in the church, and we never deal with it or throw the person out. Not talking about sinners. We don't treat sinners like that.

I'm talking about people calling themselves Christians. Do you know another area? Covetousness. Go read it.

A little bit of leaven in Corinth. You're a covetous person. That's leaven.

It'll destroy your life. Fornication, covetousness are blurring out all over people. I could keep going, but the last leaven is in Galatians, a little leaven, leaven is the whole lump, taking us back to Jewish regulations.

What was the leaven of the Galatians? A few people come in teaching, do you know all you Christians, Paul's raised up all these churches in an entire country, an entire region, all these churches, newly born again, miracles of healing. You received the Spirit by faith, and these new teachers come in saying, no, you're not perfect enough. You've got to go back to the law.

You need circumcised. You need to keep the law of Moses in order to be saved. You need to go back to your Jewish roots.

Where does it say that? My Bible says the Jews are going to go back to their Jesus roots, and I could say an awful lot. What you see here is a little bit of leaven. Saints, let me finish.

Little foxes, a little slumber, a little folly, a little leaven. I've just taught you the danger of little things, and when you begin to see this, you see that little things can be very dangerous things. Attitudes, doctrines, ways of speaking, how you judge, how you treat people, it's destructive, and you're warned about falling asleep or being foolish for an hour or letting the wrong teaching into your mind and heart.

It'll destroy you, but thank God for the Lord Jesus Christ who come to save us and sanctify us and change us. Let's pray. Father, we do thank you for your word here tonight.

Will you bless it? We know that you're searching us, O God, and Father, I pray that you expose, bring everything into the light. It's because you love us. You don't want our lives to be destroyed by sin and deception and attitudes of the heart or by other people or by addictions.

My God, you want us to be saved and sanctified and satisfied in the Lord Jesus Christ. My God, let us grab a hold of the little foxes. Let us not slumber in this hour.

My God, I pray let us run and flee from foolishness and lightness, and Lord God, to be aware of any doctrine that could leaven us in this hour. We love Jesus, and we exalt him tonight in Jesus' name.

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