

# Leavening and Judging in Corinthians

by Stephen Kaung

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of purging leaven from the church and living a life of sincerity and truth, as exemplified by the feast of unleavened bread.*

**Duration:** 1:04:15

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 5:1

**Topics:** "Leavening"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees are known for their strict adherence to studying and following the Old Testament scriptures, as well as the teachings and traditions of their fathers. The speaker emphasizes the importance of Jesus Christ and his crucifixion in the Christian life and the Church. They also address the topic of judging others, explaining that while the Bible advises against judging, there is a distinction between judging with a critical spirit and lovingly helping others. The speaker emphasizes the need for both truth and love in our interactions with others, and encourages believers to help their brothers and sisters in their spiritual journey.

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to 1 Corinthians, Chapter 5. We'll read from verse 1 through verse 8. Actually, we want to cover Chapter 5 and also Chapter 6 this morning. 1 Corinthians, Chapter 5, verse 1. It is universally reported that there is fornication among you and such fornication as not even among the nations, so that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and ye have not rather moaned, in order that he that has done this deed might be taken away out of the midst of you.

For I, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have already judged as present to deliver, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ye and my spirit being gathered together with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, him that has so wrought this, to deliver him, I say, being such to Satan for destruction of the flesh, that a spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your boasting is not good. Do ye not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, according as ye are unleavened.

For also our Passover, Christ, has been sacrificed, so that let us celebrate the feast, not with old leavens, nor with leaven of malice and wickedness, but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Let's have a word of prayer. Dear Lord, we do praise and thank Thee for Thy tremendous, amazing love for us.

Thou lovest and lovest to the uttermost. Oh, how we praise and thank Thee that Thou wilt never let us go, but Thou wilt pursue us until Thy beauty, Thy life, Thy character, Thy glory may be manifested among Thy people. Oh, Lord, we do praise and thank Thee for Thy precious word.

We ask that Thy Holy Spirit will open Thy word to us and open our understanding. We pray that Thy word may fall into good ground and will bear fruit unto Thyself. We do realize, Lord, whenever we come together, we are in Thy presence.

We are on holy ground. Teach us how to humble ourselves before Thee as Thy born slaves. Open our whole being towards Thee and allow Thy word to do its work in us.

Transform us and conform us to Thy blessed image, and we give Thee all the glory. We ask in Thy precious name. Amen.

We have been fellowshiping together on this most important subject, our calling. We, as the redeemed of the Lord, we have been called to a wonderful fellowship. We are called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Now, can you ever imagine people such as we are, and yet God, in His great love towards us, should call us into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ. Think of the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. Whom is He fellowshiping with? Sharing together without any reservation, perfect harmony.

He's fellowshiping with His Father in the Spirit. And likewise, the Father opened Himself completely to the Son, withholding not anything from His Son, sharing together with His beloved Son. And just think that God has opened up this divine, holy, perfect, eternal fellowship to us who are redeemed.

So we have the privilege. We have been called. Every one of us who are redeemed of the Lord has been called.

And because we are called into this fellowship, we ought to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The Apostle Paul said, When I come among you Corinthians, I have determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Now why? Because it is Jesus Christ and Him crucified that brings us into that fellowship.

It is Jesus Christ and Him crucified that enables us to fellowship. That is the only way. That is the only content.

That is the only possibility. Therefore, we need to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And if we do that, we will truly be one as He and the Father.

You know, as you begin to read this letter to the Corinthians, you will be amazed that Paul could at the very beginning say that we may speak one word. We may be united in one mind and one opinion. Now how can that be if we are really faithful to our calling and really know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified? Then Christ is not divided.

Otherwise, there will be division. Not only division in the world, but division in the church. And that is what we find in the first four chapters of this first letter to the Corinthians.

Now this morning we would like to go into the second problem that the church in Corinthians had. Again, it amazes us that this was not something that the Corinthian believers inquired of Paul in their letter to him.

Paul said, this is something that is universally reported.

In other words, you find that when he talked about division, he said the house of Corleone told me about your division. But here you find he did not need anyone to tell him because here is something that is universally reported. It is known everywhere.

So even when Paul was not in Corinth, he heard about it. It was well known. And strangely, the Corinthian believers, they did not even ask Paul about this problem because to them it was nothing.

They were so dull in their conscience that they considered this thing as common, as nothing to worry about. But the apostle Paul, with his keen perception, his spirituality, his discernment, he considered this as the most serious problem. And it has to be addressed and it has to be dealt with.

Now what is the problem? The problem is incest. A brother in the church in Corinth took his father's wife and this was something even in the nations it was not known. And yet when this thing happened, the church at Corinth said nothing, did nothing, as if it was nothing.

But when Paul heard of this, he saw it was a breach, a serious breach to the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. It was such a contradiction, affront, violation to that fellowship, that sacred fellowship, so unholy, so unclean. And Paul's spirit was stirred.

So he said, even though I'm not with you in body, but in spirit I'm with you. And in spirit I have judged this matter. And with you all I have committed this man to Satan that his body may be destroyed in order that his spirit might be saved.

Brothers and sisters, and yet when Paul dealt with this situation, he took the higher ground. In other words, he was not just looking at this sin or other sins as you will find in chapter 6. He mentioned another sin among them. That is a brother will go to the court of the world to accuse another brother.

But anyway you'll find that when Paul was dealing with all these negative things among God's people, he took the higher ground. That is to say, he looked at it from the standpoint of the positive, of God's purpose, of God's heart, of God's will. So therefore you'll find in this chapter, he mentioned about this matter of let us celebrate the feast of unleavened bread.

Now that is his approach. Now brothers and sisters, we know Paul said our Passover, Christ Jesus has already been sacrificed. You know, thank God, when we have the Lord's table, it is the reality of the Passover feast that the children of Israel kept year after year.

Even today. When they were in Egypt as slaves, God redeemed them by the Paschal Lamb. Every family will prepare a lamb, spotless.

And on that day of the 14th, they will kill this little lamb and put the blood at the door post of their house. And everyone of the family will gather within that house and they will eat the Passover. And while they were eating, at midnight, the angel of destruction from God passed through the whole land of Egypt to slay, to kill all the firstborn in that land.

Man and animal. From pharaoh to a slave. But when that angel saw blood on the door, he passed over.

So it is called Passover. And because of the blood of the lamb, of the Paschal Lamb, the children of Israel were spared. Now brothers and sisters, we know this is a type.

And the antitype, the fulfillment is in our Lord Jesus Christ. God sent His only begotten Son into this world as the Lamb of God. He came to take away the sin of the world.

And because of that, He was slain on Calvary's cross. And His precious blood was shed. And because of Him, our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed.

Therefore, the age of destruction passed over. Our sins are forgiven. We are spared.

We are redeemed. Satan and the world were judged. But we were delivered.

Now that's Passover. So every one of us has our Passover. And yet you find with the children of Israel, immediately after Passover, the day, the next day after Passover, they have to keep the feast of unleavened bread.

As a matter of fact, these two feasts are together. In the New Testament, you'll find sometimes the feast of unleavened bread is called the Passover feast. Because they are one and the same thing.

You cannot separate these two feasts. Even on the day of Passover, you eat unleavened bread. And after that, for seven days, the children of Israel should eat only unleavened bread.

In the house of the children of Israel, there should be no leaven whatsoever. And you know, according to the custom of the Jews, before the Passover, they have to search their house. It was the most serious thing.

They would search their house to see if there's any leaven left. They have to purge out all the leaven in their house. Why? Because in Exodus, we are told, if anyone during that feast of unleavened bread should eat leaven, he will be cut off from the commonwealth of Israel.

In other words, he will be deprived of all the privilege of the covenant of God with the children of Israel. It was a serious thing. Passover is just one day.

Because our Lord Jesus was sacrificed once and for all. You cannot have the second time. It's only once.

And it's done forever. But the feast of unleavened bread continues for seven days. Why? Because seven in the Scripture represents perfection, fullness on this earth.

In eternity, the number is twelve. But on earth, seven. It's a perfect number.

So it simply means that Passover feast was kept for one day. But the feast of the unleavened bread must be kept seven days. In other words, it is continuous.

It is a lifetime thing to us. With the children of Israel, only seven days. But with the church, it is a lifelong feast.

The church is celebrating the feast of the unleavened bread. And we will celebrate that until the return of our Lord Jesus. So here you'll find Apostle Paul says, For also our Passover Christ has been sacrificed.

We recognize that. We accept that. We believe that.

But if we believe that, then what shall we do following that Passover? Let us celebrate the feast of unleavened bread. So put it simply, the church today is celebrating the feast of the unleavened bread. The

church itself is a new lump.

It's a meal. Three measure of meal to be offered to God as an oblation. As a food offering.

So brothers and sisters, we are in the days of celebrating the feast of unleavened bread. So you can see the seriousness if there is any leaven in the church. Any leaven has to be purged because it is in contradiction even to the meaning of Passover.

To the meaning of our salvation. It is a contradiction to what God has done. And we, being redeemed, we must keep the feast of unleavened bread with the sincerity and truth.

Not with malice and wickedness. Not with leaven, but with unleavened bread. Now what is leaven? You know leaven is not permitted to be offered to God with the meal offering.

In other words, when you offer the meal offering, the flour, the bread, the loaf, you have to offer to God without leaven. If it's with leaven, it will not be accepted. You know in offering there are two things you cannot offer.

Leaven and honey. No honey, no leaven. Why? What is leaven? Leaven is something, a dough, that you put into the meal, into the flour.

And by putting the leaven in the flour, it will begin to ferment. And then you'll find the flour will begin to be blown up, puffed up. And the result is that flour or that meal will become larger than it really is and softer, more tasty to people.

Now that's what leaven is. We use leaven when we're all making bread. I remember when I learned to make Chinese bread, I used leaven.

And I see how the flour is being puffed up and blown up, and you know, because people like people, like to eat with leaven bread. Leaven is hard. It's hard to digest.

It's not as tasty. You know, that's leaven. But leaven in the scripture always speaks of something evil, corrupt.

You remember in Matthew chapter 16, verse 6 and verse 12? One day our Lord Jesus was with his disciples crossing the sea, and our Lord Jesus suddenly said, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Now the disciples said, Well, we forgot to bring our bread. But our Lord Jesus said, Don't you remember five loaves and two fishes feed how many people? And how many were left? And you remember how on another occasion, 4,000 people, how many baskets were left? I'm not talking about this physical bread.

I'm talking about the doctrine. The doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Now what is the doctrine of the Pharisees? We know that the Pharisees, they are the strictest sect in Judaism.

They make studying the Bible, that is the Old Testament, their life work. They not only study, but they try to keep every letter there. And more than that, they believe and follow the teaching, the tradition of the fathers.

In other words, when you open the Old Testament, you have the Word of God there, but you have the principles. How are all these principles to be applied? So throughout the years, you find rabbis, great

rabbis, being raised up, and they try to interpret these Old Testament texts, and make the application of it. Now suppose it said on Sabbath, you should do no work.

Now what is work? Well, if you go, if you're hungry, you'll go through a field of wheat, you can pick the grain. That's not work, but you cannot rub it. If you rub it, that's work.

Now all kinds of things. On Sabbath, you can only walk a certain distance. And if you overdo it, you are doing work.

And in modern times, when you get into an elevator, if you push the button, you do work. That you cannot do. Now what is the doctrine of the Pharisees? What is the leaven of the Pharisees? In other words, they blow up the Word of God.

They put something into it, human thought, ideas, interpretations into it, and blow it up, and make it more than what it is. Mixing truth with falsehood. Human teaching with God's Word.

Until, well, it suits the taste of people. So, our Lord Jesus on this earth, He said, you hypocrite. Because you keep the teaching of the traditions of the Father, and you violate the Word of God.

Who can dispute with these Pharisees? Saying that you do not know the Word. No. They know the Bible.

They are teachers. But they are not keeping the commandments of God. Mixing human traditions with God's pure Word.

That's leaven. And what is the leaven of the Sadducees? The Sadducees are another sect among, in Judaism. As a matter of fact, at the time of our Lord Jesus, the high priesthood family are Sadducees.

They are the rationalists. They rationalize the Word of God. If it does not appeal to their reasoning, they say, this is not true.

So they do not believe in resurrection. They do not believe in spirit or angels. They don't believe that.

Because it's beyond human reasoning. If you say they don't believe in the Bible, they study the Bible. They try to keep the moral teaching, the ethics in the Bible.

Just like people today, they love the Sermon on the Mount, thinking that this is the highest ethical teaching in the world. But do they keep them? Or are they able to keep them? Now these are the leaven of the Sadducees. If you say they don't believe, they are a sect of Judaism.

If you say they believe, they don't believe. Now that's where the confusion is. And our Lord Jesus said, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Why? Because if it is 100% error, everybody will know. Nobody will believe in it. But if you mix error with truth, that's leaven.

It blows up, puffs up. But it soothes human taste. Yet our Lord Jesus make it very clear, to celebrate the feast of the unleavened bread is a lifetime.

So every sin, every wickedness, every leaven has to be purged out. Now how do we keep the feast of the unleavened bread? Now remember what the Bible says, let us celebrate. It is a celebration.

Now what do you celebrate? You celebrate something that our Lord Jesus has already accomplished for us. Think of that. He is our Passover lamb.

He has delivered us from sin, from the world, from our old man, from the flesh, the old creation. He has delivered us completely. We are now a new lump.

So we celebrate. How do you celebrate the feast of unleavened bread? It says, celebrate not with old leaven. You cannot celebrate with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity.

You see a contrast here. Now if you celebrate with malice and wickedness, that's the unleavened bread. If you celebrate with sincerity and truth, that's unleavened bread.

Now what is malice? You know these two are opposite to each other. What is malice? In our Chinese Bible, the malice is translated hidden poison. Yin du hidden poison.

It is a poison that is hidden. That's malice. And what is sincerity? Sincerity is transparency, completely open, transparent, nothing hidden, crystal clear.

And what is wickedness? Wickedness is the opposite of truth. Whatever is not truth in the sight of God is wicked. Truth is the word of God.

Truth is Christ. Anything that is not Christ, anything that is not according to the word of God is untrue. It's wickedness.

So we cannot celebrate the feast of the unleavened bread with malice and with wicked. The only right way to celebrate is to celebrate with sincerity and truth. Nothing underground, nothing hidden.

Pure, transparent, open, according to the word of God. Brothers and sisters, we want to ask one question. Why is it that the church in Corinth should react in such a way with such a hideous thing in their midst and yet they do not mourn.

They did nothing. They consider it very common. It's okay.

It doesn't matter. Do we not know that if there's leaven, sooner or later, the whole lump will be leavened. And that's the reason why you have to purge out the leaven.

You cannot allow any little leaven in it because eventually it will pervade the whole lump. That is the most serious thing. And yet, the Corinthian believers consider it.

We already mentioned at the beginning, not today, but the Corinthians were noted at that time for two things. They were noted for their eloquence. You speak like a Corinthian, but there is another thing.

You live like a Corinthian, corrupt. That's what they were. But thank God, our Lord Jesus, His blood was shed.

He washed them away. They were sanctified. They were justified.

But how come they were so negligent that they were, they did not even consider this as something serious. And probably on the contrary, they thought themselves as very liberal, open-hearted, loving. Basically, it is because they do not take the cross of our Lord Jesus into their lives.

They believe in the objective work of the cross. They do not allow the cross to work in their own life. They want to live their own easy life.

Whatever they like, they want to do it. They reject the working of the cross in their life. And that's the reason why you find everything old, the old leaven.

So, brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ and Him crucified is so central to Christian life, to the church. If you don't talk about Jesus Christ and Him crucified, if you don't allow Jesus Christ and Him crucified to come into your life, not just a teaching, eventually it will be like the church in Corinth. We are all poor.

Don't judge. If you judge others, you will be judged. In Matthew chapter 7, verses 1, it says, Judge not that ye might not be judged.

If you judge others, you will be judged. Therefore, don't judge. But brothers and sisters, if you read carefully the word of God, there are two different kinds of judging.

One kind is bad. We should not judge. That is to say, if we judge, criticizing, despising, boasting, arrogant, thinking that we are perfect and others are not.

Now, that kind of judging is forbidden. God is our judge. And if we judge people with that critical eye, the same judgment will eventually.

But that doesn't mean that we should not judge. Why? If you read on Matthew 7, Judge not that ye might not be judged. Because with what you judge others, you will be judged.

With what you measure others, it will be measured to you. If you see your brother with a moat in his eyes. So you go to your brother and say, brother, you have this moat there.

You know, I do thank the Lord that our Lord was a carpenter, you know. And in the carpenter's house, when they are doing that woodwork, you have lots of all these little things flying around, you know, and easily get into your eyes. So our Lord said, now if you go to your brother and say, you have moat in your eyes, let me take it out.

Remember, you have beams in your own eyes. How dare you judge your brother? Judge yourself first. Take off your beam.

And then you will see clearer. And does that mean that you just let your brother go? No. Then you help that brother to take out the moat in his eyes.

So in other words, it doesn't mean that do nothing. Say nothing. As if you haven't seen.

Not at all. Judge has another meaning. And God wants us to judge.

Judge is to discern. We have to judge between good and evil. Right and wrong.

If there's no sense of such judgment, what kind of a life it is. God is love. But he judges.

We need to discern. Of course. We need to judge ourselves first.

And if we through our lives allow the Holy Spirit to judge us. And we allow him to, the cross, to work in us. Then we have the spiritual discernment to see what's going on in others.

And we will have the ability to serve and minister. Without judgment there can be no ministry. Therefore the Bible says the spiritual discerns all things.

If you cannot even discern, how can you help? How can you minister? So here you find there are two kinds of judgment. See the judgment of Paul. He said, I'm with you in spirit.

My spirit and you are together. Judge in this matter. Purge out that level.

In other words, it's judging in spirit. Not in the flesh. If you judge in the flesh that's wrong.

Because you're arrogant. You think that you are perfect. Who are you to judge? But if in the spirit there is humility there.

There is love there. There is ministry there. And that's the judgment that we have to have.

The church in Corinth has no judgment. And Paul had to touch their conscience to try to arouse them up. That they may discern, judge, and even execute.

Otherwise if they allow this thing to go on, sooner or later it will level the whole church. Purge out. You know when you read 1 Corinthians 5, you may think Paul was too harsh.

Deliver that person to Satan. Let his body be destroyed. Why? That his spirit, his love behind it.

And then if you read on to Chapter 6. Now even Chapter 5 in verse 12. What have I to do with judging those outside also? Ye, do not ye judge them that are within? In other words, we have no right to judge those who are without. God will judge them.

But we have a moral responsibility to judge those who are within. Those who are fellowshiping together. We need to judge one another.

That is to say, we need to minister to one another. To help one another. Towards celebrating with sincerity and truth.

Otherwise we fail in our responsibility. Continuing on in Chapter 6, Paul said Don't you know that one day we will judge the world? The saints will judge the world. If today you are acting like the world, how can you judge the world in a day? Because you are separated.

Therefore you can judge the world. One day God will give the judgment of the world to his own son and those who are with him. If we are able to, we are chosen to judge the world.

Paul said Don't you have anyone among you that can judge among the brothers? That the brothers have to go to the court of the world to get things settled? There is no wise man among you? Why do you defraud your brother? Why are you not willing to be defrauded? More than that. He said Don't you know we will even judge the angels? Think of that. Angels are higher than men.

And one day men will judge the angels. So what kind of purity? What kind of character must be built in man? Brothers and sisters, let us not be mistaken. There is nothing wrong in judging if it is in the right spirit.

It is wrong if you don't judge. How can the parents raise up their children without judging? No judging, no discipline. That is what you see today in this country.

If you judge, you are not loving. In order to love, don't say anything. Let people do whatever they want.

Dear brothers and sisters, how twisted is our reasoning. If you really study the word of God, you will find truth and love. If there is truth, there is love.

If there is love, there must be truth. You cannot love the untrue. If you love the untrue, you really don't love, you hate.

If you see a brother in thought, and you have been in thought before, you experience it. You repent it. You have received the working of the cross in your life.

And if you see a brother doing the same thing, well, say nothing, do nothing, let it go, be loving, you're hating your brother. You need to help your brother. The Bible said, those that are spiritual shall help those who are weak, who may fall, but beware that you be tempted.

So, dear brothers and sisters, our whole concept needs to be corrected. Today, we think that if you love, that don't care about the truth. Because if you tell the truth, it will cause problems.

People will be reacted, people will be hurt, or don't hurt. All right, everything is okay, nothing wrong, you hate your brother. What will happen when he shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ? We will be acting like king.

Am I responsible for my brother? God said, you are responsible. Love, sacrifice oneself in order to come. That's love.

That's the love of Christ. That's the love of God. And that's true love.

You know, when I read 1 Corinthians chapter 6, I wonder, I wonder if you wonder too, why is it that in that chapter towards the end, in chapter 6 verse 12, all things are lawful to me, but all things do not profit. All things are lawful to me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Now, why suddenly Paul say these things? All things are lawful to me.

In other words, we were once under law. But thank God, we are now under grace. And because we are under grace, so all things are lawful to me.

Now, do you understand this? In other words, you are above law. And because you are above law, whatever you do are lawful. But even so, he said, but all things do not profit.

Yes, you can, you are free. You know, I remember in the early 60s, during that days, you know, the sons of God and all these things going on. You know, people go into a store and just take things without paying.

Why? We are sons of God. It's all our fathers. All things are lawful.

I'm free. I'm above law. Brothers and sisters, you know, sometimes we interpret freedom in that way.

All things are lawful to me. We are the redeemed of the law. We are sons of God, children of God.

Therefore, we are above law. We can do anything. All things are lawful.

But remember, not all things are profitable. Yeah. All things are lawful, but do not be brought under the power.

If you are brought under the power of any, you become slaves. You are no longer the sons of God. You become slaves.

So you find how often we interpret our freedom, our liberty, in such a way as abusing the liberty that God has given to us. Maybe with the Corinthian believers, they say, thank God we are saved. We are above law, so all things are lawful.

We can do anything. And Paul said, remember, not all things are profitable. If it's not profitable, don't do it.

If you come under it, don't do it. And what is true liberty, true freedom? We are free from sin. We are free from the world.

We are even free from ourselves, our flesh. We are free to worship God. We are free to serve Him.

That's freedom. So dear brothers and sisters, here you'll find with the Corinthian church, they have a leaven, and yet they are not conscious. And their conscience has to be around so that they will purge out that leaven and keep the feast with sincerity and truth.

Now when you read 2 Corinthians, many commentators believe that the man that Paul mentioned in 2 Corinthians, that he has been judged by all the brothers and sisters, that he has been convicted and he has repented, and Paul said, no, forgive him, receive him. Most likely that man he referred to is this man who had committed this insanity. So may the Lord have mercy upon His church.

May He preserve His church. And may He have a glorious church, holy, blameless, of wrinkles. Dear Lord, we thank Thee for Thy love towards us.

We thank Thee for not letting us go free. We thank Thee for touching our spots and wrinkles. We thank Thee for removing all the leaven.

We thank Thee for desiring that we be holy without blamish. Oh Lord, have mercy upon them in Thy name.

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