1 Corinthians 5 (Part 2): 6-13 • Christ Our Passover Lamb

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You guys will remember last week we covered the first half of 1 Corinthians chapter 5. It was a rather challenging set of verses that deal with are just that lovely topic of church discipline, which we just love going through.

But Paul was dealing, it's very practical, Paul was talking to the Corinthians about what to do about somebody involved in their fellowship who was engrossed in a sinful lifestyle for which they were refusing to repent and, or address in any way. And so Paul felt, the need to make some very strong statements about how they were to respond to that individual. They were to withdraw from such a person.

And we saw last week that the purpose of that withdrawal was to bring that person ultimately to a place of repentance, brokenness, that they might be saved. And if you missed that message it is on our website. You can find it there or on our YouTube channel.

Today, we're going to finish chapter 5. So let's read the verses beginning in verse 6 to the end of the chapter. And then we'll pray. Paul says,

"Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people- 10 (but) *not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler-* (Do not even eat) *with such a one.* (correction - not even to eat) *12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? 13 God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."* (ESV) Stop there.

Father God, open our hearts. Once again, Lord, we deal with this issue of the purging of evil, both within the body and in our own lives. And we pray that You would help us to really lay hold of this in a practical, applicational way that will strengthen our hearts and encourage us Lord, in the things that are important to see. Open our eyes Father, we pray, in Jesus precious name, amen.

Last week we talked about how the Corinthians had lost sight of the holiness of God and we discussed how holiness is historically a challenging thing for the body of Christ to deal with. You'll remember I talked about how we Christians throughout the course of history, we've tended to have two relationships with holiness. We either embrace it to the point of falling into legalism where we start living by rules and regulations, or we tend to ignore it. And then, of course, we fall into immorality, much like the Corinthians were doing here. They were ignoring the holiness of God.

Paul wanted them to know how far reaching the consequences are when a body of Christ chooses to ignore sin and just to kind of look the other way, while unrepentant.

Can I... Again, I got to clarify. When we talk about sin, We all sin. Right? And we all struggle with sin and we all deal with it. We all deal with a sinful nature. What Paul is referring to in this chapter is open sin that is being flaunted in front of the body of Christ in such a way as to say, this is the way I'm going to live and I don't care what you think. I don't care what the Word of God says. I don't care. I don't care. I don't care. That's what he's dealing with.

When I talk about confronting sin, dealing with sin, we do that. We do that all the time. We do it in the Word. We do it with one another. If you really love somebody, you're going to confront, you're going to confront an area of their life that you see that they're falling into in an area. You're going to go to that brother or sister and say, hey, I love you. What's going on? What are you doing here? This doesn't look healthy. That's, that kind of confrontation. And hopefully we're responding well to one another when and if that takes place.

But Paul is not talking about that kind of interchange. He's talking about when you've gone to a brother, you've gone to a sister, and they've refused all counsel. They've refused all encouragement and they've just determined that they are going to live their life regardless of it. And Paul wants to ignore that when... wants to ignore, I'm sorry, wants to communicate to them that when they ignore that sort of a thing, that there are dire consequences in the body of Christ.

And that's why he asks the question that he does in the second part of verse six. If you look at me again in your Bible, *"Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?"* Now, your Bible, instead of leaven, may say yeast. But in the ancient world, people actually didn't put yeast into their dough every single time. And I'm not talking about making unleavened bread.

They typically leavened their bread, but they didn't put yeast in every single time. They would work it into the dough and then they would take most of the dough and bake it. But they'd leave back some. They'd leave a lump. And they would wrap it up and they'd save it for the next time they baked. And so when they got out to bake bread the next time, they would tear off a piece of the old lump that has the leaven in it, the yeast, and they would work that into the fresh dough that they were doing, and that would leaven the whole lump. It would work its way as they knead the dough into the rest of the dough.

And obviously leaven or yeast is a Biblical picture of sin. It's a metaphorical picture. And it's a good one, too, because of the way yeast works. Yeast, I'm sure you know is the driving force behind the process of fermentation. And it is responsible, singularly, for causing this lump of dough that just sits there on the counter, to actually rise into a beautiful loaf of bread.

But you have to see that the Jews connected fermentation with putrefaction. And that meant that they saw leaven as a picture of a corrupting influence. Okay. And that's why the connecting point between leaven and sin, because sin has that same corrupting influence, right, when it is worked into the dough.

And that's why Paul asked the question, don't you know that it just takes a little bit of yeast, a little bit of leaven to leaven the whole lump, or to impact the whole body of Christ? And that's what he's really getting at. He's saying, don't you know that it doesn't take that much sin to corrupt the entire body of Christ.

So, what are the consequences of ignoring sin? Well, huge! There's a huge corrupting influence on the body of Christ. What Paul says here as applicable to the body, is just as applicable to a family. Right? Or to you as an individual, Paul would say the same thing. Adults, regarding your family unit, do you not know that just a little bit of sin ignored, will infiltrate and corrupt the whole family?

Individuals, now, don't you know that sin in your life that you ignore and gloss over has the powerful potential to affect your whole life: your walk with the Lord, your relationships with other people; if you're married affecting your

marriage; if you have children affecting the relationship with your children, affecting your work, affecting your prayer life, and on and on it goes.

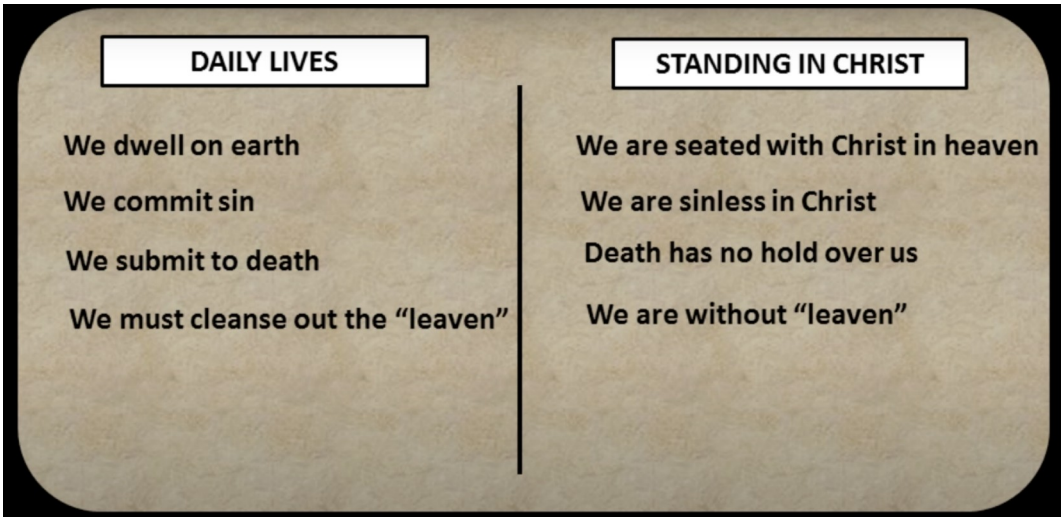
So, what is the instruction that Paul gives? Verse 7, look with me. *"Cleanse out the old leaven* (he says,) *that you may be a new lump,..."* And, in other words, a new batch of dough. Again, that metaphoric picture, as you really are unleavened.

Using again, the picture here Paul tells him to *"Cleanse out the old leaven"* What does that mean? It means get rid of the sin from in your midst. Whether you're dealing with sin... Whether we're dealing with sin in the church, (that's the word to us.) Whether you're dealing with sin in your family. Whether you're dealing with sin in your own personal life. He says, get rid of it. And wouldn't it be nice if it was as easy to do, as it is to say? Yeah.

There's a very interesting statement, I don't know if you caught it here in verse 7. Did you see where Paul said to, that they were to get rid of the leaven so that they can be what they really are, which is unleavened? That is a really interesting statement. And it sounds contradictory. Get rid of the leaven so that you can be what you really are, unleavened. Well, if we really are unleavened, then we shouldn't have to get rid of the leaven.

And it sounds like a paradox. It sounds contradictory, but it's actually not. What Paul is doing here is he's describing that fine line between our practice and our standing. Our practice and our standing...You guys understand that often apparent contradiction between those two things. Right? That, we are what we are, but yet we somehow live many times what we are not. Right?

Let me give you an example of this. I'll put this up on the screen for you as you see.



There are things in our daily lives that are true about the way we live. But there's also a reality regarding our standing in Christ that seems very, very opposite that. For example, in the first one, we dwell on the earth. Right? I mean, you and I. Isn't that your address? You're the end of... It's earth. Right?

But the fact of the matter is, the Bible says that we're seated with Christ in heaven. Now, that sounds like a contradiction, but it really isn't. It's just dealing with that issue of difference between our daily lives and the standing that we have in Jesus Christ.

Here's another example. We commit sin; we know that. The Bible says that, he who claims to be without sin is a liar and the truth isn't in him. (John 8:44) It's not a license, but it's just reality. We do sin. Our sinful nature causes us to do things that we shouldn't do.

However, in Christ, you and I are sinless. I don't know how much you think about that in a given day. It'll blow your mind right off your shoulders, let me tell you, if you really think it through. But the fact of the matter is, we are sinless in Christ. The way God the Father, sees you, is sinless. Because He's looking at you through the blood of His Son. And that is extremely cool. But it's the difference again between our daily lives and our standing in Christ.

One more example, we submit to death. I mean we all have to die at some point. Unless, I guess, we're alive when the Lord returns. And yet we are told that death has no hold over us. It's like, well which one is it? Does death have no hold over me or not? See the difference. In Christ death has lost its victory and you cannot be touched ultimately by death. But in your daily practice, we know that our bodies will expire if we, unless the Lord returns. Right?

Well, now let's put this into an understanding of what Paul is saying here in this difference between daily life and practice. Because what he's saying to us is that we must cleanse out the leaven, whether it's in the church, in our family or in our life. But the fact of the matter is, in Christ we are without leaven. And that's really another way of saying we are sinless. Right?

Here's the point of what Paul is saying through this. God sees you, and me, and us, as a body: as holy, righteous, and without sin. That's the way He sees us. Not because He's nearsighted, but because of the way He views us. And again, He views us through His Son. It's like Jesus is standing between us and the Father. And when God the Father looks at you and I, He looks through the Son. And that filter creates this beautiful picture of seeing us, as He sees or would see Christ.

And so what Paul is telling us is that our daily lives ought to correspond with our standing. There ought to be a connecting point. There ought to be a movement in our lives where that, (pointing to slide) which is on the right side of what you see on the screen there, our standing in Christ is moving farther and farther toward that other side of where we live on a daily basis.

Paul says, remove the leaven from among you. Let there be no leaven, because that's the way you really are in Christ. So let there be a closing of the gap between who you are in Jesus, and who you are today living in this world.

And of course the biggest challenge to walking contrary to sin is that we live in a world that is absolutely caked with sin. That's the challenge, isn't it? How in the world are we Christians supposed to live a righteous life, when we live in such an unrighteous world. How are we supposed to turn away from sin, when sin is so thoroughly all around us?

Notice what Paul writes in verse 9. He says, *"I wrote to you in my letter...,"* and by the way, that letter he's referring to, we don't have it. We talked about this when we first started 1 Corinthians. There are two letters Paul wrote to the Corinthians that have been lost. This is what we call 1 Corinthians, and yet he says to them, I wrote you in my letter. So this is obviously 2 Corinthians. And there was a 1 Corinthians, which we don't have.

But he says, *"I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people-..."* but some of you guys misunderstood. And you thought I was referring to the people of this world. That's... I'm paraphrasing a little bit of what he says in verse 10. So Paul had to clarify in these couple of verses here that, that would be impossible.

Can you imagine some people who really thought that they were like probably dogmatic. Hey, Paul told us not to associate with people who are openly living in sin. So where exactly are you going to move? I suppose you could probably find a monastery somewhere where you could live your life in some corner of the building and never have to interact with other human beings. But then, of course, you wouldn't be able to be obedient to the command to take the gospel into all the world, would you? And to make disciples; and to share the love of Jesus with the lost and dying world. (Matthew 28:19-20)

But Paul has to clarify here to some of these people, listen, I wasn't talking about withdrawing from life. I was saying this: I was saying, listen, if you have a brother or a sister, and he's talking about in Christ. In other words, if there's someone that you know someone in your church who says, I am a Christian, I

believe that Jesus died for my sins, and I have accepted what He did on the cross. However, that individual is living an openly sinful lifestyle for which they refuse to repent, he says, that is the person that I am telling you, that you must not associate with. That's what he says, in verse 11. If someone bears the name of brother, in other words, bears the name of Christian brother, that could be your sister, and he's involved in some openly immoral lifestyle that he refuses to turn from, he says, Paul says, don't even eat with him. Don't even eat with them! Why?

Guys, you've got to understand something. And this is something we don't get in our privatized, individualized, Americanized way of thinking. We think we're just individuals. When we come to Jesus, you're not just born again, you're born into the family of God. More than that, you are born into the body of Christ. Okay? You are part of a larger body.

And what Paul is saying is, if you see a brother or sister involved in an unrepentant lifestyle, for which they are flaunting it, in front of everyone and saying, I don't care what you think. I'm going to live this way! Then he's saying, you've got cancer and it will spread, and it will destroy the body if you don't take action to separate yourself from that.

Good grief. We know this in physical terms. If at all possible, if the, if tests find that you've got some cancerous cells in your body, the doctor is going to say to you, we've got to get rid of these! And you wouldn't argue with that. You'd be right there going, yes, ma'am, sir, whoever, let's do that. And let's do it now! Right?

Why is it we hold back in the body of Christ? Well, that's not very Christian to withdraw from someone and put them out of the fellowship, or something like that. Listen, it's not very Christian to live your life to say. I am a believer in Jesus, but I don't care about what He says. And I don't care about His word and I don't care about the fact that He says I shouldn't do this. I don't care.

You see, there's a point where we have to make a decision for the health of the body. And again, we know these things in medical science. And yet we deny them in spiritual realities. So, you are of the same spiritual body, that's why Paul is saying to do this.

So somebody might say, well, what can I do for a brother or sister who's caught in sin and who I'm supposed to withdraw from? What can I do? You can probably do one of the most powerful things that you're given to do. You can

pray for them and you ought to. And we ought to. We ought to pray for those who are caught in sin, and not just can't get out, refuse to get out.

I mean, I've dealt with many brothers and sisters over the years who are caught in sin and they wanted desperately to be free. And they... But they lacked the strength in and of themselves to walk into any kind of freedom. But they would come and they'd say, please pray for me, help me. That's a whole different situation you understand, right?

So pray for them. We've talked about this. Ask God to make them miserable. Make their lives a living misery in the midst... That's what Paul is saying here when he says, put this person out of the fellowship that their flesh would be destroyed. He said earlier in the chapter, but that their soul might be saved even if it comes to the point of physical death, yet though that they might be saved. Again, the goal is always salvation.

But again, regarding the people of the world, we don't have the luxury of having that attitude. You can't do that. You can't go up to your neighbor or your coworker, more likely, who loves to, who isn't a believer. And who loves to live the lifestyle of an unbeliever. You can't just say, well, I'm going to separate from you. You don't have that luxury. You can't avoid them. And that creates a huge challenge. I know.

If I had a dollar for everybody, every Christian who ever came to me and complained about their working conditions. Yikes! Pastor Paul, you don't know what I have to put up with at work. Well, I worked in the secular world for a while, too. I was a disc jockey and for many years. And well, I was participating in the lifestyle then. I mean, without, with abandon. But I know what it's like. I know what the people are like that you have to put up with.

But you don't have that freedom just to say, I'm going to withdraw, I'm not going to... I mean, I can see if somebody's being abused in the workplace and particularly if you're ever asked to do things that are illegal. I think there's a point where you definitely put your foot down, but you can't get away. You're going to go get another job. You're going to work with other people who don't know the Lord. And then that's... You're going to be right back where you were.

And that's why we need to stick very closely to one another in the body of Christ. It's why we need to stay in the Word. Why we need to stay in prayer. That's why we need each other. That's what the body is supposed to be.

See the body of Christ is supposed to be a place of health and restoration, not a place of deterioration. And if we ignore sin, or we wink at sin, you see, the body of Christ is going to go from being a place where people get built up and it's going to be a place where people get knocked down. Where people... they come to church and they walk away going... and they're more tempted to sin. Because we haven't dealt... And they start looking at other people.

I've had people say that to me over the years as well. She divorced and remarried and she looks happy..., or something of that nature. Or, they went, they did this. They told me they didn't pay their taxes for a couple of years and then nothing ever came of it as a... You understand what I'm saying? When there's just this interchange of our sinful lifestyles and we don't address issues and we just kind of wink at them. It's well, it's not really not that big of a deal. Paul wants us to know it's that big of a deal.

He's even going to go one step further concerning unbelievers. Look at verse 12. He says, for what do I have to do with judging outsiders? I really liked the way he says that. If you look at it in a different translation, it's like, it's not my job.

Have you ever met a Christian who thought it was their job to judge unbelievers? Do you know that the church has done this over the years? We've become very judgmental sometimes, at different times in our history. That 2000 year history, which I know you and I haven't lived... all for... during. But still, I say, we because we're a body. And sometimes the body of Christ has gotten downright ugly. And we've pointed the finger at the world and said, how could you? And Paul, although all the while Paul says, who am I? Who am I to judge you for your people outside the church? It's not my job. God's going to do it.

Somebody needs to tell that little church that protests funerals of veterans and stuff like that. Somebody needs to tell them, that isn't your job to judge those outside the body of Christ. It's not your job!

What is your job? He says right here in this kind of interesting, he says, *"Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?"* Oh, isn't that just, we're horrified! We read that and we go, well, now wait, doesn't it say, judge not lest you be judged. (Matthew 7:1, Luke 6:37) We love to quote that verse. And yet Paul says right here, you are to judge. Not hypocritically, not in a condemning fashion, but in the sense of saying, that's wrong.

Do you understand that is a judgment? To look at a situation and to make a determination is to judge. When you look at someone's lifestyle and you realize that's not Biblical. That's not Biblical the way you're living. In fact, that's

against the Word of God. You are making a judgment. Okay? That's a judgment.

Judgment doesn't mean you're going to hell. That's what we think judgment means. We're not... First of all, you don't have any right to say that to anybody. The point is, to discern a situation as wrong, according to the Word of God. Right? That's our standard, is to make a judgment. And Paul says, are you not to judge? Are you not to look at a situation and say, that's wrong! That's wrong. And of course the question... The answer to the question is, yes, it's our job.

And it's not that we look down our noses at people. It's not that we take this holier than thou attitude. But we recognize sin for what it is. And we go to that brother or that sister and we say, oh, I love you so much and I can see how you got caught in this. Because I am of the same weaknesses that you deal with. I know how you could get messed into this thing. What can I do? How can I pray with you? How can I encourage you to turn your back on this lifestyle of sin and walk with the Lord? Let's pray together.

That's how we go to brothers and sisters who are caught in sin, not with a judgmental attitude. With an open hand and an open heart, that says, let me help. Let me pray with you. Let's get into the Word together. Let's love Jesus together. Instead, obviously the church has often turned its sights on the world, spewed condemnation and judgment.

Anyway, then Paul's final point here about Passover that I want to bring up. Look at verses seven and eight. I know I'm kind of jumping around the chapter a little bit, but I wanted to take it more in sections that are connected.

In verses 7 and 8 he says, *"Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are, unleavened.* (And then he says this,) *For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil,* (and yuck) *but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."* All right, stop there.

First of all, this is so cool! Because Paul makes a connection for us that we may not... I don't know if we would have made it on our own had he not made it for us in the Word. He makes the connection between the death of Jesus and the Feast of Passover.

I don't know how many of you guys have read your Old Testament very well. Gone through the Book of Exodus. Read chapter 12 where the very first Passover celebration takes place in the Bible. But it's a beautiful, beautiful read

because it's all about Jesus. Some people say, what does the Old Testament have to do with Jesus? Everything! He is like all over the Old Testament, and Passover is all about Jesus. How do we know? Paul says so. He says right here, *"For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."*

Now, do you understand what that meant when they would celebrate Passover? They were to bake bread without leaven in their homes during Passover and the subsequent Feast of Unleavened Bread, that took place after, just on the heels of Passover.

But what you may not know is how diligently they were called to rid their homes of yeast during that Passover celebration. It wasn't just put it in that other cupboard or, put it aside, it was get rid of it! Get it out of your home. Go through your home and whatever you got to do...

They would use a bowl to mix flour and water. And then that lump from the other leavened bread that they'd used last to work in so they used these big wooden bowls. So getting rid of all the leaven in their home for Passover meant scrubbing. Got to scrub that old bowl and get all, every trace of leaven out of there.

And then, you know what they would do? The Jews would light a candle. They would get some light. And they'd look through their homes to try to find any leaven that might still be in the home. And if they found it, they'd scrub and scrub and scrub until it was gone. You get the picture? This is the stuff Paul knew.

And so when he tells them to get rid of the old leaven, he's making a connection here between what they would do for Passover and what he's telling them to do as a church. And what I believe he's also telling us to do as individuals. Just as they were to rid their homes of leaven, Paul says, therefore let us celebrate the festival. Right? That's what he says in verse 8. Let us *"celebrate the festival."*

We're all going, okay, cool. When's it start? No, no, no! He's saying by, let us celebrate the festival. Let us scrub and look for every area, every nook and cranny where sin might be hiding. And let's get rid of it so that we can keep the festival. So that we can keep the Passover celebration.

You see, Passover was a celebration of the deliverance of Israel from bondage to slavery. You guys know the story. It's a beautiful story. And you can take time to... All of our small groups that are going to be going over this passage this coming week, are going to actually be going back to Exodus and reading

that whole passage about Passover. And so they're going to be reminded of how Passover was the final plague that God brought into the lives of the Egyptians in order to set His people free from their bondage there.

Because Israel was in slavery in Egypt. And so God told Moses ahead of time, listen, He said, I'm going to, I'm going to blow the doors off this thing now this time! And I'm going to bring death into every home where there is a first born male. Whether man or animal every home will experience death. (Exodus 12)

However, I'm going to set you apart as different and here's how. I'm going to ask every single one of you, every home, to sacrifice a lamb, a year old lamb. And I want you to take some of the blood from that slaughter and I want you to put it in a bowl. And then I want you to go outside your home and I want you to take the branch of a hyssop tree and I want you to literally, apply the blood to the doorposts of your home. Literally, paint it on there. Can you imagine what that looked like that day with all those door frames with red, the blood of the sacrificial lamb?

And then He says, I want you guys to go in your homes and do not leave your home that night. Because I'm going to send an angel and he's the destroying angel. I'm going to send him throughout the land. And that night he will bring death to every home, in which, there is no blood on the doorpost. He will enter that home and he will bring death to that home. But those homes where there is blood, he will pass over. And no death will come to that home.

What were those people doing that night? They were sheltering under the blood of the lamb. Right? That's what they were doing, and that's what we do. That is what we do in Jesus. We shelter under the blood of the Lamb and destruction has no hold on us. Death has no hold on us. Life is ours, life eternal. Because we're good people. Are you kidding? Far from it. We're just sheltering under the blood. We've just applied the blood onto the doorposts of our hearts. Right? And now we are marked for salvation and death cannot touch us. That's what Passover is all about.

And obviously Passover has a huge connection to the Last Supper. Because in the gospel accounts, it was during a Passover celebration that Jesus was having with His disciples that Jesus began to inaugurate a new covenant. Passover existed under the old covenant, but it was a picture of what was to come. (Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:17-20)

And at the Last Supper, Jesus began to speak of a new covenant. And He started with some bread and He broke it in front of all of them after giving thanks. He

said, guys, this is My body. And then later He took the cup and He said, "Guys, this cup is the new covenant in My blood. And He passed those things around to them. And of the bread He said, take and eat; and of the cup He said, drink from it all of you. And the connection is very clear that we need to consume what Jesus did for us on the cross. We need to take Him in. We need to receive what He has done. And that's the Passover connection.

See, we're not just saved when we come to Jesus. We're... The leaven is taken out. That's our standing in Christ. Just like they celebrated Passover with unleavened bread, you are now an unleavened loaf. You're sinless in Christ. Wow! So now Paul says, let your daily life match up more and more every day with what it means to be unleavened in Christ.