

Removing the Leaven, John 2:13-17



Removing the leaven

- Jesus began His earthly ministry
 - Baptized by John the Baptist, not many were present
 - Tested alone in the wilderness by Satan
 - Quietly performed His first sign miracle turning water into wine
 - If you imagined that Jesus would gently ramp into his public ministry with something non-confrontational to please the crowds and hopefully to start to win the favor of the authorities, you will be disappointed by what Jesus does next

Removing the leaven

- We must always keep in the forefront of our minds what drives Jesus, what was the fire in His belly
 - **John 4:31-34 NIV**, 31 Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.” 32 But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” 33 Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?” 34 “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.
 - **John 8:50 NIV**, “I am not seeking glory for myself”
 - **John 8:29 NIV**, “The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.”

Removing the leaven

- Now, Jesus comes to Jerusalem in the time of preparing for the Passover and enters the temple
 - He has been here at least a couple other times in His life
 - But this time He came here with a purpose

Scripture

- **John 2:13-17 NIV**, 13 When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. 15 So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. 16 To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a market!” 17 His disciples remembered that it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

Removing the leaven

- The Jewish Temple was the place where Heaven and Earth seemed to meet
 - **Exodus 25:8 NIV**, “Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.”
 - It was to be holy, set apart for God alone
 - It was the place where sacrifices for sin could be offered and accepted by God
 - It was the place to come to seek God and fellowship with Him
- But this is not what Jesus found

Jesus looks around at the Temple activity and it grieved His heart what man has made of the place dedicated to His Heavenly Father

- This is the same kind of grief or sorrow found in **Genesis 6:5-6 ESV**, “5 The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.”
 - Hebrew word regret is exclusively about emotions: a feeling of pain, sadness, sorrow, or unhappiness
 - The word does not imply that God feels He has made a mistake, or that He wishes to have done differently

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 - Any parent who has held a crying, upset child as they receive a shot has experienced exactly that
 - Such a parent is "*grieved*" over the pain, but has no regrets that this was the wrong decision

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 - God is "grieved," or "pained," by the outcome of His act of creation
 - He is grieved by what mankind has done to His *"very good"* creation

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- Jesus is grieved by what His people are allowing in an area dedicated to His Heavenly Father
 - **Matthew 21:13 NIV**, 13 “It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’”
 - This was happening in the Court of the Gentiles - the outermost courtyard and the only area of the temple where non-Jews were allowed
 - The Court of the Gentiles was accessible to Gentiles, foreigners, and those who were considered impure or unclean

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- This was area Jesus taught in when in Jerusalem
- **Revelation 2-3** Christ diagnoses different churches and only two were approved
 - One had lost their first love and sliding away, One was lukewarm where no one paid any attention to them, Others were full of excitement because of false teachings
 - Christ warns them that their lampstand (*influence, light, His Holy Spirit*) will be removed if they do not stand firm, unwavering, on the foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word

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- It is the same today as God can be grieved by what He finds in some of His churches
 - Some are cold, absent of the Holy Spirit, just going through the motions
 - Some hardened by strife within
 - Some more interested in the difference between the denominations rather than working together for the glory of God
 - Some more concerned with the presentation stirring up emotions rather than stirring up the Spirit in actual worship

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- It is the same today as God can be grieved by what He finds in some of His churches
 - Some allowing false teaching because it feels and sounds good
 - Some trying to be like other “*successful*” churches rather than seeking God’s unique plan for them in their communities

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- It is the same today as God can be grieved by what He finds in some of His churches
 - But praise God some truly love God with all they are, seeking to draw closer to Him
 - Some seek to love and serve others holding fast to God's essential truths
 - Some are providing a conduit for the community to come to Jesus, not just the church
 - Some long to be Jesus' hands to the lost and wounded

Acting with the authority of the Son of God, Jesus sweeps away the leaven of sin

- **John 2:13 NIV**, “When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover”
 - There were several activities for Israel to get ready to celebrate the Passover
 - A spotless lamb had to be selected and taken into their home for 4 days becoming a part of their family
 - They also had to remove every speck of leaven from their house
 - Leaven in scripture normally refers to sin
 - The sacrificial lamb had to be selected, accepted personally, and sin removed to be able to observe the Passover acceptable to God

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- **John 1:29 ESV**, “The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away (*sweeps away*) the sin of the world!”
 - We see here an illustration of what Jesus is going to do by sweeping away the sin the His temple
 - **Malachi 3:1 NIV**, “I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty.”

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- We see here the Lamb of God has been selected and suddenly appeared in His temple
 - He begins the process of sweeping away the leaven found in His temple
 - Jesus' actions were not a result of a flash of anger, it was calculated, He took His time

Acting with the authority of the Son of God, Jesus sweeps away the leaven of sin

- **John 2:15-17 NIV**, 15 So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. 16 To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a market!”
 - Then He sat where this all happened and began teaching those who listened the truth of God’s Word

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- This is exactly what God does in the lives of those who believe in Him
 - He transforms our empty water pot lives into the fullness of the Spirit
 - Then He begins transforming us into the image of Jesus
 - **2nd Corinthians 3:18 NIV**, “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate (*reflect upon*) the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

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- This is exactly what God does in the lives of those who believe in Him
 - He begins to sweep the leaven of sin out of our lives
 - Sometimes He comes like a devastating whirlwind and turns over the tables in our lives
 - We encounter suffering but with purpose and meaning
 - We must walk through seasons where we have no idea where He is taking us or why

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- There is no such thing as “*wasted time*” in the life of a Christian
- So, hold on and allow the change God sees as necessary in your life to transform you into the character of Jesus with ever increasing likeness

Removing the leaven

- **2nd Corinthians 5:7 NIV**, “For we live by faith, not by sight.”
 - Notice we don’t live by “*knowing why*” but by faith
 - We don’t live by “*knowing when or knowing where*” but by faith
 - Never blind faith but faith in the character, word, and promises of Almighty God

Removing the leaven

- Does it seem like God is turning your tables over in life, sweeping away the leaven of sin?
 - I encourage you to hang onto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith (*Heb. 12:2*)
 - To fix your eyes upon Jesus knowing there awaits a crown of glory for us
 - Remember Jesus is making all things new and that includes you
 - He will get you there so stop worrying and living in fear
 - I encourage you to learn to praise and worship God in the storms of life knowing peace is coming to all who truly believe

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