

## Our Passover Lamb Has Been Sacrificed, and We Are Unleavened, So Let Us Live Like It

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

*This portion comes at the following point in the outline.*

- II. Paul's response to reports of division (1:10-6:20).
  - A. A church divided, internally and against Paul (1:10-4:21).
  - B. Sexual immorality and litigation: how Paul's authority, the gospel, and the wisdom of God apply to real issues (5:1-6:20).
    1. The incestuous man (5:1-13).
    2. Lawsuits against each other (6:1-11).
    3. Sexual immorality with prostitutes (6:12-20).

### Introduction

*These verses continue Paul's admonition concerning the man involved in sexual immorality with his stepmother. They're part of a larger section in which Paul stresses how his authority, the gospel, and the wisdom of God apply to real issues (two instances of sexual immorality, and lawsuits against believers), particularly as they come against the Corinthians' arrogance.*

*In verses 1-5, Paul has confronted the Corinthians for their arrogance in accepting this man's sin, and insisted on disciplining him because of the magnitude of the necessity of holiness within the church. He has called on them to take definitive action, with his and the Lord's support. Now, he utilizes the idea of this sin having an effect on the whole church to lead into a metaphor of the Passover. The picture is of a continued life of celebrating it. Jesus is the sacrificed Lamb slain in our place. We are to "eat" unleavened bread, signifying the holiness and purity inducing effects of the gospel. Believers' participation in this greater Passover leads to the pursuit of holiness, not the tolerance of sin.*

### Verses

<sup>6</sup>Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>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.

### Questions

1. General.
  - a. What are your initial observations, thoughts, or questions about the passage?
  - b. How would you briefly describe the passage?
    - The Corinthians' arrogance as they have allowed the man to continue in sin is very harmful. This one sin has an all-encompassing effect on the church. Paul calls them to eliminate this "leaven" to line up with who they are in Christ. For he, as our "Passover Lamb," was sacrificed, so that we can perpetually celebrate this greater Passover in the pursuit of purity and holiness.
2. Specific Verses.
  - a. What does Paul's use of the word "boasting" in verse 6 indicate?
    - This relates back to the arrogance he has mentioned in 4:18 and 5:2, and possibly implies that they are not merely "tolerating" a sinful situation, but have some sort of pride, somehow justifying it.
  - b. What then does he say about this boasting in the rest of verse 6?

- It's clearly wrong. He uses the analogy of leaven to stress that sin in the church, here public undisciplined sin, has harmful consequences for the whole body. This principle applies to our individual lives too.
- c. What does Paul mean when he says "cleanse out the old leaven" in verse 7?
- Excommunicate the unrepentant sinner.
- d. What will the result be?
- The church will be a "new lump," free from this "leavening" sin.
- e. How does this align with what he says next?
- He stresses that they "really are unleavened." This is the interplay of what is true in Christ and the gospel, and how we have to appropriate that reality (Ro. 6:11-12 - <sup>11</sup>So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. <sup>12</sup>Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.). Gordon Fee says, "The death of Christ makes them new; yet they must get rid of the old in order to be new, precisely because in Christ they are already new!"
- f. In the rest of verse 7 and verse 8, Paul refers to the Passover. This imagery relates to the leaven that he has mentioned and its connection to Passover (Ex. 12:1-28). His use of this metaphor is to stress that what happened in the Passover pictures the gospel and applies to believers in being made "unleavened." Believers are participants in the gospel realities in Jesus to which the Passover points.
- 1) What is the significance of "Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed"?
- In the Passover, the lamb that was killed and whose blood was put on the doorposts signified a substitute so that the Israelites' firstborn son would be spared. This obviously points to what Jesus has done in his death on our behalf as our Substitute. But here, also, Paul is stressing that Jesus's sacrifice also purifies us, makes us "unleavened," so we can pursue holiness in practice (2 Co. 5:21).
- 2) Therefore, what are we to do, and what does this mean?
- Paul says to "celebrate the festival." This means to live in the reality of what the Passover signified: having a heart, life, and here, a church, that appropriates who we are - free from sin ("the leaven of malice and evil"), and pursuing holiness and purity ("the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth").
- g. Why would this be vital for the Corinthians to apply?
- The purity of their church is at stake here. Jesus has made them righteous, and the church has to live in that reality by addressing the sin in its midst, lining up with the Passover's meaning. It also has individual relevance for any individual Christian, and therefore applies to each of us, and our church.
3. Final thoughts and application
- a. Do you have any final observations, comments, or questions?
- b. How do you think you can apply the truths of this passage to your life?