

**Articles and Sermons :: Tolerating Spiritual Leaven****Tolerating Spiritual Leaven - posted by myfirstLove (), on: 2011/8/11 12:52**

by Matt Slick

Leaven is a common ingredient in things like bread and cake that produces fermentation and causes dough to expand and rise. The idea of leaven is to make sure that it is in the entire batch you're cooking. The Bible mentions leaven in different contexts. In Exodus 12:15, regarding the Feast of Unleavened Bread, leaven was not permitted. It was not permitted in the Passover meal (Deut. 16:3) and God forbade leaven to be used in grain offering (Lev. 2:11). Why? Because ultimately, leaven represents pride and false teaching.

Jesus said in Matt. 13:33, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened." He was signifying that the preaching of the gospel will be spread throughout the entire world. But, and this relates to our article, Jesus also said in reference to the false teachings of the Pharisees, "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees... 12 Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Matt. 16:11-12). This is the leaven that we have to beware of -- the leaven of false teachings that is becoming more prevalent in the church today.

1 Cor. 4:6 tells us that we are "not to exceed what is written," and 2 Tim. 3:16 says the inspired Scriptures are for correction and teaching. Therefore, the Scriptures are the final authority in everything they address, and we are not to teach as doctrinal truths anything that is not found in the Bible. Now, that hasn't stopped certain people from twisting the meaning of Scripture, imposing secular ideas upon the text, and forcing it to say what they want to suit their purposes. Unfortunately, there are things being taught in churches and on "religious" TV that are not biblical. In light of what 1 Cor. 4:6 says, let's take a look at some of false teachings in the Christian church today.

We have televangelists who boldly proclaim to millions that we are little gods. There is the name-it-and-claim-it "prosperity" teachers who say that the crucifixion of Christ bought us health and wealth and we need to claim what is rightfully ours. We are taught that churches must change their appearance and message in order to attract unbelievers -- all the while compromising the gospel. The error of universalism, that all people will be saved, is creeping in little by little and gaining converts. The Scriptures are increasingly seen as a collection of good stories, suggestions by which we can gain wisdom rather than the inspired, authoritative word of God (2 Tim. 3:16). Jesus is not uplifted as the only way to salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12), but the "main way to God" and that, if you are sincere, do good things, and seek God in your own way you too can make it to heaven. More and more churches are teaching that we maintain our salvation through doing good works (Isaiah 64:6). Homosexuality is increasingly seen as an alternative lifestyle instead of the sin against God that it really is (Rom. 1:26-27). Some churches are advocating theistic evolution - the idea that God used evolution to get us here -- thereby denying the reality of Adam and Eve and The Fall. Much of the literature sold in Christian bookstores promotes man-centered theology while reducing the majesty of God, turning him into a cosmic "buddy" who is hip and cool, yet lacks the greatness of God's Holy Character and sovereignty (i.e., The Shack). Christians seem more interested in following the super gentle, easy-to-follow, blonde haired, blue eyed, Caucasian surfer Jesus instead of the one that beckons us to pick up our crosses, follow him, and seek the lost (Matt. 10:38). And, women pastors and elders are becoming more common despite the clear biblical admonition to the contrary in 1 Tim. 2:12-13 and Titus 1:5-7.

Why are these things happening in the church? Perhaps it is because the word of God is not considered to be true and absolute as it really is. Paul's words to Timothy are appropriate here: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires," (2 Tim. 4:3).

Yes, of course, there are many good pastors and churches out there that, by God's grace, preach and teach the truth and the totality of Scripture. They do not shy away from the harder things of truth and teach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), including God's predestination (Eph. 1:4; Rom. 8:29) and election (Matt. 24:22; Rom. 8:33; 2 Thess. 2:13). They proclaim that unless you believe Jesus is the great I AM, you will die in your sins (John 8:24); that hell is a real place for those who do not receive Christ (Matt. 25:46; Mark 3:29); that we are by nature children of wrath (Eph. 2:3); that we are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 4:1-5; 5:1); that you cannot come to the Christ unless it is been granted to you from God the Father (John 6:65); that Jesus spoke in parables so that people would not be saved (Mark 4:10-12), and many more such biblical truths that are not popular to mention. But such teachers are becoming fewer and fewer w

hile the ear-ticklers who, like parasites, bury themselves deep within the comfort of Western Culture and preach to Christians me-centered messages aimed at appeasing the masses.

They are wolves in sheep's clothing who use emotion with scripture-twisting and speak perverse things in order to draw disciples after them (Acts 20:29). Sadly, most Christians are ill-equipped to discern what is good and bad because they are not studying. Therefore, they cannot accurately handle the word of God (2 Tim. 2:15), nor can they give an answer to everyone who would ask (1 Pet. 3:15). Instead, they gather teachers to themselves so they might hear what they want to hear (2 Tim. 4:3) -- that which serves them instead of learning how they can serve God in truth.

To tolerate this spiritual leaven means to invite apostasy. Like leaven, error gradually creeps into the church and spreads to all parts, causing the whole to elevate itself with pride and do what is right in one's own eyes instead of that which is right in God's. 2 Thess. 2:3 speaks about the great apostasy that is coming. However, it cannot occur without a host of lesser apostasies within the Church that will ultimately deceive Christians and prepare the ground for the arrival of Antichrist.

As Christians, we are to take the logs out of our own eyes (Matt. 7:3-5), get ourselves right with God, dedicate ourselves to his word, and seek to follow him where he would lead us -- whether it is comfortable or not. God has stated that judgment will begin with the house of God which is the church (1 Pet. 4:17). Let it begin with us and may we seek God's holy truth and, if need be, die defending it.

**Re: Tolerating Spiritual Leaven, on: 2011/8/11 13:58**

Thank you for this message.

Can't think of any other message more needed or less heeded than this one, in these days.

Thanks to you both.

{eta} I'm not Calvinist, but that should not be the point that distracts from the message. The apostasy and the sin in the camp needs to be dealt a hard blow by preaching the love for and fear of GOD.