

Become a New Lump

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Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread picture a time and a process whereby we are able to remove sin from our lives and be renewed. It is a time when we are to draw closer to God and His Son. It is also supposed to be an introspective time when we are actively looking into our lives and finding sin, just as we are to search out our house for any leavening and remove it.

I am sure we are all familiar with the scripture that speaks of becoming a new lump. And that's what we are going to delve into more today in this split. The title of this split sermon today is *Become a New Lump*.

Turn with me please over to 1 Corinthians 5:7 and we will have a look at one of the places where becoming a new lump is referenced. **1 Corinthians 5:7—Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Christ, our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore, let us keep the Feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened of sincerity and truth.**

Now, there is a lot stated in this verse. But for now, let's just look at the part about becoming a new lump. So first, what is a lump? Pretty basic question here. The dictionary definition says it's just "a compact mass of a substance, especially one without a definite or regular shape."

We are without definite shape. We are moldable still. But we are able to be molded in a way that was not possible in times past because we have direct access to God through Christ. That is what 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 are speaking about. We can be without sin with God's help. He is able to mold us into our real full potential.

It makes me think a little bit about the body when Paul spoke about it back in 1 Corinthians 12. He says that "the body is not one member but many." Each part has its role to play. This applies to the Church now, but it applies even more into the future because we don't know what we will be built and shaped into.

So, this time of the year we are told to become a new lump – without the leaven, without the sin, so that we can be molded into our full potential. So, we are pictured as this lump that doesn't yet have a defined shape.

In Greek, the word for “lump” here is often used to describe “any substance that is mixed with water and kneaded.” And we see in the New Testament that both clay and dough are described as being a “lump.” One is dust from the earth that is mixed with water and the other is flour that is mixed with water. Both have to be kneaded, and both are essentially a blob of substance without a defined shape.

And especially in the Old Testament, we know that God often compared His people to lumps of clay. And of course, there are many comparisons with God being the potter.

So, while these two lumps are different, they do share some things in common. They are both showing how mankind is a work in progress. Because a lump, either of clay or dough, has yet to be fired, so it has yet to take on its final shape. They are both parts of the early stages of a work.

Let’s turn over for an example of God speaking about a lump of clay and Him being the potter in the Old Testament. That’s in Jeremiah 18:1-4. **Jeremiah 18:1-4—The word, which came from Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause you to hear My words. Then I went down to the potter’s house and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter.** So, the clay was marred or corrupted. It was ruined while the potter was working with it on the wheel.

I don’t know if any of you have had the opportunity to throw on a potter’s wheel. I did when I was a teenager, and I really enjoyed it. It’s actually pretty fun. You basically get to play with mud, and you can come up with some pretty cool stuff. But there’s a lot of technique involved. There is always a fight with the clay being too wet or too dry, and you have to get it just right.

You have to work out all the air bubbles, for example. Even if the air bubbles don’t give you problems when you’re on the wheel, when you fire it in the kiln, you find out if you had air bubbles or not. And that’s because a seemingly good piece of pottery, once it’s fired, will basically explode if it has any air bubbles in it. The air bubbles heat up and the only way for them to escape is to break the exact same thing that you were spending time to create.

So, you have many things that can go wrong. Even just the speed of the wheel. You know, you go too fast, and your lump of clay might become disconnected from the wheel and go off shooting across the room! And if you go too slow, well, you also have problems because then you have to put more pressure, and the more pressure that you apply the more likelihood that your hand is going to mash up the clay. It’ll just bust through the wall. And that happens often, especially if you are making the walls of your vessel pretty thin. You have to have real lightness of touch so that your fingers don’t bust through. And if that happens then your whole creation is ruined, and you have to start over again.

But the cool thing about working with clay is that you can reuse it. You have to take the ruined work, and you have to squish it back together by kneading it or wedging it. And the most important thing is to

make sure there are no air bubbles and that you have a very homogeneous lump. And then, you can pop it right back on the wheel and try again.

So, continuing here in **verse 4—so he made it again another vessel as seemed good to the potter to make it.** So, after the first vessel was ruined on the wheel, the potter takes the clay and remakes it into another vessel. And this one, it says, seemed good. It was pleasing and right.

Verse 5—Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? Says the LORD. And so, what happened with the first vessel on the wheel? It just says that it was ruined or corrupted when it was in the hand of the potter. God is asking here, can He not do exactly as this potter just did? He throws something on the wheel, and it gets messed up. That happens all the time. Not every piece comes out good when you are shaping it. So, cannot God just rework the clay and make something else that is actually pleasing and good?

The verse continues and says, **Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel.** So, God is clearly the one here that does the shaping. We are told that Adam was made from the dust of the earth. Just add a little bit of water to that dust and you get clay. So, God really is the potter; He molds and fashions us.

But we can resist Him, just like the clay can resist the potter. Clay can have impurities in it that can make it difficult to work with. And we sure have a lot of impurities. The clay can also fight against the potter's hand. Just like I mentioned, it can be too wet or too dry. If that happens, the potter is going to have difficulties to shape it how he sees best.

Verse 7—At what instant I will speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to throw down, and to destroy it. So, whenever God so chooses, He can pluck up a nation or kingdom. This has to do with uprooting like you would with a plant or a weed. So, you uproot it and throw it down. It's destroyed.

He goes on further to state, **If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.** So, this is stated very poorly. God does not repent, especially how we think of the word when it comes to sin. This word is translated in most instances as "comfort." It comes from the same root as the name for the prophet Nahum, who's meaning also has to do with comfort. But if we just plug the word "comfort" into that verse I still find it, you know, difficult to digest what's really being said.

Let me read you a definition of "comfort." It says, "the easing or alleviation of a person's feelings of grief or distress." In the Old Testament, this word is used in contexts where there is a need for emotional relief or solace, often following distress or grief. And in its most basic form, it is also related to "growling or

groaning.” So, it’s a little bit of a tricky word to translate using just one word in our own language as it is with so many other words that you try to translate.

This same word for “repent” is also used in **Genesis 6:6**. You don’t have to turn there, but I think it is good just to touch on it really quick. It states, **And it repented the LORD that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart.** Now, this is speaking of a time just prior to the flood. The wickedness of man had grown so much that God was going to flood the earth and only save Noah and his family. So just think of how God must have felt. He definitely didn’t regret and wish that He hadn’t created mankind. We know that God has a plan, and He has known what He is doing from the very beginning, so seeing mankind turn to wickedness was not much of a surprise for Him.

But think of the emotion that comes from seeing a creation that you love and have focused on, and see that creation turn from you and know that it’ll have to suffer as a result. Well, that’s what this is about. It is about a release of emotion, a groaning, a release of His grief.

Some translations state that “God was sorry that He had made man.” And that is partially true here too, but “sorry” not as in “regret.” It is sorry in the sense that He is sorry to see mankind go down this wicked path and the consequences that would come with that. Do you think God wanted to see that happen to mankind? Of course not. Just like a parent doesn’t want to see their child suffer because of wrong choices, God doesn’t want to see that for mankind either. But we have free-moral agency, and that comes with the territory.

So, returning back to Jeremiah we can see that this word for “repent” is being used in a similar manner. God is saying that if this nation whom He has spoken against, turns from their evil, that He (God) will experience an easing or a release of His grief and distress. That is really how God feels when we don’t follow Him. Why? Because there are consequences. God created this earth, this whole solar system, everything. There are laws and when those laws are broken there are effects. So, when it says in that verse that He will be eased of the distress that He intended to do to them, it is really speaking of the consequences for going against God.

This Old Testament scripture here is really showing how God cares about His creation, about mankind. He doesn’t want to see us suffer, and if we turn from our evil ways He’s glad about it. He doesn’t want to see us suffer, like I said, and simply by going against God, we will suffer. But, if we turn to God, and we show God that we have learned our lesson, then He doesn’t seek to see us suffer any more than we need to. But He will indeed allow us to suffer, especially when it is to bring about repentance.

Let me re-read **Jeremiah 18:8** again. **If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.** Now this, again, has to do with God’s judgment. God can decide to pluck up and throw down any nation or kingdom He so chooses. The reality

is that at the time when this was written, God was only working with one nation on the earth. So, all the other nations were against God. They were all doing their own thing. So, God can do with them as He chooses. If a nation whom God has decided to pluck up and destroy for their evil, if that nation were to turn from their evil, then God would have mercy on them.

Just think of the prophet Nahum, who I just mentioned a bit ago. That ties in with probably the best example of such an act from God. We know that Nahum went to Nineveh and prophesied about the coming destruction of the city and of the Assyrian empire. But before him, we know that Jonah was first sent to the city. Jonah went to Nineveh to proclaim to the people that God would destroy their nation for their evil ways unless they turned from them.

You can hold your place here in Jeremiah, we are going to return here shortly, but let's turn over to Jonah 3. **Jonah 3:3—So Jonah arose and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.**

Let's notice their response in **verse 5—So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.** Now, this is quite unexpected really, that a whole nation would have such a response. But as we know, Jonah wasn't looking very well after being in the belly of the whale. Three days and three nights in there and he must have been looking pretty rough, to say the least. But in any case, we see that the people in Nineveh believed God and this message that Jonah brought to them.

And it says they "proclaimed the fast and put on sackcloth." We know that sackcloth has to do with humility, and that makes sense if we understand what sackcloth really is. It is literally the same cloth that is used for sacks or bags, especially those that hold food stuff such as grain or whatever else type of food you want to put in there. In other words, sackcloth was the cheapest of cloth, it is permeable, and it was sown very loosely. Definitely not waterproof. And it was often made of goat's hair. If you ever have petted a goat, you know that they don't have the softest of hair. It's thick, stiff, and prickly.

So, imagine how itchy and uncomfortable that must have been to wear and have touching your skin. Sackcloth makes for a great durable material for a sack, but a horrible material for clothing, so you are plenty uncomfortable when you are wearing it. And that was the purpose. It is a physical reminder, just as fasting is. It is about denying self. You are denying your own personal comfort. You are denying what your physical body wants. So, the sackcloth pictures their humility and their recognizing that they were wrong and were now looking towards God.

Let's continue in **verse 6—For word came unto the king of Ninevah, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be**

proclaimed and published through Ninevah by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed, nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and cry mightily unto God. Yes, let them turn, everyone, from his evil way and from the violence that is in their hands.

So, the king made a proclamation that all the citizens should put on this sackcloth, and even the animals, and that they should fast and call on God and then turn away from their evil ways. That basically is what repentance is about. We have to call on God for forgiveness from our ways and then change, and we must do it with humility.

That should be our attitude during these days of Unleavened Bread as well when we are seeking to get rid of the leaven in our lives. And that is also the way that we are supposed to approach Passover. What Christ had to endure for us is not supposed to be taken lightly. We are even instructed not to take Passover in an unworthy manner. So, in that sense, we should be examining ourselves before we even get to the Days of Unleavened Bread and Passover.

Continuing on in **verse 9—Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger that we perish not?** Again, we have the word “repent” here showing up, but it is not really about God changing His mind. Notice right before the word “repent” is used it already says, “if God will turn,” as in change His mind. Here, the word “repent” is similar to what we read earlier in Genesis 6. It is about being “sorry for,” as in having compassion for them. And in this instance, it is certainly about having pity on them.

God knows we are weak and what we face every day. We were made with “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.” That is something that is built into us. So, our default is to succumb to those things. We actually have to fight against them. And that is something that God understands.

So, the king is asking, “Who can tell if God will turn and take pity on us in a compassionate manner, knowing how we are and seeing how we are trying to turn from our wicked ways.”

Then in **verse 10** we read, **And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that He said that He would do unto them, and He did not.** Here once again we have the statement that “God repented of the evil,” and now we should have a better understanding of what that really means. It is simply a matter of being sorry for, taking pity, and having compassion. And to a large extent, it is really about having mercy.

And unfortunately, too, this translation tried to indicate that God changed His mind about the “evil” that He was going to do to them. But again, we know that God cannot be evil in the way that we think of evil today. God is not evil. This word that is translated so often as “evil” in the Old Testament really just means “bad.” And it is sometimes translated that way too. It is simply the opposite of something good.

So, while that word may work often when it is translated in other places as evil, it definitely does not work when referring to God.

Some of these old translations are a large reason why so much of the world sees the God of the Old Testament as some kind of angry deity who wants revenge and is all too glad to punish mankind. But that is really sick and twisting of the truth. The God of the Old Testament is the same as the God of the New Testament, the same one who sent His only Son to us as a sacrifice so that the rest of mankind could have the possibility to be perfected.

But when we think of this example of Nineveh, it is the exact same as what was stated back in Jeremiah and the potter. Jeremiah 18:8 says, "If the nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent," or "have compassion or pity on them of the bad that I thought to do unto them." That is precisely what happened in this example in Nineveh. God was going to pluck it up and throw it down.

It's a very interesting example of how God works, and it's kind of like what was stated in some sermons more recently, that in times past we had this idea that God was only working in the Church. And that is not the case at all. His Church is the only place where He is working to build the 144,000, but if we think that's all God is doing in the world, then we are really limiting Him. We can see from this example that God can show mercy to anyone who turns from their evil ways, and in this example, it was towards an entire nation.

It makes me think of what will happen before Christ returns. I am sure we are going to see some crazy things happening. I mean, every day the news is pretty crazy. But is it possible that something like this happens again? I would say not only is it possible, but it is even highly likely if we consider how God's plan is shifting gears and how there will be people who live into the new world that is ruled over by the Kingdom of God. Those people have to come from somewhere. We know that there will be those that it speaks of that will not come up to the Feast, and that will be dealt with. But it also means that there will also be those that actually turn to God.

But another interesting thing to consider from this example of Nineveh is what happened afterward. About one hundred fifty years later, the prophet Nahum was sent back to Nineveh because the people there had returned to their wicked ways. And this time, they didn't repent, and they were destroyed by the Babylonians and the Medes. So, they repented once, and it lasted for some time. But turning to God is a continual process. That is what these Days of Unleavened Bread picture. It is about getting rid of all those little pieces of leaven and then keeping them out. You have to keep searching for them. And when we do that and we find them, we have a way now that we can be renewed and without sin. We can become a new lump as we read about, ready to be molded, similar to the clay.

And on top of that, we are told to eat of the unleavened bread. And where does that come from? We know that it comes from God via Christ. He suffered so that we could eat that unleavened bread that comes from him. And the process of repentance and going before Christ and God is what makes it possible to be fully cleansed. Little by little we can actually be perfected and made into a finished design.

Let's go back over to **Jeremiah 18:9—And at what instance I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it. If it do evil in My sight, that it obey not My voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.** So, this is like what we read back in verse 8. But instead, here God is saying that if He is working with a nation to build it and plant it, but they do not obey Him, that with a groaning and regret, He will not give them the blessings that come from obedience.

Again, this is not something God wants to do, but God is not partial. There is a right way and a wrong way. And regardless, if you are the nation or kingdom that He is working with, you will not reap the benefit unless you follow Him. That can be applied to God's Church as well. God wants to bless us. But even if you are in the environs of the Church and you go against Him and even though it pains Him, He will take His blessings away from you as a result.

Let's continue in **verse 10—Now, therefore, go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus says the LORD; Behold, I form...** Now, this is the same word that's used for the potter that's forming a vessel. So, He says, **Behold, I form evil/bad against you, and devise a device/plan against you. Return you now every one from his evil ways, and make your ways and your doings good.**

Now, notice their response to God in **verse 11—And they said, There is no hope. But we will walk after our own devices,** "We will walk after our own thoughts, after our own plans," **and we will, every one, do the imagination of his evil heart.** That's a pretty bleak response. This is supposed to be the nation that God is working with and yet they have this response.

Look at how Nineveh was moved and responded, and God didn't even plant them and build them like He had done with this nation. It is clear that they understand that the heart or mind is inherently evil, or maybe better stated, that the mind was made to easily succumb to its own devices, its own wants. There is nothing evil about our minds except that they are weak, and that they were given free choice to make those evil decisions. But overall, with these statements, they understand that mankind walks after its own thoughts.

It makes me think of the scripture in Proverbs. I will just read it to you really quick. It's **Proverbs 12:14.** It says, **There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.** So, it seems here that they are acknowledging basically what this verse says to a large extent.

In verse 11, they were stating that “Look, we are just going to go after our own thoughts and our own plans.” They knew that as a result, you know, what the outcome would be. Like the verse in Proverbs says, man comes up with his own path, but in the end that path leads to death. So, if they know they are just going to walk after their own ideas and they know that there is really not any hope for them.

And knowing how the people turned on the messenger, Jeremiah, a little later on in the story, perhaps they realized that they had just gone too far. No one was going to respond to God. I mean, if you look at their history, they didn’t have the best track record. But we need to think about that. Just as it seems they understood that they had gone too far with their sin, we too can go too far. Our minds can go too far. We can go too far. And if we do it for too long without repenting, then it can be too late for us, and then all that’s left is judgment.

So, that’s why it is important that we get rid of the leaven in our lives. And unlike the people of Judah, we do have hope. How many scriptures are there that speak of Christ being our hope? There are a lot of them that speak about this.

When Paul writes in **1 Timothy 1:1**, he starts out with his letter by saying who he is. It states, **Paul, an apostle of Christ Joshua by the commandment/authority of God our Savior and of Christ Joshua, our hope**. And in the beginning of this letter, he is stating who he is, that his authority comes from God and Christ, and lastly, that our hope is in Christ. It doesn’t get any more simple than that. If we understand it correctly, we can see that without Christ, we would have no hope. He plays such a crucial role in God’s plan for mankind. Without him, there would be no hope to ever truly change and for so much of mankind to be able to come through this.

Another scripture that speaks about Christ being our hope can be found over in Colossians 1:26. You can turn over there. **Colossians 1:26—The mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations but now is made manifest to his saints**. So, in the Old Testament, the Messiah was spoken of. They knew a king would come and save them, but they had no idea what that meant. So much of what they could see was just physical. Even the Jews of today still see the figure of the Messiah as a physical savior of sorts. Someone who is going to restore the temple and bring world peace and end suffering. But they have no idea how!

And just think of those that were around before Joshua came onto the scene. Sure, they understood some parts of the Old Testament about a Messiah – like someone was going to bring peace and save the world – but they had no idea he was going to fulfill all of these Holy Days from the Old Testament. It’s so clear to us now because we understand. How thankful are you that you understand that Christ fulfilled Passover and has become our Savior? Because for the rest of the world, it’s been a mystery.

So, the way God was going to bring about the Messiah was a real mystery. And especially how it was something that no one could have ever imagined. To think that the holy spirit could actually live in humans and come into them through the Messiah. That's a pretty crazy design and so it's no wonder it was a mystery. No one but God could have come up with it.

The only ones that could understand back then during Joshua's time were the ones that God was calling and working with. Because God has to give the understanding. Just think of Nicodemus when he was like "How can you be born again?" Or when the other ones, you know, when they flipped out when Christ said that they had to "Eat of his flesh and drink of his blood." The Jews at that time had their own ideas and Christ didn't fit into what they thought would happen. He wasn't how they thought that he should be. And because of that, so many missed out.

I am sure there are things that we are waiting for or looking for that are not going to work out exactly like we think they might. We are really along for the ride. And that's why it is so important that we stay close to God and get the leaven out of our lives, so that when we are presented with something that God is doing and working out, that we don't fight against it like those in times of Joshua did.

Continuing on in the next verse, **verse 27—To whom God would make known that is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.** It's pretty much stating in other words what I was just saying. The Messiah came not just for the nation of Israel, but for the gentiles too – for all of mankind! And it says the riches of the glory is Christ in us. Christ lives in God's Church. That is the hope for mankind. Without access to the holy spirit there is no hope.

Remember, we are told to become a new lump, "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." It is because of Christ sacrificing himself for us that we have that access to God and His spirit now by which we can actually become a new lump. Again, all of what this is talking about was fulfilled in these days – in Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Let's look at one reference here to the potter from Jeremiah 18. Let's turn over to Romans 9:17. Here, Paul is speaking to the Romans basically about how God works, how His plan has progressed over time, and how God is the ultimate designer in this plan, one that is totally righteous.

Romans 9:17—For the scripture says unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose I have raised you up, that I might show My power in you, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore, He has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens. So, we understand that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. After each plague, Pharaoh became more and more stubborn and resisted God more and more. Pharaoh was put in this position because God knew exactly what he would do when tested. It was all part of the plan. This is when Passover began and the foundation for the Days of Unleavened Bread was set.

Verse 19—Will you say then unto Me, Why does He yet find fault? For who has resisted His will? None. But, O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why have you made me like this? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?

God ultimately has all the power and can do whatever He chooses and in whatever manner He chooses to do so, so that His plan comes to pass. And as it states, “Shall the thing that was being formed say to the one forming it, why are you making me like this?” It’s like you are, you know, the potter and you’re making a pitcher, and it starts to talk to you and says, “Hey, like, why are you making me so tall?” That would be ridiculous. You don’t need to be responding to an inanimate object. You don’t have to give it your reasons. And you can have your reasons but, you know, the potter knows what the potter has to create, and the potter can make whatever he pleases. He can make a vessel to honor, and he can make one to dishonor.

But here is a question though. Does God actually turn those vessels to dishonor? Not entirely, if we understand it correctly. He uses vessels of dishonor to accomplish His plan. That is exactly what He did with Pharaoh. But He already knew what was in Pharaoh’s mind long before all of the plagues started. Pharaoh’s mind was already set against God. All that God did was magnify what was already there.

It is very similar to the creation of evil. Did God actually create evil? Well, not directly. But He did give free moral agency. He created an environment where evil could exist. Just think of Satan, he was actually created as Lucifer, the most spectacular of all of God’s creation. But Satan turned from God. That is when evil was created.

This whole environment that God created makes me think of AI, you know, artificial intelligence. It is something we have today, and we can kind of see how it relates to what God created, albeit in a very puny way. But if you think about AI, it is basically an environment that programmers create. There are laws essentially that are programmed. But since AI can learn on its own, it is only really limited to defined parameters or laws, if you will, that the creator or programmer has set.

And so, that is a little similar to what God has created. We have laws of the universe, but God gave us free moral agency. So, we are actively taking part in the design as well in that sense. God will form us, but it is up to our response as to what kind of vessel we will be made into.

But where God’s creation and AI differ in a huge way, is that God is always in control and knows what He is building. Pharaoh was stubborn and resisted. Those were his choices. But God used that for good. AI on the other hand doesn’t know what it wants to become. The programmer just puts together some parameters and lets it run, not really knowing what the outcome will be. The programmer is not in total

control, and that is very scary. If time were to go on much into the future, that is something that would really scare me, because that is a can of worms that can't be closed so easily once it's opened.

There was a show I watched some years ago called "The 100." It is a sci-fi show, and basically the earth was pretty much destroyed in a nuclear exchange because the AI had learned that humans had been destroying the earth. And so, the AI came to the conclusion that in order to save the planet that it had to destroy mankind. So, it let off some nukes and yeah, pretty much destroyed the earth and people had to go off into space to survive and whatever.

I have heard AI programmers talk about that exact same scenario as being a possibility of something that could actually happen because we are getting to the point now where AI can program on its own, it can hack into systems, it could take over basically anything that uses electronics. Anyway, it's definitely some really scary stuff.

But getting back to the vessels to honor and those to dishonor, it really comes down to our response to God. Because as we read about back in Jeremiah, God will show mercy to those that turn to Him, and He will take away those blessing to those that turn away from Him. The choice is ours to make. We can choose to cleanse the leaven from our lives, or we can get puffed up and have that leaven spread.

Let's turn back now to the scripture that we started off with at the beginning of this sermon. Let's turn back over to **1 Corinthians 5:6—Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover has been crucified. Let us, therefore, celebrate the Feast, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened of sincerity and truth.** Paul is emphasizing now what the Days of Unleavened Bread have become after Christ sacrificed himself.

Before that happened, what was this Holy Day about? It was really just a looking back at the time when the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt. It was a time to be thankful for what God had done for His people. But it was really a type of a physical memorial if you will. It was about being freed from a physical slavery. But there is a more important type of mental slavery that still existed. You can be free from physical slavery, but you are still subjected to a spiritual slavery, which is way more important.

But now, after Christ did what he did, these Holy Days were suddenly made alive. There was a hope to be freed from spiritual slavery. No longer were the Days of Unleavened Bread just about a physical removing of leaven from our homes. Instead, it was now about removing leaven from our own lives. And we are now pictured as being able to be made into something new, without leaven – a new lump.

We know back in Exodus 12:15 that we are commanded to get rid of the leaven from our houses, but also equally important was what we were told to replace it with – unleavened bread. It is commanded, not suggested, that we eat unleavened bread for all seven days.

The old leaven spreads just like sin does. But unleavened bread doesn't spread. In fact, it's made from a fresh lump of dough, not dough that has been sitting around during the day even. You basically mix it together and bake it right away. Because if you don't, natural leaven that is in the air that's all around us will enter into your lump and it won't be unleavened anymore. That is why we are supposed to eat of unleavened bread for all seven days. And if we understand the metaphor that God uses, we will also understand how He is showing us the importance of our connection with Him.

And what is our primary means of connection with God? Through prayer. We have to be praying to God on a continual basis. We have to be using the whole process of repentance that has been given to us. Those in the Old Testament didn't have access like we do now. Only the high priest was able to go before God in the Holy of Holies, and only once per year on the Day of Atonement, but Christ is there as our High Priest and Mediator and we can go before Him every single day, even multiple times a day – whenever. So, we need to remember that.

And then, of course, we have another big tool as we saw that was used in Nineveh, and that's fasting. But of course, when we are speaking about a daily thing, prayer is something that we shouldn't slack on. Again, eating the unleavened bread that comes from Christ is a daily thing. That is how we can become pure, be without sin, and become that new lump.

In closing here, let's turn over to some scriptures that speak about what unleavened bread really is – the unleavened bread of life as it's referred to. Let's turn to Exodus 16:3. We are jumping in here after the Israelites were freed from Egypt, and as is the case with them so often, they were murmuring and complaining.

Exodus 16:3—And the children of Israel said unto them, O that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt when we sat by the fleshpots and when we did eat bread to the full. For you have brought us forth unto this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger. So, they were complaining and reminiscing about how good they had it back in Egypt when they were slaves. You know, the good old days. It's pretty crazy to think but they were hungry, and they were yearning for those pots full of meat and for the bread as well.

Let's continue on in **verse 4—Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law or not.** So, God provided them with manna that fell from the sky, and He was testing them. He gave them specific instructions for how much was to be gathered every day. They weren't allowed to gather more and store it for the next day and have a day off. The exception, of course, was on the sixth day when they had to gather twice as much so that they could have for the Sabbath, for the day of rest. So, this was a test of their obedience to His instructions and also a test to see whether they would keep the Sabbath properly or not.

But God provided for them. They just had to collect the manna every day. And it's the same for us. God provides for us; we just have to take it in.

Now, let's look at John 6 where Christ references this scripture in Exodus. **John 6:31—Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Joshua said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which comes down from heaven and gives life unto the world. Then they said unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.** So, that is a good attitude they had. That's the attitude we should all have. How much do we really want that bread? And if we do, you know, we need to work on getting it.

Verse 35 says, And Joshua said unto them, I am the bread of life. He that comes to me shall never hunger, and he that believes on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, that you have seen me and believe not. He is saying you have seen me, but you don't believe me. And it is not just about physically seeing either, although he did perform a lot of physical miracles that people did see. But it is about everything he told them that is true. You know, we can receive the truth, but that doesn't mean we choose to believe it.

People choose to believe whatever they want, whether it is actually true or not. That is even more true today than ever before. Just look at what this world believes to be true. We are far past people losing common sense. Before, some of these crazy things that people claim today that are totally untrue would have gotten them put in a mental institution. But today those people are so often celebrated.

But my point is, even when we are confronted with the truth, it is up to each and every one of us to choose to believe what we want to. That is part of our free moral agency. And that is something we need to reflect on. Do our actions show what we actually believe to be true?

If we are not repenting of sin, then what does that say about what we believe? If we aren't getting rid of the leaven in our lives, then what does that say about what we believe? If we aren't eating of the unleavened bread every day, what does that say about us and what does that say about what we believe?

Let's skip down to **verse 53—Joshua said to them, Very truly I tell you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whosoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up in that last day.** That last part, the scripture we just read here, is all about Passover. We drink the wine that symbolizes Christ's blood that was shed so that he could make a New Testament whereby we could have this remission of sin, and we eat the unleavened bread that symbolizes his body that was broken for us.

If we don't take part in Passover, then we can't receive what God has planned for us through the Holy Days. It is a commanded assembly, but it is not a Holy Day. In a way, it's like a gateway to the Holy Days, if you will.

So, we know that the first step is that we must go through Passover. It's Christ's sacrifice that makes it possible for us to become a new lump. Passover is just the beginning. From there, we go into Unleavened Bread where we are to work with what God and Christ have given to us – searching out that sin and getting rid of it.

As we read about earlier with the example of Judah, they were hopeless. They knew that only with their own carnal ways and with free moral agency, that they would just walk after their own devices and do as they pleased. And so, God devised a plan, as it states. Not just for them at that moment in time, but a plan for His Church that would be established, and then eventually a plan for all of mankind.

God wants His Church to continually turn to Him and choose Him. If we do, He will show us mercy. And as Christ says, He will not cast us away.

And we saw back in Jeremiah and Jonah that God is not partial. He was working with Judah, and they turned away from Him, so their blessings were taken away and they were punished. On the other hand with Nineveh, we saw that this people that God was not working with, that they heeded His warnings and quickly turned to Him. They put in sackcloth, prayed, and fasted so that God would spare them. And He did.

Our God is indeed very merciful. That is something that we should be very thankful about during these days of Unleavened Bread. We have been given so much, and we shouldn't take this gift lightly. In these examples, we can see that God is the Master Potter and He's working not just with the Church but the entire world, albeit in a different manner for a different purpose. But it all aligns with His ultimate plan for mankind. God's plan and intention is that as many that can be perfected, will be.

Our goal in the Church right now needs to be focused on being transformed. We need to allow God to shape us into what will be needed into the future. We need to become that new lump.

So, let's do as it says and celebrate these Days of Unleavened Bread with sincerity and truth, because now we can.