

Spring Cleaning: A devotional with thought provoking questions

I have this memory of going to bed when I was a child and breathing in the smell of bedding and linens that had hung outside in the fresh spring air. This didn't happen every day, but you could count on it to be part of spring cleaning. The time when the whole house got a deep spring cleaning.

This spring as we approach Easter, you may or may not have already done your spring cleaning. Perhaps your spring cleaning is on hold for better weather. Jewish people don't have that option. To prepare for Passover, deep cleaning cannot be delayed.

For Jewish families, the house had to be cleaned by the morning of the 14th of Nisan, this year that is April 7th, from top to bottom removing all leaven, leaven by-products such as breads, pastas, etc. and it included animal feed. This was a rigorous job that could last well up to a couple of weeks if it was to be done right. This was instructed by Moses in **Ex 12:15** *“Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.”* So, on the morning of the 14th day of Nisan all yeast, the bread, food or feed containing yeast was removed and burned, so that the people could have their evening seder meal at the start of Passover, Nissan 15, since a Biblical Jewish day starts at sundown.

Let's jump forward to another Passover cleaning described in the Gospels. Shortly after Jesus rides into Jerusalem (*Nisan 10*), He goes to the temple, and look what happens: **Matthew 21:12-16** *“Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers*

and the seats of those who sold doves. 13 And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" 14 Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. 15 But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant 16 and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise'?"

Consider the following. This is Passover week. People were busy cleaning their homes from leaven, Jesus walks into the temple and cleanses the temple of the “leaven” that He found there; money changers, and sellers of animals and birds. The presence of a marketplace in the temple was a distraction to what the temple was truly all about. One a side note, there is historical evidence that the Chief Priest and Scribes profited from the business of the money changers and the sale of the animals and birds in the temple. You can image, they were more than a little put out with Jesus’ antics. They had just about enough of Him!

Now, consider being one of Jesus’ disciples. What was going through their minds? Oh, oh the Chief Priest and Scribes aren’t going to like this. Jesus is once again messing with the system. Why does He have to be so radical? Can’t He just let it be?

Jesus’ passion was for the temple and its God ordained purpose to be a place of holiness (*Ezek.43:12*), a place dedicated to honour His Father, and a place of prayer & worship (*Isaiah 56:7*).

Jesus recognized the “leaven” the sin that had come into the temple. It had been there so long that it had become the norm. But that didn’t make it right. It distracted from what the temple was intended for. Perhaps, the greedy profiteering of the sellers angered some of the people. Perhaps, the noise and the activity of the marketplace created

anxiety and pushed people to frustration and anger with each other, as they brought their offerings to the Lord. Let consider that; How easy is it to worship and pray when you are angry, anxious or frustrated?

Something needed to be done. So, Jesus cleanses the temple from the traders and the noise and activity which shouldn't have been there in the first place just like people were cleaning their homes of leaven.

Let's bring this home. As believers in Jesus, Christ has cleansed us from the leaven in our lives. **1 Corinthians 5:6-8** says: *"Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Therefore **purge out** the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, **since you truly are unleavened**. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, **not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.**"*

- In this letter to the Corinthians, Paul uses leaven to describe sin. Paul says we must clean out the old leaven; the carnal old way of living that can infect us as individuals, our marriages, our families, our communities, etc.
- Paul warns the Galatians that if even a little leaven comes in, it will leaven a whole lump. **Galatians 5:9** *"A little leaven leavens a whole lump."*
- Paul instructs the Corinthian church to purge out the sin, because you do not want it to affect and influence you not those around you.

In Christ, we are the unleavened bread and we are also the temple of God. **1 Corinthians 3:16** *"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"*

Therefore, as we come to the Passover, this year, take inventory. Is there malice? Is there sexual impurity? Is there evil? Is there sin? Is there an ungodly habit? How is your relationship with God? Are you prepared to ask God to reveal to you where there might be leaven in your life?

On March 21st, 2020 the Lord put these words in my heart: *“There is a deep cleaning and healing coming to my church. Deep, deep, deep, like the healing move in the 50’s and 60’s, but this one is for the heart of the church. My church is crippled and cannot do what I need it to do in these last days. I am coming with a mighty wave, to cleanse my church. I will come and sweep my church, burn the chaff, cleanse the heart, as I did in the temple, so that My Glory may fill the hearts of men, so that My church will be glorious without spot or wrinkle.”*

I believe this health crisis may be that season of deep cleansing. We are on this Sabbath rest as a world. Let us stop and consider where we are at. This Passover week, as we celebrate Jesus’ death for our sin, let’s reflect, have we picked up leaven along the way?

Let’s return to the temple. How does the story end? **Matthew 21:14-16** *Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. 15 But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant 16 and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise'?"*

Wow, do you see what the cleansing resulted in:

- **Healing:** The blind and the lame were healed! This speaks of the opening of spiritual blind eyes and of strength & confidence in our walk with God.
- **Joy:** Children were singing and dancing, because the leaven is gone from their home. This speaks of freedom in the home. The family, now free to walk in peace and joy and to express it freely.
- **Purity and Power:** This pure praise out of Children’s mouths terrified the enemy. This speaks of your words coming from your heart, including your prayer and praise. From a pure heart, it terrifies the enemy (**Psalm 8:2**).

Let's take a few moments and reflect on what the Lord might be saying to you.

Q. Examine your daily walk with The Lord? *(Be honest with yourself)*

Q. What is the greatest hinderance to a deeper walk with God? *(Ask Him if you don't know)*

Q. Ask the Lord's forgiveness.

1 John 1:9(NLT) *"But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness."*

Q. Do you have a daily devotional time with the Lord? If not, write down how you will start one. If you have a devotional life, how could you enhance it?

Q. Have you made a commitment to the Lord?

Acts 2:21 *“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.”*

Remember that God is always working something good in the midst of our trials and difficulties. During this health crisis, keep your eyes fixed on Him!

1 Corinthians 3:16 *“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”*

If you would like to someone to pray with you, please email info@onelifechurch.ca and someone will contact you.

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