

Are You Yet in an Accountability Relationship?

By Anand Peter

This meditation is based on the Epistle of Paul to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 5:1-13). It revolves around three main considerations:

1. Jesus died a sacrificial death atoning for the sins of all human beings, and He was led to the cross as they would lead a sacrificial lamb to the altar. Come to think of it, they used to be kinder to the lambs they slaughtered as sacrifices than to Jesus, Who was subjected to much torture before they nailed Him to the cross. *One fact that all Christians should keep in mind is that Christ's sacrifice on the cross was a one-time event, never to be repeated.*
2. Most of us know what leaven is. It is a biological leavening agent and works by fermenting the sugars in the food to create carbon dioxide. Fermentation produces additional flavour, such as the sour flavour in sourdough bread. *A pinch of leaven spreads through the dough, and such is the nature of sin.*
3. *There is no small sin and big sin.* Unaddressed sin, however small it might be, can corrupt our entire inner being.

Jesus Christ is both our Good Shepherd and the perfect sacrificial Lamb of God. He became the sacrifice for our salvation. Under the Mosaic Law, animals were sacrificed as sin offerings, again and again, whenever people returned to sin. The difference here is that Jesus was both the High Priest and the Sacrifice at the same time. We read in Hebrews 7:26-28: "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore." Our Lord Jesus became the perfect sacrifice, offered once for all. As we read the Passover and Last Supper narratives, we learn that Jesus is our Passover Lamb. Because of Christ's blood, God "passes over" us; instead of paying the penalty of death, we receive His gift of eternal life.

When we take communion, the bread and the wine symbolise Jesus' body and blood, broken and shed for us. The leaven mentioned in these verses is also a reference to the Passover. Unleavened bread, or bread without leaven as a raising agent, was eaten at the Passover. Leaven figuratively represents sin or wickedness. We read in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye 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 bread of sincerity and truth." The words "as ye are unleavened" indicate that we are already, in Christ, a new lump; we are therefore called to purge out the old leaven, and to live in accordance with that new identity as believers. During the original Passover, the Israelites were called to trust and act as God's own people.

That was not an abstract theological point. Paul was confronting a specific situation of immorality that had arisen in the Corinthian church (see verses 1-5). Their failure to deal with sin dishonoured Christ's sacrifice. The same is true today. When the church associates with, or even tolerates, sin, we dishonour the name of Christ and our own salvation.

Accountability plays an important role in the Christian walk. Are you currently in an accountability relationship? This is a relationship in which you allow a fellow believer to hold you responsible for sin in your life, especially in particular areas of temptation. Think about whom you could ask to fulfil this important role in your life.