

# Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for  
May 3, 2026

*"With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving, he shall present his offering with cakes of leavened bread."* – Leviticus 7:13



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“\*” = Please stand if you are able.

## Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

### Call to Worship – Colossians 3:12-17

*Leader: So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved,*

**People: Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;**

*Leader: Bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone;*

**People: Just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.**

*Leader: Beyond all these things put on love,*

**People: Which is the perfect bond of unity.**

*Leader: Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body;*

**People: And be thankful.**

*Leader: Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,*

**People: Singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.**

*Leader: Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,*

**People: Giving thanks through Him to God the Father.**

## Prayer of Invocation and Confession

### Gospel Absolution Text – 2Corinthians 3:18

**\*Hymn #310** – *“Rejoice, the Lord is King”*

### Scripture Reading – Leviticus 23:15-17

### Ancient Creedal Proclamation – Nicene Creed (pg#846 in the red hymnal)

## Offerings Presented

[Please put your tithe/offering in the plates before or after the service – Thank you!]

[Gifts labeled “Deacon’s Fund go to aid those in need in the congregation.]

**\*Doxology #731** (red hymnal)

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;*

*Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

**\*Sung Psalm #51A** – “*God, the Merciful to Me*”

**Prayers of the Church & Lord’s Prayer** (sins)

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

**Reformation Creedal Reading** – Westminster Larger Catechism, Q#167.

*Leader: How is our baptism to be improved by us?*

**People: The needful but much neglected duty of improving our baptism,**

*Leader: Is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in the time of temptation,*

**People: And when we are present at the administration of it to others;**

Col 2:11-12  
Rom 6:4,6,11

*Leader: by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby,*

**People: and our solemn vow made therein;**

Rom 6:3-5

*Leader: by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to,*

**People: The grace of baptism, and our engagements;**

1Cor 1:11-13

Rom 6:2-3

*Leader: By growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings*

Rom 4:11-12

**People: Sealed to us in that sacrament;**

1Pet 3:21

*Leader: By drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace;*

Rom 6:3-5

**People: And by endeavoring to live by faith,**

Gal 3:26-27

*Leader: To have our conversation in holiness and righteousness,*

Rom 6:22

**People: As those that have therein given up their names to Christ;**

Acts 2:38

*Leader: And to walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit*

**People: Into one body.**

1Cor 12:13,25

**Ministry of the Word**

**Prayer of Illumination**

**\*Sermon Text** – Matthew 13:33-35 (Luke 13:20-21)

**\*Gloria Patri #735** (red hymnal)

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.*

**Sermon** – “Parable of the Leaven”

A Sermon Series on Parables

# Ministry of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

## Invitation & Warning

TRC practices guarded open communion. All who profess faith in Christ, have been baptized, have a basic understanding of this sacrament, and are in good standing with a biblical local church are welcome to the Lord's Table. If you are uncertain whether you should partake, it is wise to abstain and speak with the pastor afterward.

## Prayer

### Words of Institution – Matthew 26:26-28 + Luke 22:19-20; 1Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:26

“While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.’ . . . Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.”

### Partaking of the Bread and then the Cup

### Prayer of Thanksgiving

\***Hymn #642** – “*Be Thou My Vision*”

\***Benediction**

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*Everyone is welcome to Coffee Hour Fellowship downstairs after church today*

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## Upcoming Events

- The next in-person **Elder-Deacon meeting** is on Saturday, **May 16<sup>th</sup>**, from 8:00-10:00ish AM, at the Aldrich's.
- **June 6<sup>th</sup>**, Saturday, there will be a **Pot-Luck Picnic** starting at noon at the Ensminger's (100 Hallow Rd, Winchester, CT). If possible, please bring a side, drink or a dessert. Hot dogs & hamburgers will be provided. (RAIN DATE: June 27<sup>th</sup>)
- **July 18<sup>th</sup>**, Saturday, there will be a **Pool Party / Picnic Pot-Luck** starting at noon at the Gabelmann's. Sandwich platters, beverages and an ice cream bar will be provided. If possible, please bring a pot-luck food item. (We will gather rain or shine.)
- **October 10<sup>th</sup>**, Saturday, there will our annual **Oktoberfest** at the Aldrich's. If possible, please bring a food item. (Rain Date: October 17<sup>th</sup>)
- *Regular Studies & Gatherings:*
  - Sunday School** for all ages (9:00 AM) at the Grange.
  - Tuesday Study** (10:30 AM – noon) – Augustine's Sermons, at Pastor Doug's house.
  - Wednesday Study** (6:30 – 8:00 PM) – On 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>: Thessalonians. On other: Free discussion.
  - Gen-Alpha Club** 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays, at Pastor Doug's house.
  - Friday Young Adult Discussion Group** (6:30 PM) meets on 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday, at Pastor Doug's house.
  - Saturday Morning Prayer Group** at the Gabelmann's. (Please call Sheryl to confirm if the group is meeting that day, 860-309-7250.)

## ONLINE RESOURCES

<i>TRC's Webpage:</i>	<a href="http://TrinityReformedCT.org">TrinityReformedCT.org</a>
<i>TRC's Facebook Page:</i>	<a href="https://facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/">facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/</a>
<i>TRC's Youtube Channel:</i>	<a href="https://youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT">youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT</a>
<i>Pastor Doug's</i>	<a href="https://youtube.com/simplyreformed">youtube.com/simplyreformed</a>
<i>Youtube Channels:</i>	<a href="https://youtube.com/@PilgrimsofPlunder">youtube.com/@PilgrimsofPlunder</a>

## **INTERNET PRAYER CHAIN**

If you have any prayer requests for our prayer chain, please email them to Donna Ensminger at: [trcnwprayer@gmail.com](mailto:trcnwprayer@gmail.com). (If you would like to join the Prayer Chain, also see Donna.)

## **LEADERSHIP**

<b>Elders:</b>	Rev. Douglas Aldrich, pastor	860-379-1147	douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net
	Bob Ensminger	860-485-8738	robert.ensminger@arthurgrossell.com
	Rich Gabelmann	860-605-7852	rgabelmann0415@gmail.com
	Rev. Jonathan Haulenbeek	203-709-0784	jhaulenbeek@icloud.com

**Deacons:** David Mattson (chair), Carl Bierce, Caleb Goodell, Mason Goodell, Dean Winters

**Sunday School:** Verna Aldrich

**Music Coordinator:** Cindy Rines

**Clerk:** Sheryl Gabelmann

**Treasurer:** Cindy Rines

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## **Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut**

*Worship Starts At: 10:30 AM (9:30 AM in the summer)*

*Sunday Worship At: Winchester Grange (100 Newfield Rd; Winchester Center, CT 06098)*

*Mailing Address: P.O. Box 343; Riverton, CT 06065 - Phone: (860) 238-7399*

*Webpage: trinityreformedct.org - Email: trinityreformedct@gmail.com*

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## **Sermon Notes**

Matthew 13:33-35 (Luke 13:20-21)

"Parable of the Leaven"

A Sermon Series on Parables

May 3, 2026

## **Introduction**

- 1) The last few weeks we have looked at the Parable of the Mustard Seed. Matt 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32  
Luke 13:18-19
  - a) It is a parable about how the Kingdom of God will grow greatly over time.
  - b) It starts off small and then becomes a mighty tree where many saints will find shelter and succor (to give help, relief, and assistance especially during times of distress and suffering.).
- 2) Today's parable (the Leaven) is similar but with a different focus. Matt 13:33; Luke 13:20-21
  - a) Where the Mustard Seed focuses on the Kingdom's external growth.
  - b) The Parable of the Leaven focuses on its hidden and inward growth that brings transformation.

## **Leaven**

- 1) Leaven, or yeast, is a piece of fermented dough kept from a previous batch and mixed into new dough to make it rise, making bread.
  - a) Leavened bread is our sandwich breads, rolls, Italian or French bread, etc.
  - b) Unleavened bread would be crackers, hardtack, or matzah.
- 2) Leavened bread excels in quality and taste (better texture, flavor, digestibility, etc.)
  - a) While unleavened bread excels in simplicity, speed, and practicality.
  - b) A loaf of Wonder Bread is better for sandwiches but terrible for backpacking.
  - c) Hardtack (or pilot bread crackers) is terrible for sandwiches but great for backpacking.

- 3) Only a small amount of leaven is needed, though it is required to make the bread rise.
  - a) It is a common household item, used to make one's daily bread.
  - b) Remember the ancients did not have electricity or refrigeration.
- 4) And for the West, unlike rice for the East, bread is the primary staple food.
  - a) Remember Genesis 3:19 about one of the primary toils of this life, "*By the sweat of your face you will eat bread*".
  - b) Yet we pray it (at least) every Lord's Day.
    - i) Matthew 6:11 – "*Give us this day our daily bread.*"
    - ii) Which is both bold ("*give us*") and humble ("*our daily bread*").
- 5) So leaven, or yeast, is common, necessary and yet powerful.

### **Leaven as a Symbol of Sin**

- 1) Yet, leaven throughout Scripture is usually used as a negative allusion.
- 2) It is used as a symbol of sin, and dangerous corruption, that must be purged.
- 3) Thus no leaven in the bread for the Passover meal. Ex 12:15,19-20
  - a) The Passover bread is literally called "the bread of affliction." Deut 16:3-4
    - i) Because it symbolizes Israel's suffering in Egypt and the haste of their deliverance.
    - ii) Thus no leaven in the bread.
  - b) Let alone the "Feast of Unleavened Bread", which immediately follows and is bound together with the Passover. Ex 12:14-20; 13:3-7
  - c) No leaven is to be mixed with sacrificial (animal's) blood. Ex 23:18; 34:25
  - d) No leaven is to be used in offerings by fire. Lev 2:11
- 4) In Amos 4:5 leaven is mentioned ironically as part of corrupted worship, which is done with hypocrisy and false piety.
- 5) Our Lord during His earthly ministry commands us to watch out, and beware of, the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod, which is hypocrisy. Matt 16:1-12  
Mark 8:15; Luke 13:21
- 6) Paul also warns about the danger of sin, that it is like leaven.
  - a) A little bit causes great damage and must be purged. 1Cor 5:6-7
  - b) Like such sins as malice (hatred), wickedness. 1Cor 5:8
  - c) And that false teaching, though seemingly minor, can do massive damage. Gal 5:9
  - d) A little sin, or falsehood, will infect the whole, whether the community or the individual.
  - e) What is that great and terrifying line by C.S. Lewis: the "*road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.*" – The Screwtape Letters.
- 7) Today's Parable, however, is one of the few times that leaven is used as a positive image in Scripture. Lev 23:17; 7:13  
Matt 13:33; Luke 13:20-21
  - a) The basic imagery of leaven being small, common, but having a massive impact, is still the same.

- b) But in this case, it is used to encourage us about Christ's Kingdom.
  - i) As we read in Matthew 13:33a – *“He (Christ) spoke another parable to them, ‘The kingdom of heaven is like leaven . . .’”*
  - ii) Or in Luke 13:20-21a – *“And again He said, ‘To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven . . .’”*

8) So, let us ponder this story about the Kingdom of God and leaven.

### **The Parable of the Leaven – The Woman**

- 1) The main character of this story is “just” a common woman making bread.
- 2) Let us be careful and not read too much into any parable.
  - a) Which is always a danger when reading a parable.
  - b) Parables are brief fictional analogies drawn from ordinary life that usually convey a single central universal truth.
  - c) The woman is simply the agent of the action, not the theological symbol.
  - d) Seeing the woman as Mary ruling in heaven, is way beyond this text.
- 3) However, nothing in Scripture is random or meaningless.
  - a) Notice common actors are used throughout the parables.
    - i) A man sows seed. Matt 13:24
    - ii) A merchant seeks pearls. Matt 13:45
  - b) What is more common than a woman making bread?
    - i) Especially in the ancient world.
    - ii) It is familiar, objective, modest, and indispensable in a very ordinary way.
- 4) The world looks to power and greatness; Armies, warfare, money, power, influence. Ps 20:7; 33:16-17; Prov 21:31  
Is 31:1; Jer 9:23-24; Zech 4:6
  - a) This is not the way of Christ and His Kingdom. Matt 20:25-28; 23:11-12; Mark 10:42-45  
Luke 22:25-27; John 18:36; 2Cor 10:3-4
  - b) Yes, the Kingdom will have great influence.
    - i) Christianity has greatly influenced warfare (e.g. just war theory, the idea that the military must be under civilian control, the Geneva Convention, the Red Cross, etc.) and politics (e.g. the rule of law, equality under the law, limited government, the end of slavery, etc.)
    - ii) But the outcome is never the goal.
  - c) If there is no bread, then there is no home, no hearth, and thus there will be no great armies, or powerful states, let alone good ones, nor even life itself.
  - d) The church is about the bread, being like a “mere” woman working dough.

### **The Parable of the Leaven – The Flour**

- 1) The woman is kneading “three pecks of flour”.
- 2) This too must be interpreted with restraint.
  - a) A peck (or “saton” in the Greek, or “seah” in the Hebrew) is a standard ancient unit of measurement.

- i) It is about 8 dry quarts.
- ii) 1 Bushel = 4 Pecks.
- b) 3 Pecks is a lot, about 40+ pounds.
- c) So to say you love someone “*a bushel and a peck, and a hug around the neck*” means you love a person a lot.

(From the song “A Bushel and a Peck” from the 1950 Broadway musical, “Guys and Dolls.”)

- 3) Some of the medieval interpretations, again, went crazy with this.
  - a) Thinking it represented the three parts of the whole man (body, soul & spirit).
    - i) Or, all of humanity as seen in the three sons of Noah (Shem, Ham & Japheth).
    - ii) Or, all the known (ancient) regions of the world (Asia, Europe & Africa).
  - b) There is some truth to these things, that Scripture does teach the Kingdom affects the whole man and all of humanity.
  - c) And to be inspired by Scripture to think about big things is okay.
  - d) However, to read things into Scripture that are not clearly there is dangerous.
  - e) And our first task is to always hear the Scriptures in context, seeking the original meaning of the ancient author, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- 4) Calvin had the correct focus.
  - a) The focus is on the power of the leaven, not the number.
  - b) The leaven works through the whole.
    - i) Nothing remains untouched.
    - ii) Matthew 13:33b – “until it was all leavened.”
- 5) Remember, Genesis 18:6.
  - a) “*So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah, and said, ‘Quickly, prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it and make bread cakes.’*” – Genesis 18:6
  - b) This is the same amount of flour in Matthew 13.
  - c) Abraham is hurrying to show hospitality because he is a righteous man.
    - i) This is a generous, even extravagant provision.
    - ii) But still within the norms of honoring distinguished guests.
  - d) The three visitors, however, are actually the LORD Gen 18:1-2,13,17,20-22  
and two angels. Gen 19:1
    - i) Only later does Abraham realize who they are. Gen 18:10,13-14,22-23,25; 19:1
    - ii) Thus the command in Hebrews 13:2 – “*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.*”
- 6) A little leaven is a powerful thing.

### **The Parable of the Leaven – Hiding the Yeast**

- 1) The parable tells us the leaven is “hid” in the flour.
- 2) Again, do not overread into the text.

- a) The term “hide” is not implying secrecy in some negative sense.
  - b) It is an ordinary term used for mixing leaven into dough.
    - i) The Greek here simply means to “*put into*”.
    - ii) Working it into the flour until it disappears from sight.
  - c) The Kingdom works invisibly and inwardly, not by outward display.
    - i) The leaven is not seen, yet it is active.
    - ii) Its effect is real, though initially imperceptible.
- 3) This leads to questions about where is the leaven growing:
- a) About holiness of the individual Christian becoming more sanctified?
  - b) The growth of the church into more holiness and having better theology?
  - c) Affecting society around us, such as ending slavery?
- 4) Good questions!
- a) But always be leery of focusing on man first, whether the individual or the earthly kingdoms of this world.
    - i) A most pernicious problem since the fall.
    - ii) Especially in our modern times.
  - b) Scripture puts the focus on the King and His Kingdom, then us.
 

*Matthew 6:33 – “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*
- 5) Thus the phrase “*until it was all leavened*”. – Matt 13:33b
- a) It describes the certainty of the outcome of the Kingdom’s work.
  - b) It is not a specific single moment in time.
  - c) But it points to the process of reaching its appointed completion.
  - d) Going from Christ’s 1<sup>st</sup> Advent to His 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent.
    - i) From His birth to His return in power and glory at the end of the age.
    - ii) The period we are living in right now.
- 6) This parable is first, and foremost, about the Kingdom and its operation.
- a) Thus the “*The kingdom of heaven is like . . .*” – Matthew 13:33b
  - b) It is hidden from sight.
  - c) But through the pervasive efficacy of the Gospel, working by the Spirit through the Word, it will spread everywhere and effectively and radically change whatever it enters.
  - d) That is its focus.
  - e) And its application flows from it.
    - i) The Kingdom will manifest in all aspects of life.
    - ii) “Spheres” if you will; Church, Family, State, Individual, etc.
    - iii) Which needs to be rightly and carefully ordered.

## Application

- 1) The Kingdom first affects the church,  
Christ's spiritual body on earth. Matt 6:33; 16:18-19; 18:17-20  
Luke 17:20-21; Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:13,18
- a) It is easy to get depressed at the current state of the church.
- i) Yes, there is a lot wrong.
- ii) There needs to be a lot of repentance.
- iii) Yet, the judgments of the Lord are  
true and righteous altogether. Deut 32:4; Ps 19:9; 119:137  
Dan 4:37; Rom 2:5-6; Rev 16:7
- iv) And all things are happening by His purpose,  
for His glory, and to show forth His justice  
and His mercy. Gen 45:5-8; 50:20; Ex 9:16  
Is 46:9-10; Rom 9:22-23; 11:36  
Eph 1:5,9-11; Phil 2:13; Col 1:16-17
- b) Remember the purpose of the parables is to give wisdom to the saints  
and show God's rightful judgment against the world.
- i) As we heard in our Lord's explanation of why parables were used back  
in Matthew 13:10-17.
- ii) And it is repeated in today's sermon text: *"All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds  
in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable. This was to fulfill  
what was spoken through the prophet: 'I will open My mouth in parables; I will  
utter things hidden since the foundation of the world.'" – Matthew 13:34-35*
- c) Yet it is the nature of fallen man to dwell on the negative and miss all of God's blessings.
- d) When you look at the big picture, however, isn't there so much to rejoice about!
- e) We have 2,000 years of worship, teaching, prayer, and reflection by the saints!
- f) We stand on the shoulders of giants, greatly inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- i) We have the Creeds, Catechisms, and Confessions.
- ii) We have great works of theology.
- iii) We have great hymns and prayers to recite.
- iv) We have refined doctrines tested by time.
- Such as the Trinity, the doctrine of the atonement, the covenant of grace.
  - Inerrancy of Scripture, amillennialism, presuppositional apologetics.
- g) Only a foolish man would ignore these great blessings.  
(Which explains what is so wrong with modern American Evangelicalism.)
- h) Go read Ephesians 4:11-16.
- i) He has not left us (His church) as orphans, He has been with us,  
and will be with us always, until the end of the age. Matt 28:18-20; Heb 13:5  
John 14:16-18; 14:26; 15:26
- 2) His church is made up of individuals created in the image  
of God and redeemed by His blood. Gen 1:26-27; Acts 20:28; 1Cor 6:19-20  
Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; 1Pet 1:18-19
- a) Who have been born again by His Spirit  
and given new life. John 3:3-8; 6:63; Ezek 36:25-27  
2Cor 5:17; Eph 2:1-5; Titus 3:5
- b) So that His holy ones will grow in holiness  
and trust in Him, and His Gospel. Hab 2:14; Matt 28:18-20  
1Cor 15:24-25; 2Cor 3:18; Col 1:6

c) 2Corinthians 4:16-18 – *“Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”*

3) The church, made up of saints, is destined for eternity. John 10:27-29; 17:2-3; Rom 8:29-30  
Eph 1:13-14; Phil 1:6; 1Pet 1:3-5

a) And we (individual Christians), and she (the church, the bride of Christ) are but pilgrims, strangers, in this fallen world, because His Kingdom is not of this world, and our citizenship is of another, greater, eternal Kingdom. Gen 23:4; 47:9  
John 18:36; 2Cor 5:1  
Phil 3:20; Col 3:1-2  
Heb 11:13-16; 1Pet 2:11

b) Yet the leaven of the Kingdom affects all around it.

c) And what a blessing the church, and the saints, are to families, and all other earthly institutions (government, military, businesses, etc.)

## **Conclusion**

1) Praise God we are on the other side of the cross.

2) We are in the New Covenant and have a New Testament.

3) That is why we use leavened bread in Communion and not unleavened as per the ways of the Old Covenant.

4) Because Christ has come, He has died, He has risen, He has given us His Spirit, and now reigns in heaven.

a) This should convict us as we go to His royal table.

b) And it should greatly encourage us, because His Kingdom is like leaven, which will grow, until it is all leavened.

5) 1Corinthians 5:6-8 – *“Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”*