

MARK 14:1-2, 10-11

## WHAT LEAVEN?

<sup>1</sup> Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him. <sup>2</sup> “But not during the Feast,” they said, “or the people may riot.”

...<sup>10</sup> Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. <sup>11</sup> They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover were observances which included the ridding of leaven; yeast. They were also celebrations of a radical new life as God's people. Finally, these commemorations brought to mind the necessity of death; the death of the first born and the death of the lamb, through whose blood the Israelites were spared. How fitting that this was the time that the religious officials found themselves at a point where the only solution to their problem was to rid themselves of this troublesome Jesus through his arrest and execution. Their desire was to protect the life they had, while God's desire was to provide that radical new life they were seeking in their worship. The leaven God was wanting to eliminate was the leaven of malice and evil; sin. The leaven the leaders wanted to be rid of was Jesus. Through Judas, they both got their way.

It is fitting that Jesus' arrest came through betrayal. It was the perfect opposite of the loving relationship that God offers. Betrayal is so hideous because it is so personally relational. There is no betrayal without the appearance of trust through which the victim opens himself up to the betrayer. Yet, God continued the celebration of the Passover by offering his Son up as the true Paschal Lamb.

As we live our lives each day, we need to see the leaven in the world as sin and not the sinners or the organizations and structures we see. As disciples we are to announce and demonstrate that our redemption has already been secured by the blood of Jesus. Therefore, we are freed to live a radical new life of hope in the midst of a world of despair.

**O Christ, you are the lamb by whose blood I am redeemed. You have saved me for a purpose and to a new life. Empower me root out of my life the leaven of malice and sin, and fill my heart with love for you and my neighbors. Amen.**