



Beware Of The Leaven....

"Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matthew 16:6).

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"And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. 6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. 7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. 8 Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? 9 **Do ye not yet understand, neither remember** the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? 10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? 11 **How is it that ye do not understand** that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? 12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of **the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees**" (Matthew 16:5-12).

This teaching reveals some salient principles that can make a difference in life, if taken seriously:

- 1) Loss of context and perspectives lead to serious misunderstanding of the message. Jesus warned His disciples about the doctrines of the pharisees, but they thought that He was talking about the leaven of bread. Why? - because they had lost the perspectives and context of previous miracles;
- 2) Sometimes people hear what their imaginations detect rather than the reality of the situation, and end up in destruction (see 2 Samuel 10:1-19).

Generally, leaven has the power to subtly permeate, pervade and transform every bread it comes in contact with. As long as leaven is separate from bread, it has no impact / influence on it. Reasonable contact with others is essential to influencing their values, worth and potentials for Christ as Jesus himself did, but we cannot afford to "become monkeys while trying to catch other monkeys". The Christian is in the world but must not be of the world, if s/he is to be effective in converting souls for Christ.

Scriptures like Galatians 5:7-9, I Corinthians 5:6-8; Mark 8:15, Luke 12:1 and Matthew 16:6,11 presents leaven as a source of malice, evil, hypocrisy, etc. Just like a good leaven leavens meals positively, in the same way an evil leaven pervades and increase the size of the evil and pollution. It is in this context

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that Jesus used leaven to represent the doctrines of the Pharisees. Jesus warning the disciples ahead of their contact with the Pharisees was aimed at helping them maintain their distinctiveness against evil, so as to have effective contact with sinners that produce transformation and added value. How do these apply to us today?

- 1) Watch against being derailed by sweet-talking, tongue-rolling human philosophies and crafty words that appear right on the surface but are potentially very damaging. **"And their word will eat as doth a canker"** (2 Timothy 2:17);
- 2) Beware of movements that sounds right and smells right on the surface but are driven by dark forces of destruction. **"... considering the end of their conversation"** (Hebrews 13:7);
- 3) "Be not deceived: **evil communications corrupt good manners**" - and not the other way round (I Corinthians 15:33). Be careful, white gloves get stained by mud, not the mud being stained white by the white gloves;
- 4) "How these Christians fell" - through compromise on little things.
- 5) "And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, **Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?** therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord" (2 Chronicles 19:2). Staying the right course can feel lonely, but do not be deceived by the flies "dancing" on the gum paper!
- 6) Leaven does not retain its physical identity, after it has invaded and transformed the bread. Similarly, **the leaven of the pharisees, can transform a disciple into a pharisee while s/he still looks, feels and smells like a disciple of Jesus!** And, here lies the danger!

Christ's teaching challenges all to eradicate evil leaven from our lives while pursuing godliness.