

MARK 8:11-21 LEAVEN

INTRO:

- Notice in today's scriptures a few things.
 - Mans vulnerability to forget God's faithfulness and power.
 - Ps. 103:2; Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:
 - The burden of Christ.
 - Leaven and its dangers.
- This incident signifies Jesus' last conflict with these religious leaders in Galilee.
- From here on the Lord's miracles and parables would primarily be intended for the disciples and not the religious leaders or even the crowds.
- Also, His public ministry in Galilee had come to its end.
- He would later make a trip through the area, but He did so secretly,
 - (Mark 9:30)
- After this He shifts His focus to Judea and Jerusalem.
- The crucifixion is less than one year away.
- The main lesson in these verses is the danger of leaven, not bread.

READ 8:11-21

VS. 11

- A sign from heaven, or in or coming down from the heavens.
- As to the Pharisees, Sadducees (Mt. 16:6) and Herodians who asked for signs many times, they would never have enough signs to convince them, only God could open the heart and shine the light of His glorious gospel.
- Right up to the end of Jesus' earthly ministry these unbelievers demanded more signs from Jesus.
 - Lk. 22:8; ^{Now} when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long *time* to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him
 - Mark 15:32; Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe."
- Oh how we all want signs, signs and confirmation for what we are praying and believing for. But God often lets us rest in faith and trust and we are to embrace the word Jesus spoke to Thomas,
 - Jn. 20: 29; "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and yet have believed."
- What a stark contrast is seen here regarding appreciation, respect and thankfulness toward Christ compared to the Gentiles Jesus had just been with.
- Here the religious leaders showed their evil intent, hatred and jealousy.
- These leaders were of His own people, yet would not receive Him, thus fulfilling the scripture in John...
 - Jn. 1:11; He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

VS. 12

- He sighed deeply: This word in the GK expresses coming to ones absolute limit. Of exasperation. He was exhausted and tired out with their hardness, criticism and unbelief. How it weighed on Him
- His heart would have it otherwise, but they would not.

VS. 13

- **And He left them. WHAT SAD WORDS.**
- **What a tragic picture this gives of Jesus departing from the willfully hard hearted. 4 sad words.**
- **Through out the gospels Jesus challenged them to believe Him, they saw a multitude of miracles and how Jesus cared for the multitudes, yet they would not repent, open their hearts or sincerely seek Him.**
- **As the bible says, "men love darkness rather than light." (Jn 3:19)**
- **God's patience has a limit. (Gen. 6:3) My Spirit will not always strive.**
- **Let us be sure, take heed that we are obeying Christ, walking in the light He gives us regardless of the cost for continued disobedience will not only greave the Spirit of God, but also harden our hearts.**
- **If I realize my heart is hard, even in a small area, go to God, repent, let tears and repentance soften my heart afresh as I go before God.**
 - **Break up your fallow ground. Hos. 10:12, Jer. 4:3.**

VS. 15

- **Jesus' teaching here spring from His confrontation in vs. 11&12.**
- **He charged them: In the GK. It is in the imperfect tense, meaning a emphatic instruction, repeated and ongoing. Not spoken once and done.**
- **These words are highlighted by the words, "He charged them."**
- **Take Heed; horao: to see, become acquainted with by experience. Pointing to a discerning mind.**
- **Basically, to use your head. Think it through, play it forward...what does the bible say? (thread)**
- **Jesus did not often use the word "beware." When He did it had a great emphasis.**
- **Beware: Blepo. To perceive by the use of the eyes, to see with the minds eye, to discern mentally. Be constantly keeping a watchful minds eye.**
- **Jesus only used this exact word one other time in the gospels. It appears 10X by 3 different GK words, but 8 of the ten had to do with Pharisees and the leaven.**
- **A greater vividness and intensity than "take heed. Expressing a mor earnest intent contemplation. (Acts 1:9)**
- **This warning was to watch out, beware of leaven. False doctrine.**
- **Leaven = doctrine.**
 - **Matt. 16:12**
- **Leaven, yeast always illustrates influence that is what yeast does, it influences the loaf and is usually spoken of in scripture as being a negative thing.**
- **Leaven is associated inmost cases to corruption, fermentation, puffing up.**
- **Part of the effect of the leaven of the Pharisee was their thirst for power, authority, superiority and position.**
- **Leaven is most often in scripture a symbol of something evil.**
- **Leaven is always a small amount of a given substance that has the ability or effect to alter anything into which it has been mixed. Sometimes very significantly.**
- **And in doctrine it can blur the correct view of God and truth.**
- **In short, the leaven of the Pharisees and the others spoken of here, was doctrinal error and personal hypocrisy. This came out as works righteousness, externalism, thus proclaiming themselves spiritually superior.**
- **They may have looked good on the outside, but inwardly they were full of self, uncleanness and death, so Jesus rightly pronounces to them,**
 - **Mt. 23:27, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men's* bones and all uncleanness.**

- Evil, like leaven, begins often small, hidden a little thing. But is soon spreads and grows infecting the whole.
 - Gal. 5:7-9, You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? ⁸ This persuasion does not *come* from Him who calls you. ⁹ A little leaven leavens the whole lump.
- The leaven of Herod and his followers the Herodians.
- The Herodians were a worldly group who catered to Herod, accepted the Roman way of life, and saw in Herod and his rule the promised kingdom of the Jewish Nation.
- **BEWARE:** Does this word catch our attention?
- What signs have you seen? Beware, falling rocks, beware of dog!

• **Pharisee:** A sect that seems to have started after the Jewish exile. In addition to OT books the Pharisees recognised in oral tradition a standard of belief and life. They sought for distinction and praise by outward observance of external rites and by outward forms of piety, and such as ceremonial washings, fastings, prayers, and alms giving; and, comparatively negligent of genuine piety, they prided themselves on their fancied good works. They held strenuously to a belief in the existence of good and evil angels, and to the expectation of a Messiah; In opposition to the usurped dominion of the Herods and the rule of the Romans, they stoutly upheld the theocracy and their country's cause, and possessed great influence with the common people. According to Josephus they numbered more than 6000. They were bitter enemies of Jesus and his cause; and were in turn severely rebuked by him for their greed, ambition, hollow reliance on outward works, and affection of piety in order to gain popularity. they were ritualistic, and of extreme order. Proud, and in love with authority and power.

- **Sadducees:** a religious party at the time of Christ among the Jews, who were sceptics and who denied that the oral law was a revelation of God to the Israelites, and who deemed the written law alone to be obligatory on the nation, as the divine authority. who, distinguished for birth, wealth, and official position, and not opposed to the favor of the Herod family and of the Romans, hated the common people, were the opponents of the Pharisees, and rejecting tradition, acknowledged the authority of the O. T. alone in matters pertaining to faith and morals.
- they denied not only the resurrection of the body but also the immortality of the soul and future retribution, and the existence of spirits and angels.

• **Herodians:** The Herodians derived their name as followers of King Herod. The Herodians were a political party that wanted to restore a Herod to the throne in Judea as well as other areas ruled by Herod the Great. They were political foes of the Pharisees who wished to restore the kingdom of David. We only find them being mentioned three times in the gospels and always in conjunction with the Pharisees. Although politically opposed to the Pharisees they participated with them in the persecution of Jesus.

- With these groups there was as little of God in the formality of the Pharisee as in the loose living of the Sadducees and Herodians. The true Christian avoids both.
- Sometimes what Jesus says is not to be taken literally. He is speaking figuratively and something deeper than what appears on the surface. (Jn 4)
- The fact that Jesus continued to warn His disciples about leaven/false doctrine and living, shows the immense importance of correct doctrine.
- Doctrine is a rudder, a compass, a guide for our faith. It is important. Make sure you are on holy doctrine.

VS. 16

- The disciples had forgotten the power and provision of Jesus, they worried about their hunger, missing what Jesus really meant.
- How easy it is to forget the faithfulness of God. PS 103:1-2
- The disciples were somehow ignorant of the Saviors warning about leaven. Thinking only of the physical and not Pharisaical error.

VS. 17

- Notice two little words here which show us the untiring working of Jesus regarding the shallow understanding of His disciples.
 - Yet & still. It shows He had been working and will still work.
- He knew they would eventually, with the coming of the Spirit, grasp what He sought for them to know.
- By our first birth and by our nature we are all deaf and blind. Our hearts are naturally hard and self-absorbed.
- But the work of the Holy Spirit is to soften our hearts and open our eyes.
- Let the word of God, the truth of God penetrate, germinate, grow, and bring forth a harvest in my heart and life? May my heart be good soil.

VS. 18

- Are we not often like these disciples and miss what Jesus is trying to teach us, say to us?
- I am sure that Jesus was somewhat frustrated with their slowness of understanding, and the hardness of the heart of the Pharisees.
- Remember disciple means "learner." Oh they were slow to learn, but am I not also?
- Jesus did not give up on them but continued to teach them. He stayed and taught them for 40 days after His resurrection, (Acts 1:3)
- He then continued to teach them by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Just as He had promised. (Jn. 16:12-15)
- And He continues to teach His disciples/learners today through the Spirit and the word.

VS. 21

- How is it possible you do not understand?
- This phrase is in the imperfect tense. That is He said it over and over again. There was an agony of soul behind this question. (Jn. 14:9)
- Matt. 16:12 informs us that the disciples finally got what Jesus meant.
 - Then they understood that He did not tell *them* to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the ^[a]doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - What a relief.

CONCLUSION:

- Today this warning of "beware of the leaven," false doctrine, would be a charge from Christ to be aware and stay far from the doctrinal temptations of legalism, hypocrisy, rationalism, materialism, immorality and the worldliness of culture which creeps into one's heart and the church.
- Doctrine is important.
- It means "A BODY OF TEACHING."
- We all have them.
 - How can one be saved.
 - What is God like.

- **Does God forgive? Etc...**
- **We must be clear and be aware of false doctrine and correct doctrine. Know your bible, all of it.**
 - **Rom. 16:17; Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.**
 - **1 Tim. 4:13, Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.**
 - **Tit. 2:7; in all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,**
 - **Acts 2:42, And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' ^[a]doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers**