

Embrace The Least... Not The Yeast!

Matt 5:17-20 (NIV)

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the LEAST stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

19 Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the LEAST of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called LEAST in the kingdom of HEAVEN, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called GREAT in the kingdom of HEAVEN.

20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of HEAVEN.

Matt. 16:6 (ESV) - Jesus said to them, "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Matt. 16:6 (NIV) - "Be careful," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Matt. 16:11 (ESV) - How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven (yeast) of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

I. "What is yeast/leaven?"

II. "What does the Bible say about yeast/leaven?"

1 Corinthians 5:7-8 (NIV)

7 Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

8 Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

III. "What is the yeast/leaven of the Pharisees?"

1. They made the Commandments of God void by their traditions!

Matt. 15:3-6 (ESV)

3 He answered them, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"

4 For God commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.'

5 But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or his mother, "What you would have gained from me is given to God,"

6 he need not honor his father.' So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God.

2. They were hypocrites, teaching one thing and practicing another!

Matt. 15:7-8 (ESV)

7 You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:

8 "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me..."

C.S. Lewis - "Anyone who has ever taught or attempted to lead others knows the tendency in all of us toward exaggerating our depth of character while treating leniently our flaws. The Bible calls this tendency hypocrisy. We consciously or subconsciously put forward a better image of ourselves than really exists. The outward appearance of our character and the inner reality (that only God, we, and perhaps our family members know) do not match."

3. They did their works to be seen and appreciated by men!

Matt. 23:3-7 (ESV)

3 so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.

4 They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

5 They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long,

6 and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues

7 and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi[b] by others.

4. They loved the spotlight and special treatment!

Matt. 23:13 (ESV) - "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in."

5. They used their office to make themselves rich!

Luke 20:45-47 (ESV)

45 And in the hearing of all the people he said to his disciples,
 46 "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts,
 47 who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

IV. "What are we to do with this yeast/leaven?"

The scientific definition of fermentation or yeast is "a substance in a state of putrefaction."

1. A little unbelief in the lives of believers is a dangerous thing!

Matt. 16:7-12 9 (ESV)

7 And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, "We brought no bread."

8 But Jesus, aware of this, said, "O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread?"

9 Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered?"

10 Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered?"

11 How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

12 Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

2. A little sin in the life of a believer is a dangerous thing!

Ephesians 4:27 (ESV) – and give no opportunity to the devil.

Romans 6:11-13 (ESV)

11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

Galatians 5:9 - "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough."