

Watch Out for Leaven – Part 1

Matthew 16:6

⁶ Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and **BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN** of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Matthew 16:6 NASB

⁶ And Jesus said to them, “**WATCH OUT** and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Jesus is here warning His disciples to beware of the ‘leaven’ of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. This warning caused the disciples to suspect that Jesus was saying this because they forgot to bring bread on the trip.

Matthew 16:7

⁷ And they reasoned among themselves, saying, **IT IS BECAUSE WE HAVE TAKEN NO BREAD.**

The disciples thought Jesus was pointing out a deficiency in their preparation, when in reality He was pointing out a lack in their spiritual perception.

Matthew 16:11–12

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.

When Jesus warned His disciples of the “leaven of the Pharisees” He was referring to the doctrine of the Pharisees, not literal bread. Moreover, this belief that you are responsible for our own salvation is an error they picked up from the Pharisees. The Pharisees had corrupted their minds into thinking that they were saved by self-works. Unless they took certain precautions (bread on the journey), they could not be saved. This was leavening their minds and keeping them from seeing the truth.

Matthew 16:9–10

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 SEVEN THOUSAND**, and how many baskets ye took up?

Notice how this leaven of self-works was affecting their spiritual perception and understanding. As long as they were trying to save themselves, they could not see (discern) what God was doing in the miracles He performed.

For instance, they did not understand that the less they had to save themselves, the more power God supplied to them. This was demonstrated when God fed 5000 men after they gave Him 5 loaves. However, He fed LESS (4000 men) after they gave Him MORE (7 loaves)!

We should probably point out that the *leaven* in their doctrine not only produced a flaw in their understanding, it also produced a flaw in their *faith*.

Matthew 16:7–8

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,**

Those people who are working hard to save themselves, are typically the ones who are operating in the least amount of faith. When people *do too much*, they aren't leaving any room to believe God!

In fact, whenever Jesus used the phrase “O ye of little faith,” it was always in response to his disciples doing too much.

Matthew 6:30

³⁰ Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more clothe you, **O YE OF LITTLE FAITH?**

This was spoken after the disciples were “worrying” too much.

Matthew 8:26

²⁶ And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, **O YE OF LITTLE FAITH?** Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

This was spoken after the disciples were “fearing” too much.

Matthew 14:31

³¹ And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, **O THOU OF LITTLE FAITH,** wherefore didst thou doubt?

This was spoken after Peter was “doubting” too much (or looking at the wind and the waves)!

Now, where did the disciples get this leaven (i.e. the belief they had to save themselves)?

Matthew 16:6

⁶ Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven **OF THE PHARISEES AND THE SADDUCEES.**

Apparently, they got it from the Pharisees or the *false teachers*.

Matthew 15:1–2

¹ Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, ² Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they **WASH NOT THEIR HANDS WHEN THEY EAT** bread.

The Pharisees wrongly taught men to wash (purify themselves) BEFORE eating. This is a false doctrine.

1 Timothy 4:1

¹ Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to **SEDUCING SPIRITS, and DOCTRINES OF DEVILS;**

‘Doctrines of devils’ are used by the devil to try and seduce men from the faith (truth). These are the “tares” the enemy sows among the wheat to keep them from bearing *fruit* ([Matthew 13:24, 25](#)). The enemy (devil) inserts ‘leaven’ (error) into truth because he knows that ANY changes to the truth will keep you from bearing fruit. Moreover, anyone who does not bear fruit will eventually fall away.

1 Timothy 4:2, 3

² Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;
³ **FORBIDDING TO MARRY, and COMMANDING TO ABSTAIN FROM MEATS,** which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

One doctrine that the devil tries to introduce to people is one that “forbids men to marry.” This is a demon doctrine because it *forces* people to do something that is against nature.

Another demon doctrine is one that *forces* men not to eat meats. This is a demon doctrine because it denies the work of Christ. Plus, it deceives men into trying to save themselves.

Now, the thing I want you to see is how we are directed to eat in the New Testament.

1 Timothy 4:4, 5

⁴ For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: ⁵ For it is **SANCTIFIED BY THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAYER.**

We are not told to *wash* before eating. Instead, we are told to pray (and believe) before eating! This is actually a metaphor of *salvation*. And notice, we're saved, *not* because we have washed or purified our own selves (meat), but because we pray and believe that God has *already* made our "meat" clean. Thus, any doctrine that requires us to cleanse our own selves apart from faith in Christ, is an example of *leaven*!

Galatians 5:3, 4

³ For I testify again to every man that is **CIRCUMCISED**, that he is a debtor to **DO THE WHOLE LAW**. ⁴ Christ is become of **NO EFFECT UNTO YOU**, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are **FALLEN FROM GRACE**.

Paul is warning them against seeking to be justified by the Law (circumcision), because this not only separates them from Christ, it also separates them from grace. Furthermore, such teaching is an example of *leaven*!

Galatians 5:7–9

⁷ Ye did run well; **WHO DID HINDER YOU** that ye should not obey the truth? ⁸ This persuasion *cometh* not of him that calleth you. ⁹ **A LITTLE LEAVEN** leaveneth the whole lump.

The fact is, we are justified by *faith*, and not by *works*.

Romans 3:28

²⁸ Therefore we conclude that a **MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH** without the deeds of the law.

Moreover, those who are justified by faith are believing that God will supply everything they need to be saved and bear (fruit).

Romans 4:19–21

¹⁹ And being not weak in faith, **HE CONSIDERED NOT HIS OWN BODY NOW DEAD**, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the **DEADNESS OF SARAH'S WOMB**; ²⁰ He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, **GIVING GLORY TO GOD**; ²¹ And being **FULLY PERSUADED** that, what he had promised, **HE WAS ABLE ALSO TO PERFORM**.

Neither Abraham nor Sarah had any power (strength) to bring forth a son. Instead, they *believed God* was able to "perform" it in them! This justified them and gave them access to grace (strength) to bring forth the promise.

Romans 5:1–2

¹ Therefore being **JUSTIFIED BY FAITH**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: ² By whom also **WE HAVE ACCESS BY FAITH INTO THIS GRACE** wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Notice, grace is given to us in order to enable us to STAND. Grace is not given to us in order to give us permission to sin.

Jude 4

⁴ For there are **CERTAIN MEN CREPT IN UNAWARES**, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly *men*, **TURNING THE GRACE OF GOD INTO LASCIVIOUSNESS**, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The grace of God doesn't give us permission to sin. Instead, it teaches us to refuse sin and live righteously.

Titus 2:11–12

¹¹ For the **GRACE OF GOD** that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, ¹² **TEACHING US** that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should **LIVE SOBERLY**, righteously, and godly, in this present world;