WE DON’T UNDERSTAND

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**DATE: 12/30/2018 SS**

**TEXT: Mark 8:14-21**

**INTRODUCTION**

As we begin a new thought today, let’s take a minute to review a little

In **vs. 1-8**, Jesus takes seven loaves of bread and a few small fish and He feeds 4,000 people!

In **v. 8** the disciples collect the leftovers and find they have 7 baskets full

In **vs. 11, 12** Jesus is confronted by the Pharisees

And we see Jesus refusing to play their game in **v. 13 a**

***“And He left them…”***

He simply leaves them standing, while He and His men get into a boat and sail away – **v. 13 b**

That brings us to our text

While they are crossing the lake, Jesus takes the opportunity to teach His men an important Lesson

**v. 15 – *“Jesus charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod”***

But they fail to Understand the Lesson Jesus is trying to teach

Why? It seems their minds are, on other things

**v. 14 – *“Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf”***

While they are crossing the lake, the disciples still have their mind on bread

They realize that they have forgotten to bring along any bread for themselves

I can imagine their conversation, “*Oh brother! We had seven huge baskets full of bread back there and we forgot to bring any with us! Now we are hungry and we don't have enough bread to feed even one of us!*”

Of course, Jesus knows what’s going on!

And He uses their forgetfulness as an opportunity to teach them a great Spiritual Lesson

I want to eavesdrop this morning on this conversation between Jesus and His men

Because we need to hear what He has to say

Let's observe the *lessons* the Lord teaches His men in these verses

About their lack of Faith and their Failure to Understand His teachings

I want to take the Lord's words in **v. 21 b** and Teach on

***“How is it that ye do not understand?”***

We need this, because we are just like the disciples

Sometimes we just don't get it / Let's listen and learn

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**I. THE LORD’S “COMMAND” – v. 15**

***“And He charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod”***

Jesus ***“charged them”*** – *a strong command, the matter was serious*

He then warns them – ***“take heed”*** *Be careful*

***“beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod”***

Our Lord's charge and warning needs to be looked at

First, let’s look at …

**A. The ‘Leaven’**

Leaven is another word for yeast

Yeast is added to dough to make it rise

Yeast is a bacterium that feeds on the dough and these bacteria give off a gas that causes bread to rise

Yeast can lie dormant for months, and then, at the first hint of moisture, it comes to life and begins its work

The yeast will completely fill the whole lump of dough

As I mentioned, the yeast feeds on the dough and produces gas which causes the dough to ferment

Fermentation, is the first step in decomposition

The only thing that can stop the leaven is extreme heat

When yeast is exposed to the fire, (Baked) it dies

In the Bible, Leaven is a picture of Sin, Evil and Wickedness

It is used as a picture of Corruption

Believers are commanded in **I Corinthians 5:7** to…

**“*Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened*,”**

We are to lay aside evil and spiritual corruption and live for the Lord

We are also warned in **I Corinthians 5:6** that…

**“*a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*,”**

The idea here is that a little sin is like yeast or leaven in our lives

When we tolerate a little sin in our lives, (any sin!)

It will soon infiltrate every part of our lives

Jesus warns about allowing Evil Influences in

So, Jesus warns about the **“*leaven*”** or *the evil influences* of …

**B. The ‘Pharisees’**

So, what is the Leaven of the Pharisees?

You know I found a great commentary that gave me this answer after just a little research

I want to tell you about this commentary so you can get one and use it for yourself

It is the greatest commentary on the Bible every written

It is called the Bible!

Comparing Scripture with Scripture

**I Corinthians 2:13 – *“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual”***

The Leaven of the Pharisees is defined in **Luke 12:1**

**“*…beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy*”**

The Pharisees were religious men, but their religion was external; it did not change their hearts

They claimed to love the Lord, but they were nothing but religious fakes and phonies

When they infiltrated the lives of those around them,

… Like yeast, they corrupted those lives as well

In **Matthew 23:15**, Jesus said it like this

**“*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves*”**

Jesus is warning His men of the danger of having a hypocritical heart

That is something that we all struggle with!

It doesn’t take much for someone to get cold and distant from God

Then we begin to pretend on the outside that everything is OK

We are masters at pretending that our hearts are where they ought to be

Jesus is warning us all against hypocrisy in our hearts

We need to be sure that we are what we claim to be as we pass through life

Beware of the leaven of hypocrisy!

Next, it speaks of the **“*leaven of”*** *…*

**C. ‘Herod’**

In **Matthew 16:6** which is a different account of the same event

Jesus calls it the Leaven of **“*the Sadducees*”**

The Pharisees were the religious conservatives of the day while the Sadducees were the religious liberals

They were worldly and secular and they joined forces with King Herod in compromising with the Romans

These people, both the Sadducees and the followers of Herod, are often called ***“Herodians”***

The Leaven that infiltrated their lives and teaching was Materialism, Worldliness and Unbelief of the Word of God

Jesus is warning His men not to get caught up in the quest for things of the world

**I John 2:16 – *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world”***

To be a friend of the world is to be the enemy of God

**James 4:4 – *“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God”***

The Lord's Will then and now is that His people be separated unto Him

We are to live as ***“strangers and pilgrims”***

**I Peter 2:11 – *“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;”***

Not partaking in the world's sins or being caught up in the desire for more of what this world has to offer

As far as sin is concerned, we are commanded to be a separate people,

**II Corinthians 6:17 - “*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you*”**

As far as material things are concerned, …

… we are to seek our treasure in Heaven and not in this world,

**Matthew 6:19-21 - “*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:” “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:” “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*”**

Jesus is simply telling His Men, regardless of the age in which they live … to Beware of Hypocrisy, Worldliness and Compromise

He tells us that if we allow just a little of those things to exist in our lives, they will infiltrate every area of life,

Just like yeast infiltrates an entire lump of dough

He still expects His people to live different!

**THE LORD’S “COMMAND”**

**II. THE DISCIPLE’S “CONFUSION” – v. 16**

***“And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread”***

The Disciples did not understand

The disciples heard the Lord's warning and they immediately misunderstand what He is trying to say

Their minds are so focused on the material, physical world that they cannot see the spiritual side of anything

They hear what He says … but can’t figure it out

Here are some possibilities as to what they might have been thinking or asking

-- “*Is He rebuking us because we didn't bring any bread?*”

-- “*Is He telling us not to buy bread from the Pharisees or the Herodians?*”

-- “*Is Jesus saying that we should have no fellowship with the Pharisees and the Herodians?*”

Of course, none of the above is the correct answer!

Jesus isn't talking about real bread at all

He is merely using the leaven found in bread as a metaphor, as a symbol of evil

They are so worldly-minded that they can't grasp what the Lord is trying to tell them

**1.** Let's not be too hard on these fellows

There are a lot of times when we don’t get it either

It’s not that the Lord isn’t trying to convey His Truth

It’s that we aren’t really all that interested

That's why we aren't any farther along than we are right now

(The problem is that we think we’re a lot further along than we really are, which is a form of Pride)

Or It’s just not that important to us

**I Corinthians 3:1 – *“And I, brethren, could not speak***

***… unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ”***

I’m not trying to be hard on you, but the truth is that our lives and our words tell on us

That's why folks continue to struggle like they do

That's why we don't enjoy the victory like we could

We are often quick to dismiss the spiritual truths that we are facing

We are so quick to dismiss what we see and hear without ever realizing that God is trying to Grow us, Teach us and Develop us for His glory

**2.** Let's take a church service for example

We always come in and do the very same things

The choir sings, we sing, we pray, we sing again, we receive an offering, someone preaches and we all go home

It's the same formula Sunday after Sunday

We have gotten used to it and it's just what we do

We have become so accustomed to the routine of doing "the church thing” that we fail to even consider God,

Or to even look for God in what we are doing

-- Have you ever stopped to think of just the privilege we have of coming to church

And how much of a spiritual blessing that is?

When you go to church, you are enjoying a privilege that many people around the world have never and will never have

-- Have you stopped to think that when you get to go to a church like this one, that you are especially blessed?

Think about it!

God has been good to this church!

We have what people everywhere are looking for

We have it, but we fail to recognize it for the blessing it is

We take it for granted

(And, I wouldn't do that if I were you)

When we take the blessings of God for granted, He has a way of removing those Blessings from our lives and giving them to others who will appreciate those things and who will be thankful to the One Who gave them!

-- Have you ever stopped to think that every message you hear is an encounter with eternity?

That the preacher has spent time with the Lord

He has gotten a word from God and He is sharing that word with you (Probable not)

What a blessing!

-- Have you ever stopped to consider that every song and every service is an opportunity to offer praises to the King?

We may sing the same songs and do the same things,

But we are privileged to be here

Some may think, “*Oh No! Not that song again!*”

It doesn't matter if we have sung it thousands of times

Look at the words, offer them up as a hymn of praise and love for Jesus and He will make it real to your heart!

-- Have you ever stopped to think that every testimony you are privileged to hear is a close encounter with Heaven?

When people stand to testify, I guarantee you there is more than one who says (in their heart of course)

“*Well, there they go again!*”

But, I say, if we look at it the right way, we will praise the Lord that someone loves the Lord enough to stand up and praise Him

If some of you stones would start standing and praising the Lord, then some of these saints could take a rest

**3.** Are you still with me?

I bet some of you aren’t, because this stuff just doesn’t interest you!

That is a scary place to be

**4.** Consider for a moment, other areas of your life

Have you ever stopped to consider that the trials we face might just be the hand of the Lord?

**5.** Have you ever thought about the truth that God is intimately involved in your life

And that which you see as Routine, Accidental or Coincidental is really God at work?

All I am saying that we need to learn to see beyond the obvious and look for the unseen hand of God working in us and around us

The disciples weren’t getting it!

They were so focused on the material world that they failed to see the spiritual work of God

I fear that we are much the same

God is seeking to Grow us, Change us, to Develop us

And we are so captivated by the world and the needs we think we have … that we cannot see the Lord at work around us

What a shame!

When we are like that, we miss out on so much that God wants us to enjoy

We need to pray that God will help us to look beyond the material to see the spiritual

We need His help to grow beyond our spiritual limitations

**THE LORD’S “COMMAND”**

**THE DISCIPLE’S “CONFUSION”**

**III. THE LORD’S “CHALLENGE” – vs. 17-21…**

Remember, Jesus started out trying to warn them about the evils of the Pharisees and the Herodians

They totally missed the message and are focused on physical bread

In a sense, they are no different than the Pharisees that rejected Jesus in **v. 11**

The Pharisees saw what Jesus could do and they refused to believe

The Disciples were with Jesus when He performed many of His miracles and still didn’t understand

They still couldn't understand that He could take care of them

They were so worried that they weren’t going to eat

Didn't they know that Jesus could take that one loaf and feed them all?

Didn't they understand? No, they didn't!

Now, it's one thing for unbelievers like the Pharisees to fail to see and believe

It's another thing altogether when those who claim to know and love the Lord …

… to fail to see His power and believe Him for their needs

(Shame on us)

I’m concerned for folks when I see that kind of behavior

When Jesus senses the disciple’s thoughts, He asks them a series of questions

Questions that are designed to awaken their faith

These questions are designed to cause them to remember what the Lord has done

These questions are designed to remind us of what the Lord can do as well

Let's take a look at those questions for a moment

**1.** Jesus questions them about their memories

Didn't they see Him feed 5,000?

Didn't they see Him feed 4,000?

Didn't they hear His words and response of the people?

Have they forgotten His mighty creative power?

Are their hearts so hard that they cannot be penetrated by the things that they themselves have experienced?

**2.** Then, Jesus asks them specifically

… About how many baskets of fragments were left over in the two miracles

They answer that there were twelve in the first …

… and seven in the second

Our Lord's point in this is to get them to see Who they are dealing with

The Pharisees had seen His miracles, yet what they had seen was not enough to convince them of His true identity

They had seen enough to convince the hardest of hearts,

Yet they refused to believe what they saw

They failed to understand that Jesus Christ was and is God in the flesh

Apparently, the same is true of His disciples

This unbelief among His Own men must have been frustrating, disheartening

**v. 21 - *“And He said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?”***

And their failure to fully appreciate and trust Him has been handed down to you and I

Isn't it true that we are just like these men?

The Lord has done so much for us, but when the next crisis of faith arises, we react in fear instead of faith

We need to do what the Lord was trying to get these men to do

We need to take the time to *reflect* on what He has done and *remember* His power in our lives

When Israel came out of the wilderness …

… and entered into Canaan in **Joshua 4**

They set up a memorial of twelve stones in Gilgal

God had parted the river for them and allowed them to cross on dry ground

Before the water came back together, each tribe took a stone from the river

They served as a memorial

**Joshua 4:21, 22 – *“And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?” “Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land”***

They were a reminder of the great power of God in their lives

We need to have some memorials in our lives as well

-- Stop and think about all the needs God has meet

-- Stop and remember when God answered your prayers

-- Stop and think about the peace of God; the sense of His presence; the times when He blessed you for no apparent reason

-- Stop and think about how He saved you

*Set up a memorial*!

If He can do that, nothing is beyond His great power!

Stop, Reflect and Remember, then Realize …

… that if He can do those great things, and many more besides,

There is nothing in your life that He cannot handle

Remembering what the Lord has done in your life is the first step toward real revival and a genuine spiritual walk with God

You see, what Jesus is really trying to teach His disciples is that it isn't what you have or what you can do that matters

Everything in your spiritual life comes down to Who you know and to Who you walk with

If He is in your boat, you don't have to worry about where the bread will come from

He will take your little and make a lot out of it

If you are a child of God today, the best thing you can ever do is learn to trust Him Wholly, without Reservation, and He will never fail you

Of course, if you aren't saved and you don't know the Lord then you need to come to Him right away and get that matter settled

Jesus does not want us to live our lives focused on earthly matters like bread

But unfortunately, that is often the case

He wants us to understand that a lack of bread is not our real problem

Our real problem is that we do not see, hear and think about the things of God (Like we should)

Our real problem is a serious lack of faith!

When that is addressed, we will find that we don't have any problems

When your faith is in the Problem Solver hands, other issues cease to be important!

**THE LORD’S “COMMAND”**

**THE DISCIPLE’S “CONFUSION”**

**THE LORD’S “CHALLENGE”**