

# Invisible & Subtle Influences - Discerning & Counteracting Leaven

Monday, 15 April 2024 07:06

Jesus taught His disciples often.

Many times He would just be listening to while they discussed matters among themselves.

It would seem perhaps to them He wasn't paying attention.

But then He would pose a deep and probing question or make a comment to make them think.

It is from interactions like this that we, His disciples and followers of today, can learn a great deal and those same lessons for the disciples back then become meaningful and powerful to us today.

The Main text for Today: Matthew 16:6

## Matthew 16:6 NIV

"Be careful," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

NLT: "Watch out" ...

ESV: "Watch and beware" ...

When Jesus gives warning to His disciples back then and through the Word which is "Living and active" we receive these same warnings and take heed.

Hebrews 4:12 NLT

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is **sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword**, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. **It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.**

I have been led by the Lord and have been meditating on this passage for some time that there is some depth to this which we need to understand and apply to our lives.

Lets read the full passage in context:

## Matthew 16:1-12 NLT

One day the Pharisees and Sadducees came to **test** Jesus, **demanding** that he show them a miraculous sign from heaven to **prove** his authority.

He replied, "You know the saying, 'Red sky at night means fair weather tomorrow; red sky in the morning means foul weather all day.' You know how to interpret the weather signs in the sky, but you don't know how to interpret the signs of the times! Only an evil, adulterous generation would demand a miraculous sign, but the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah." Then Jesus left them and went away.

Later, after they crossed to the other side of the lake, the disciples discovered they had forgotten to bring any bread. "Watch out!" Jesus warned them. "Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

At this they began to argue with each other because they hadn't brought any bread.

Jesus knew what they were saying, so he said, "**You have so little faith!**

Why are you **arguing** with each other **about having no bread? Don't you understand** even yet?

[NIV: Version

Matthew 16:8 NIV

**Aware of their discussion**, Jesus asked, "You of little faith, why are you **talking** among yourselves **about having no bread?**]

Don't you remember the **5,000** I fed with **five loaves**, and the **baskets of leftovers** you picked up?

Or the **4,000** I fed with **seven loaves**, and the large **baskets of leftovers** you picked up?

Why can't you understand that I'm not talking about bread? So again I say, 'Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.'"

Then at last they understood that he wasn't speaking about the yeast in bread, but about the **deceptive teaching** of the **Pharisees and Sadducees**.

Here Jesus explains the limitation of their failure!

**Faith OR More Specifically - The LACK THEREOF**

What happened in the 2 instances that we know well from scripture that Jesus referred to?

## 1. Feeding 5000

Matt 14:13-21

John 6:1-13

Mark 6:32-44

Luke 9:10-17

### a. Background:

**John 6:2-5a NLT**

A huge crowd kept **following** him wherever he went, **because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick**. Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him. (It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.) Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him.

### b. Situation:

**Matthew 14:15-17 NLT**

That evening the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. **Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.**"

### c. The Word of God:

But Jesus said, "**That isn't necessary—you feed them.**"

### d. What they had:

**Mark 6:38 NLT**

"**How much bread do you have?**" he asked. "**Go and find out.**"

They came back and reported, "We have five loaves of bread and two fish."

Typical "acceptable" / "sensible" human Reaction. Response:

"**But we have *only*** five loaves of bread and two fish!" they answered.

### e. The Faith Result:

**Matthew 14:20 NLT**

They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers.

Jesus first established what they had, forcing THEM to go find out.

One Question for you today - **WHAT DO YOU HAVE?**

Not what Dont you have!!

## 2. Feeding 4000

Matt 15:29-39

Mark 8:1-13

### a. Background leading to the Situation:

**Matthew 15:29-31 NLT**

Jesus returned to the Sea of Galilee and climbed a hill and sat down. **A vast crowd brought to him people who were lame, blind, crippled, those who couldn't speak, and many others.** They laid them before Jesus, and **he healed them all. The crowd was amazed!** Those who hadn't been able to speak were talking, the crippled were made well, the lame were walking, and the blind could see again! And they praised the God of Israel.

**b. Situation:**

**Matthew 15:32 NLT**

Then Jesus called his disciples and told them, "I feel sorry for these people. They have been here with me for three days, and they have nothing left to eat. I don't want to send them away hungry, or they will faint along the way."

**c. What they had:**

**Matthew 15:34 NLT**

Jesus asked, "How much bread do you have?"

They replied, "Seven loaves, and a few small fish."

**d. The Word of God:**

**Mark 8:7 NLT**

A few small fish were found, too, so Jesus also blessed these and told the disciples to distribute them.

**e. The Faith Result:**

**Mark 8:8 NLT**

They ate as much as they wanted. Afterward, the disciples picked up seven large baskets of leftover food.

### **3. The way the world and Christians typically behave and think:**

**Many will still hold to this that there are things in the world that just are they way they are!**

**Matthew 17:19-20 NLT**

Afterward the disciples asked Jesus privately, "Why couldn't we cast out that demon?"

**"You don't have enough faith,"** Jesus told them. "I tell you the truth, **if you had faith** even as small as a mustard seed, **you could** say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. **Nothing would be impossible.**"

How much more Spiritual hearing!

**We can often be found to be counteracting the little Faith we have.**

**Proverbs 18:21 NLT**

Death and life are in the power of the tongue,

and **those who love it**

**[i.e. the tongue and what it says! -**

**Good or evil, deception or truth]**

**will eat its fruits.**

Recently I heard an encouraging teaching on setting goals and faith - Not Faith is BEING SURE of what we Hope for - so we focusing on achieving them, by Faith

Hebrews 11:1 NLT

Faith shows the **reality** of what we hope for; it is the **evidence** of things we cannot see.

Hebrews 11:1 KJV

Now faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen.

**Instead - Human nature will often work like this:**

We look at the circumstances

We believe what we see

We act on what we believe and See  
We are robbed, deceived and  
"have so little faith" or  
"no real faith"

Just look at the 5000 and 4000 feeding examples Jesus referenced to his disciples

"And that's the way I want it always" rule!  
Do we really want what we say?!

I guess i have to put up with this - its hereditary  
I guess we will never have money  
I guess Ill never be out of debt  
I have always just been a ... Person  
I will never have a job a really like

We speak impossibility  
We think impossibility  
We act impossibility  
We model it in our lives and to our kids and our families

Some generation has to change  
To break the perpetual cycle from generation to generation

### **So what were the Pharisees guilty of?**

What is the essence of the Faith Jesus was challenging the disciples about?

### **How do we apply this to ourselves today?**

**What do you and I need to change?**

**What do I need to be on my guard against?**

**What do we need to become serious about by change of heart?  
and adopt tangible actions and evidence in our lives?**

The Leaven / Yeast of the Pharisees was:

- a. Hypocrisy
- b. Pride
- c. Self Righteousness
- d. Religious acts of rote
- e. Neglect of Justice and Love
- f. Most Important - Resistance to True spiritual understanding (Faith)

### **Today - the Leaven or Yeast of the World is**

**every deception or influence that robs us of the result of faith in God and His word!**

### **What is the essence of the lesson God has for us today?**

Once the leaven or yeast was in the dough  
What can to dough do about avoiding to rise?  
NOTHING!!!  
The yeast impacts the dough

How much does it take?  
Very little!!!

## ILLUSTRATION of DOUGH

So Jesus is warning that exposure to and keeping company with and allowing the influence of this Leaven of the Pharisees would definitely cause the intended effect!!!

### The Antidote?

**Avoid** the Yeast - Of the WORLD: the subtle and **deceptive influences** of the **devil!!!**

And not just that but

Have FAITH in GOD!!!

Supernatural faith

Faith that defies human logic and natural science!!!

Faith that only comes from God

### Romans 10:17 NKJV

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

### Romans 10:17 NIV

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

### 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 NIV

Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that **a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough?** 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**. 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.

**God gave instruction to the Israelites about not having leaven at Passover.**

**It was a matter of life and death!**

### Leviticus 23:5-6 NLT

"The LORD's Passover begins at sundown on the fourteenth day of the first month. On the next day, the fifteenth day of the month, you must begin celebrating the Festival of Unleavened Bread. This festival to the LORD continues for seven days, and during that time the bread you eat must be made without yeast.

### Exodus 12:17-19 NLT

"Celebrate this Festival of Unleavened Bread, for it will remind you that I brought your forces out of the land of Egypt on this very day. **This festival will be a permanent law for you;** celebrate this day from generation to generation. **The bread you eat must be made without yeast** from the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month until the evening of the twenty-first day of that month. **During those seven days, there must be no trace of yeast in your homes. Anyone who eats anything made with yeast during this week will be cut off from the community of Israel.** These regulations apply both to the foreigners living among you and to the native-born Israelites.

### Exodus 12:15 NIV

For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel.

1 Kings 17:12-

The widow who was going to die then Elijah saved her through miraculous bread too!

**What are some of the areas can this be applied to then?**

#### 1. Health

##### a. Doctors and science dictate one thing

- i. Your genes...
- ii. Its in your blood line

- iii. You have got ...
- iv. You will always...
- v. There's nothing we can do...

**b. But God...**

- i. Who created you?
- ii. Before I formed you in the womb I knew you

**Jeremiah 1:5 ESV**

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,  
and before you were born I consecrated you;  
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

- iii. I knit you together in your inmost parts

**Psalms 139:13-16 NIV**

**For you created my inmost being;**

**you knit me together in my mother's womb.**

I praise you because **I am fearfully and wonderfully made;**

your works are wonderful,

I know that full well.

**My frame was not hidden from you**

when **I was made in the secret place,**

when **I was woven together in the depths of the earth.**

**Your eyes saw my unformed body;**

all the days ordained for me were written in your book

before one of them came to be.

- iv. I am the healer

**Exodus 15:26 NIV**

He said, “If you listen carefully to the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, **I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you.**”

- v. He was a cripple for 18 years from birth but Jesus Healed him
- vi. Get up, Pick up your mat, Walk!!!

**John 5:8-9 NIV**

Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath,

**c. We can say**

- i. "I have got" or
- ii. "they say" or
- iii. "our family has a history of" or
- iv. "I Can't" or
- v. "I'm too old" and many other "claims we adopt

**d. BUT Jesus Said..**

- i. He healed ALL OF THEM
- ii. Ask and you will receive

Matt 7:7

Luke 11:9

**John 16:24 NLT**

You haven't done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.

- iii. Power over sickness and disease

**e. So is your situation also a lack of faith? Just like He told His disciples**

**f. PUSH IN AND DONT ACCEPT ANYTHING LESS THAN THE PROMISES OF GOD**

**g. They overcame by the Blood of the Lamb and the Word of their Testimony!!!**

**Revelation 12:11 NIV**

They triumphed over him

by the blood of the Lamb  
and by the word of their testimony;  
they did not love their lives so much  
as to shrink from death.

## 2. Finance

### a. We can say

- i. "I'm not able" or
- ii. "I can't" or
- iii. "I'm not ... Minded" or
- iv. "I don't have enough to tithe"
- v. "I can't give God that much - I won't have enough"
- vi. We can own a poverty mindset

### b. But God Said...

- i. He gives power to create wealth  
**Deuteronomy 8:17-18 ESV**  
**Beware** lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember **the LORD your God**, for it **is he who gives you power to get wealth**, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.
- ii. He provides  
Over 100 verses confirm this  
**Philippians 4:19 ESV**  
And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus!
- iii. Jehovah Jireh **Gen 22:14**
- iv. IF you will not work you will not eat **2 Thes 3:10**
- v. He warns about laziness  
**Proverbs 10:4 NLT**  
Lazy people are soon poor;  
hard workers get rich
- vi. But He also creates divine opportunities  
**Genesis 26:12 NLT**  
When Isaac planted his crops that year, he harvested a hundred times more grain than he planted, **for the LORD blessed him.**
- vii. He blessed Jacob **Gen 35:9-11**
- viii. He Blessed Abraham **Heb 7:1-2**  
**Note Abraham tithe his 10th from His blessing!!**
- ix. He blessed Job **Job 42:12**
- x. He blessed Joseph **Gen 48:3**
- xi. He blessed many others - because their heart was not the same as the Pharisees **AND they trusted God!!**
- xii. Give and it will be given to you  
**Numbers 18:29 NLT**  
Be sure to give to the LORD the best portions of the gifts given to you.  
**Luke 6:38 NLT**  
Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back."

c. So is your financial situation also a lack of faith?

d. ARE YOU PUSHING IN BY FAITH AND TAKING GOD AT HIS WORD

## 3. Relationships

### a. We can say

- i. Its always been like this

- ii. I'm just like that
- iii. I always attract the wrong people
- iv. I will never find someone like that
- v. I'm destined to be alone
- vi. My wife... Or My husband ...

**b. But God Said**

- i. Humble yourself and he will lift you up

**James 4:10-11 NIV**

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.

- ii. Give and it will be given to you **Luke 6:38**

## 4. Circumstances

**a. There can be a myriad of things:**

- i. We can say hopeless things
- ii. People contemplate suicide
- iii. People have substance addictions
- iv. People are living with habitual addictions
- v. There is unforgiveness
- vi. Hardness of heart
- vii. Unresolved matters
- viii. Lack of humility
- ix. Lack of provision
- x. Loneliness
- xi. Pain in the heart and the body
- xii. Lack of Vision
- xiii. Confusion
- xiv. Misunderstanding
- xv. Worry about the future - career, spouse, money, country, purpose, calling...
- xvi. And the list can fill pages!!!!

**b. But God can say ONE WORD**

**i. BELIEVE**

**Mark 5:35-36 NIV**

While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?"

Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; **just believe.**"

**ii. But also ASK in FAITH**

**James 1:6-7 NIV**

But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

5. So how does our future look now that Jesus has said to us today

- a. Beware of the **Invisible & Subtle Influences - Discerning & Counteracting Leaven of the devil in this world!**
- b. **Have Faith**
- c. **Only believe! No matter what the world says !!!**