

Matthew 16:5-12 A Warning About the Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees  
(About False Doctrine)

Introduction: In our last message there came an open confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees and Sadducees. In our text today Jesus warns of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

- I. The concern of the disciples for bread. Verse 5
  - A. It is said in the latter part of verse 4, “And he left them and departed.”
    1. He left the Pharisees and Sadducees.
    2. According to Mark He and the disciples went by boat to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.
  - B. Much to the dismay of the disciples, they discovered that they had neglected to replenish their supply of bread.
    1. Mark said they had only one loaf left.
    2. They had left in great haste. (They were shook up.)
    3. Now they were probably embarrassed at their neglect.
- II. The Lord's warning about the leaven of Pharisees and Sadducees. Verse 6
  - A. While the disciples' minds were on material things Jesus had His mind on spiritual things. (He was still thinking about the conflict with the Pharisees and Sadducees and about their false doctrine.)
  - B. He warned the disciples. Verse 6
- III. The misunderstanding of the disciples. Verses 7-12
  - A. The disciples had their minds on material things and they interpreted what He said in that light. Verse 7 (All too often we misunderstand what the Lord has said and fail to get the spiritual application.)
  - B. Jesus pointed out that He was not talking about bread. Verses 8-10
    1. One loaf of bread was sufficient without His miraculous powers.
    2. Jesus knew that they would make this mistake, but by allowing them to do it, He would impress them all the more with the lesson.
  - C. A secondary lesson for us all – as long as Jesus is with us we need not worry and fret about material things, but trust in Him.
  - D. Jesus was warning them about the doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Verse 12
- IV. The leaven of the Pharisees.
  - A. The Pharisees were fundamentalists in Israel.
    1. They held to the old time religion.
    2. They held strictly to the Law of Moses and the traditions of the forefathers.
  - B. It was the traditions of the fathers that got them into trouble. (Much of it was heresy.)
  - C. The Pharisees believed in works for salvation. (See Ephesians 2:8-9.)
  - D. The Pharisees believed in a religion of rituals.  
(It did not matter if the heart was right or not just so long as you got the ritual right.)
  - E. The Pharisees believed in an outward show of righteousness but did not require inward righteousness.
  - F. The Pharisees taught for doctrines the commandments of men.

V. The leaven of the Sadducees.

- A. The Sadducees were the modernists of their day.
  - 1. They placed human understanding above scripture or tradition.
  - 2. They refused to believe anything which they could not understand from the human viewpoint.
- B. For one thing, they refused to believe in angels.
- C. They refused to believe in a resurrection.
- D. They held to no strict moral code.

VI. The danger of false doctrine.

- A. For the saved there is no danger of it causing one to loose his salvation.
  - 1. Neither is there danger of a sound doctrinal person becoming a rank heretic overnight.
  - 2. But there is the danger that he will let in a little leaven that may grow to leaven the thinking of the whole man.
  - 3. There is the danger that a whole family may be led into doctrinal heresy.
  - 4. Even a whole church may be led away from truth.
  - 5. A whole association of churches may be led astray.
  - 6. A whole denomination may be led astray.
  - 7. Christianity as a whole may be contaminated.
- B. The danger for the unsaved is that he may trust in a false plan of salvation that cannot save.

Conclusion:

- 1. Make sure you know what the Bible teaches about how to be saved and make sure you are saved.
- 2. Make sure you are in a church which teaches and preaches the truth of God.
- 3. Read and study the word of God and seek to rightly understand it. (A lifetime of study.)
- 4. Let the Bible (New Testament) be the rule for your life.

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