

LOVE THE "LEAST" NOT THE "YEAST"!

Based on the command of Christ #27 – "Beware of leaven".

Matt 5:17-20

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

Matt. 16:6 (NKJV) - "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."

"Be careful" (horate) and "Be on your guard" (prosechete)... Both can be understood to be commands or imperatives.

Matt. 16:11 - How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

I. "What is Yeast/Leaven?"

The Greek word translated "yeast or leaven" is (zume).

II. "What Does the Bible Say About Yeast/Leaven?"

1 Corinthians 5:7-8

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 Of No Effect By Their Traditions.

Matt. 15:3-6

3 Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?”

4 For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’^[a] and ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’

5 But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is ‘devoted to God,’

6 they are not to ‘honor their father or mother’ with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

2. They Were Hypocrites, Teaching One Thing And Practicing Another.

Matt. 15:7-8

7 You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

8 “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

Hypocrite = “an actor” one who wears a mask or one who pretends.

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

3 So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.

4 They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.
 5 "Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long;
 6 they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues;
 7 they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called 'Rabbi' by others.

4. They Loved The Spotlight And Special Treatment.

Matt. 23:13 - "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

5. They Used Their Office To Make Themselves Rich.

Luke 20:47 - They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely."

IV. "What Are We To Do With This Leaven?"

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

Matt. 16:7-12

7 They discussed this among themselves and said, "It is because we didn't bring any bread."

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

9 Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered?

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

11 How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

12 Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

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

Ephesians 4:27 – “and do not give the devil a foothold.”

Romans 6:11-13

11. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

13. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

Galatians 5:9 – “A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.”