

**“Leaven of the Sadducees”**

**Matt 16**

**Scripture Ref: Luke 12:1; Rev 2-3**

- 1. In Jesus day, the Pharisees and Sadducees didn’t see eye to eye, they were sort of like the liberals vs conservatives of today**
  - a. But when Jesus came, the suddenly found a reason to come together, in opposition to Jesus!**

**The Pharisees and Sadducees Seek a Sign**

(Mark 8:11-13; Luke 12:54-56)

16:1 Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. 2 He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; 3 and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. 4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed.

- 2. In Jesus day, the Rabbi’s taught that demons could perform miracles in the earth, but only God could perform miracles that pertained to the sky**
  - a. So in effect they were saying to Jesus: *“OK, you healed people, you fed thousands, but you could be a demon. Show us a sign in the sky and prove your not.”***
  - b. So continuing with their line of thinking of the sky, Jesus replied *“you guys are able to look at the sky and predict the weather, can’t you discern the signs of the times?”***
  - c. In other words, if the religious leaders had been studying the word with open hearts as they should have been, they would have known that Jesus was the Messiah.**
  - d. Daniel the prophet has spelled out the exact date that Jesus would come, and be “cut off” (Daniel 9)**
- 3. The problem with these guys was that they taken worship of God and made it into their own personal religious system**
  - a. It wasn’t about God at all – it was about them, and their power, and their status before the people**
  - b. And Jesus – He was invading on their turf! That’s why Jesus gave his disciples the following warning.**

**The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees**

5 Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. 6 Then Jesus said to them, *“Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.”*

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread."

8 But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "*O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? 9 Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? 10 Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? 11 How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? -- but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*" 12 Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

**4. What was the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees?**

- a. Well we already covered the doctrine of the Pharisees, which was legalism: Attempting to please God through our behavior
- b. And it makes you a hypocrite, because no one is without sin

*Luke 12:1 "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*

**5. But we didn't cover the doctrine of the Sadducees. What was the doctrine of the Sadducees?**

- a. Well the Sadducees weren't legalists, they were just the opposite – they were liberals! Sort of...
- b. The Sadducees rejected the "oral law" that we discussed a few weeks ago.
  - i. They considered the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament, to be the inerrant Word of God, and they sought to follow it literally. (so in this sense, they were *literalists*)
- c. They believed that God was not concerned about the everyday activities of man, so in essence what you did was not as important as what you believed.
- d. So they didn't worry about denying themselves the pleasures of life as the Pharisees did.
- e. Josephus, the Jewish scholar who became a Roman citizen and a historian of the Jews, noted that when the Sadducees held parties, they were just as wild as the Romans.
- f. Sadducees also did not believe in miracles, angels, the resurrection, and they did not believe in the establishment of God's Kingdom here on earth.

**6. Does that sound familiar? It sounds just like some churches that you might walk into today.**

- a. Churches with bibles in the pews and crosses on the wall, places where God is talked about.

- b. But where large parts of the scriptures are explained away, and thought to be “out of touch” with the current culture.
  - c. ... where things are done according to the wisdom of man, instead of a reliance on the Holy Spirit
  - d. ... where experience is more important than the application of sound biblical truth
  - e. ... where the imminent return of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom is not emphasized,
    - i. but rather a progressive theology that encourages us to accept whatever our culture brings us as *normal*.
  - f. ...where righteousness, holiness, repentance of sin, confession, surrender – these are concepts you wont hear
  - g. If you want to get an idea of what the church *should be*, read through Revelation chapters 2-3.
7. And here is the problem with the introduction of liberal progressivism into the church. It might be considered “progressive” or “current”, but in reality its poison!
- a. Jesus compares the doctrines of legalism and liberalism with leaven - For you bible students, you know that leaven, or yeast, symbolizes sin.
  - b. A baker knows that if you put a pinch of dough that has yeast in it into a larger mass of dough; the yeast will spread through the dough.
  - c. Sin is the same way – if we compromise and open a door, it never stops with just a little. It always spreads...
    - i. Take you further than you wanted to go
    - ii. Keep you longer than you wanted to stay
    - iii. Cost you more than you wanted to pay
8. And the leaven of the Sadducees is no different. The moment we start compromising as a church, allowing liberal thinking to creep in, allowing the culture to shape the church...
- a. It is like adding a little yeast to a lump of dough – it will spread, and it will compromise the integrity of the church
9. So Jesus is warning the disciples here...
- a. Beware of the legalism of the Pharisees
    - i. It makes you hypocrites
    - ii. It hardens your heart to the sinner who needs Jesus
    - iii. It causes spiritual cannibalism – you start nipping and snapping at one another, judging one another
  - b. Beware of the liberalism of the Sadducees
    - i. It promotes compromise in the church

- ii. **It turns your focus to the wisdom and ability of man to solve your problems, instead of the power of God**
- c. **Jesus is giving this warning right before He begins to tell the disciples about something very important – something radically different that He is about to introduce... HIS CHURCH!**

**The Church, and the Rock it is built on**

13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

14 So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

20 Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

**10. Next week we will cover this section in more detail, but today I want to close with this thought...A group of people can be founded on a number of things...**

- a. **A common interest, like a hobby**
- b. **A common goal, like helping animals**
- c. **A common set of political principles,**
- d. **It could be based on a dynamic social, political, or religious leader (the cult of personality!)**
- e. **You could even have a group of people that are assembled based on a common set of spiritual and biblical principles seeking to change the world around them – which on the surface sounds like a church...**
- f. **But if it is not based and founded on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, then it is NOT church.**

**11. The church – the true church – is based on one and only one thing – The Rock of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ.**

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**Matthew 16v1-20**

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