
Dangers to Look Out For

Mark 8:14-21



The Lake of Galilee



Leaven

- **OT:** initially at the feast of Passover; unleavened bread to remember that they had to leave Egypt quickly.
- Leaven was excluded from other festivals (Lev. 2:4, etc.).
- From certain kinds of sacrifices (Lev. 2:11).
- At the feast of unleavened bread, the entire house had to be cleansed of leaven.
- It came to be associated with evil and sin.
- **NT:** Only used positively one time.
 - Matt. 13:33 – illustrates the quiet, pervasive growth of the kingdom of Christ.
- About a dozen times used negatively.
 - E.g., 1 Cor. 5:7 - Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

Dangers to Look Out For

- **1) The Danger of Negative Spiritual Influences (14-15)**

Leaven or Yeast

- A single-celled, microscopic organism of the fungus family.
- About 600 different species.
- Initially when exposed to heat it increases its activity.
- At 140 degrees, the yeast dies.
- Feed on sugar from natural sources, including fruit, grain, nectar, and molasses.
- Produce chemicals called enzymes, or ferments that break down their food.



Leaven or Yeast

- Is...
 - Invisible
 - Powerful
- Spreads...
 - Quickly
 - Constantly
 - Silently
- Produces deadly results.
- So leaven speaks of the power of negative spiritual influence.
- Matt. 16:12 - He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.



2) The Danger of Spiritual Dullness (16-18a)

- Cf. Jer. 5:21 - 'Now hear this, O foolish and senseless people, Who have eyes but do not see; Who have ears but do not hear.
- Cf. Ezek. 12:2 - "Son of man, you live in the midst of the rebellious house, who have eyes to see but do not see, ears to hear but do not hear; for they are a rebellious house.
- Mark 4:10-11
 - Cf. Matt. 13:11 - "Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted."

Negative Spiritual Influences

- **The Leaven of the Pharisees (15)**
 - This is dead, superficial, traditional, religion.
- **The Leaven of Herod (15)**
 - This is secular worldliness.
- **The Leaven of the Sadducees (Matt. 16:6)**
 - This is liberal, anti-supernatural religion.

2) The Danger of Spiritual Dullness (16-18a)

- Two primary ways...
 - 1) Distraction with their bodily needs, so they failed to seek first Christ's kingdom.
 - 2) Familiarity with Christ and spiritual things.

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- **3) The Danger of Weak Faith (18b-21)**

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- Matt. 16:8 - But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread?"
- A) Weak faith in Jesus' ability to provide.
- B) Weak faith in Jesus' true nature.

How Can We Grow Strong in Faith?

- E.g., of Abraham in Rom. 4:18-22.
 - "w/o becoming weak in faith" (4:19); "grew strong in faith" (4:20)
 - **That means that there are degrees of faith.**
 - NT speaks of: "little faith," "great faith," and being "full of faith."
 - Rom. 4:20 – Focused on the promise of God; i.e. the Word of God.
 - Cf. Rom. 10:17
 - Gal. 3 – faith in the promises of God.

Clear & Present Danger

- 1) The danger of negative spiritual influences.
 - Superficial, traditional, religion.
 - Liberal, anti-supernatural religion.
 - Secular worldliness.
- 2) The danger of spiritual dullness.
- 3) The danger of weak faith.