

*Mr 8:15 Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."*

The followers of Jesus had gotten into a boat and somebody (there's one in every group) was hungry and began complaining that the hospitality committee had fallen down on the job. Jesus took the opportunity (as He usually did) to drive home a crucial lesson, more lasting and more necessary than their next meal. Now those of us with a bent towards sanctified imagination have a party with parables! So let me restrain myself and stick to the obvious point Jesus is making.

Leaven is internalō it permeates the bread dough. On the one hand it is hidden, and on the other hand it is obviously there. The Pharisees and Saducees were prominent, powerful teams. Jesus interacted with them, as did his followers, continually. Among the many things that could be identified as leaven in their teaching and example, I would address twoō two that I need to beware of, and perhaps you do, too.

**APPEARANCE:** the Pharisees were very concerned about outward appearance. They wanted respect. They loved praise. They sought approval and advancement. They felt they deserved it. After all, they kept the rules, said the right things that everybody expected them to say, and went beyond the norm in many ways. *They saw themselves as the guardians of God's word.* But Jesus saw them completely different than they saw themselves. Jesus said they were whitewashed tombs full of corruption inside, preferred man's approval more than God's, were extremely rigid in their outward standards, but suffered no qualms of conscience being cruel, selfish, arrogant, unteachable, angry, critical and defensive. OUCH!

**CONTROL:** the Saducees were very concerned about maintaining control. They had very definite opinions about the way things should be, and woe to the individual who didn't get in line. *They felt they were the guardians of God's work.* And as such, what they wanted and what God wanted were automatically identical. To wait was to show weakness. To give grace was seen as giving in and losing the contest. They knew it all. They had it down. And you'd better not go against them because if you did, you were going against God! OUCHō again!

**Does anybody else need this warning except me?**

*It's so easy to see what needs corrected in your life* (ō oops, excuse meō I see a speck in your eye just now. Let me help you remove it. Trust meō I've got experience!)

*It's so natural to be so sure of what "should be", and demand it "now".* Watch how I transform and sanctify my impatience and self will+into a virtue called conviction.+But it's sin just the same, no matter what name I give it.

To be content with external conformity instead of internal transformation into the Savior's image is eating bad bread. Beware, it'd make you sick and everybody else around you, too.

**Self Check Questions:**

1. What are ways I buy into the leaven of the Pharisees in my setting today? (Make it personal, don't point fingers.)
2. How does real godliness manifest itself in contrast to the leaven of the Pharisees.
3. Who is someone that exemplifies a genuine concern for heart issues and challenges you to pursue them?
4. What are ways I buy into the leaven of the Saducees today? (Make it personal, don't point fingers.)
5. Who is someone that exemplifies gentle submission and patience and challenges you to pursue it?
6. What other aspects of the leaven of the Pharisees and Saducees do you think Jesus is referring to?

**For Further Study:** Luke 12:1-5; Matt 16:1-12; Matt 23:1-36; John 12:42-43; 1 Cor 5:1-8; James 3:13-18; 1 Peter 2:1-3;

Lord, You know the hearts of all men. Nothing is hidden from You. And the day is soon coming when it will not be hidden from men, either. You said our secrets will soon be shouted from housetops. I beg of You, O King of heaven, make and keep me pure within. Cleanse me from the leaven of hypocrisy, arrogance and stubbornness. I want to reflect You. I lay down my heart upon Your gentle altar and ask but to wield the servant's towel with love. Make me on the inside what will honor You on the outside. Grant me such a life that those who know me best will miss me most when my journey's done. Change my heart, O God. This I ask in the name of Him Who is the author of the work begun in my heart and has promised to complete it for His glory. Amen+

**Remember, you are very special to us and are praying for you continually. Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4**  
**Ron & Val**

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.