

Eternity Daily Bible Study

(A ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

Walking In The Spirit - 77

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Topic: The Kingdom of God Is Like Leaven

Date: 7th December 2009

Matthew 13:33 ESV *He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."*

There is a Greek word play here. Leaven (yeast) = *zeo*, whereas the word for God's life is *zoe*. The same letters in a different order, an anagram. So the leaven is the all-pervading eternal life of God working through the soul of the believer and then throughout society as a whole.

The three loaves are possibly, on an individual level the body, soul and spirit - and on the societal level the three divisions of mankind in the ancient world (sons of Shem, Ham and Japeth).

The woman in this parable, is the Church, the bride of Christ, which does the hard work both of getting the gospel into the hearts of men and women and of spreading the gospel throughout the nations of the world.

Since leaven was a well-known symbol of spiritual contamination and is associated with everything from immorality to hypocrisy, malice and evil (Deuteronomy 16:4, Matthew 16:6,11,12; 1 Corinthians 5:1-8; Galatians 5:9) it then seems a very unusual choice for a symbol of the Kingdom of God! Leaven symbolized the pernicious, corrupting nature of sin that could start small and then defile a whole church or society.

Jesus however used it in the opposite sense - of how a small amount of good could influence and take over a whole society!! This actually happened with the Roman Empire.

One of the things we need to understand about the Kingdom of God is that it cannot be defiled. It has too much life and power for that! When Jesus touched a dead person He was not defiled - rather the dead person was raised to life! When a woman with an issue of blood touched Jesus, Jesus was not defiled, rather the woman was made whole. When Jesus reached out to a leper, He was not made unclean, instead the leper was made clean and new. And when Jesus was offered as a sin offering on the cross and took all the sins, all the pain, all the sickness and all the uncleanness of the world on Himself -He still rose from the dead!

Thus when faithful Spirit-filled Christians are mixed into society, it is not the Christian that will be defiled – but rather society that will be influenced and transformed (providing that we stand firm in our faith and do not compromise). There is no food, drink or circumstance that 'automatically' taints us if we are seeking to be holy. We can reach out to lepers and to broken hurting people without fear of spiritual defilement.

Paul put the possibility of our victory over evil this way: **Romans 12:21 ESV** *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

The abiding Spirit-filled Christian does not need to fear the world. Instead the world and its demons, powers and principalities should fear the powerful life of God that dwells in the heart of the believer!

Now the leaven has to be kneaded into the dough. So often we compartmentalize our faith and keep the leaven over in one part of our life, or the church over in one part of society unable to influence the rest. Every part of your life must be surrendered to God and filled with the transformational life of God.

Leaven is organic, exponential, fast-growing and powerful. My brother Peter and I found out just how powerful yeast is when as curious young boys we decided to have a go at making 'fermented orange juice wine'. We knew you needed orange juice and yeast and a bottle that could take the pressure. So we got an old champagne bottle from our parents,, two packets of baker's yeast and the orange juice and mixed it all together, wiring down the cork with an enormous amount of fencing wire.

A few hours later we went to check on it and found orange juice spurting out from under the cork and the wire stretched to breaking point. It was about to explode! Peter got some pliers and undid the wire. The cork flew out, juice sprayed everywhere, and the eaves of our house were covered with a revolting black mold that was impossible to remove. The yeast had quietly but powerfully created an enormous pressure inside.

This is the powerful hidden force of life. The force that disrupts the old order and even breaks through rocks and concrete. The leaven is 'hidden' in the flour. It is invisible at first but its effects soon take over, changing everything. A believer with the life of God within them will undergo an explosive transformation. Even though the gospel is hidden in the heart it will soon do its work and transform the whole person breaking up even the toughest areas of the human personality.

So we see the twin parables (mustard-seed and leaven) are about things regarded as pests because they were so rapidly propagating, powerful and all-invasive. The life of God is a powerful, explosive, world-invading force.

We have to have confidence in the Kingdom. We do not need to seal the leaven in a glass jar to protect it. Rather we are to mix it in. We are to get out there and encounter the powers and principalities being totally confident that we are the more powerful force.

The faith-filled believer knows that what he or she has can topple the walls of Jericho. There is a sense that our life is real and the world is just a shadow that is passing away. We are the agents of change, the quiet revolutionaries, the leaven and the mustard seed. The small, small, lively things that disrupt everything else.

Blessings,

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