

THE LEAVEN OF THE KINGDOM

MATTHEW 13:33

I want to talk to you about the Power of the Gospel to Transform – The Leaven of the Kingdom.

Matthew 13:33

He spoke another parable to them, “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened.”

We are right in the middle of Jesus Sermon by the Sea where he gives 7 different parables to describe The Kingdom of Heaven. He is speaking to friends who have been lived by a Kingdom called Rome. For virtually everyone who heard these words they were surrounded by a definition of Kingdom that involved Geo-Political Power, achievement and success.

Meaning that the Strong rule the weak. The Powerful came into power by eliminating those with less power. So a Kingdom was almost always associated with this idea of strength.

So when Jesus said to you the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven have been reveal - their minds had to connect to this context of what they had known and heard. This physical realm that ruled over the lives of men and women. In Jesus day it was Rome - in Israel’s past it was David....

But then we have this tension in the Sermon arise as Jesus begins to describe the Kingdom of Heaven with word pictures that were familiar to those listening.....

- The Kingdom starts and multiplies by listening from the heart...**Parable of the Sower**
- It Grows and multiplies in the context of another system - **the Wheat and the Tares**
- It is invasive like a **Mustard Seed....grows beyond anything else**

Here is Verse 33 of Chapter 13 **He points to another mystery of the Kingdom....**

it is like Leaven....Leaven that changes everything it touches!

The good news of the Gospel of the Kingdom is that it is like Leaven - it has Power to Transform everything it touches.

One of the more fascinating aspects of this parable and the mustard see was that Jesus used pictures that would have been seen as negative.

- **No you do not want mustard invading the garden it will take over.**
- **But now Jesus talks about.....Leaven!**

The first time we read about Leaven in the scriptures is Exodus 12 in the context of preparation for the Exodus from Egypt and then as a memorial and reminder of God removing His people....

- **they were to remove the Leaven that represented impurity and corruption....**

The leaven was a symbol of sin....

- In Matthew 16:11 we have Jesus warning to His disciples about the leaven of the Pharisee’s.
- Now because this is the only New Testament reference to Leaven that appears to be positive - we have only one in the Old testament in Lev 23:11 they are to bring leavened bread as a first fruits offering....**otherwise leaven is a NOT seen as a positive spiritual symbol....**

And the secret is simply this Christ in you!
Yes, Christ in you bringing with Him the hope of all the glorious things to come.
Col 1:27b JB Phillips

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Now some folks in the theological world have see this and want to hold it as a Theological Dogma....

- meaning - any reference to leaven in the scripture is always a negative that God is referring to impurity and sin.
- You have to do some mental gymnastics to this text - when Jesus clearly says the Kingdom - which has been his context the entire sermon in **chapter 13 is LIKE.....vs 33 Leaven!**

But then again we have John's revelation in of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah - who? Jesus Revelation 5:5. Then we have Peters reference in I Peter 5:8 of "...your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring Lion....."

Both the Devil and Jesus are talked about as a Lion....

The Point? Allegories are word pictures - Not to be mistaken as Theological Dogma....

Jesus is saying to His friends - hear this.....

- **This Kingdom is not like you have heard or known!**

It is like Leaven....which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened."

- **Its Power is Unmatched!**
- **Its Promise is Certain!**
- **Its Provision is Complete!**

Here you have **3 pecks of flour** - what does your NIV say? About sixty pounds of flour....

- Now by itself it will just remain what it is....ground wheat.....flour....

Jesus says here you have something that remains the same.....but then you add this thing called....**Leaven - yeast.....it changes everything!**

- **Transforms the entire make up of the Nature of the Flour totally and completely.....in the end it can feed over a 100 people.....(reference to Matt 13:23)**

The Power of the Gospel of the Kingdom is not limited by the Kingdoms of this World!

Here Jesus talks about 60 lbs of flour....

- **When the leaven is introduced - here is a question will the flour ever just be flour again? NO!**

Irrefutable Law that everyone listening to Jesus understood.....here it is.....

The Leaven is Stronger than the Flour!

- Can I just say this right now? One of the greatest challenges for the Body of Christ.....is all of the stuff we are trying to get done....it is our lack of revelation about the Power of the Gospel!
- **The irrefutable law of the Kingdom of God - This Gospel of the Kingdom is stronger than anything it touch's.....Sin - Sickness - Separation.....**

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I want you to notice 3 specific things that Jesus says in Verse 33 about the Leaven.....

1 - The Leaven was Hidden....to the eye....in a mass of flour...

- When you came up upon the flour you did not see it or notice it right away....
- Hidden in 3 pecks of Flour - some say Acts 1:8....Jerusalem, Samaria and the ends of the Earth.... others - Body Mind and Spirit....

I say yes to both.....

- The Leaven - beloved please lets not miss this - **the Leaven is the Gospel of the Kingdom all that God has done for us in Christ....**hidden in this mass of flour....
- The Mystery of the Gospel is that the Leaven changes everything it touches'!
- **Leaven - yeast and water....Gospel Grace and Faith....**
 - Eph. 2:8 *For it is by grace you have been saved through faith and this not from yourselves it is a gift of God lest anyone should boast!*

Here we have this picture of what looks hidden and unnoticed.....in the flour...this is a picture of the Gospel personally and corporately....**it may look small hidden and insignificant but the Spiritual law is non the less the same....**

- **The Leaven is stronger than the flour!**

2 - Jesus uses this word 'Until'

- **Until** - It is used in Matthew 2 to talk about the star led the Magi until it stood over Bethlehem - and that Joseph stayed in Egypt Until it was time to return....
- This word in the original language is what is called a **Predicate Indicative.....**
What does that mean?
- **The Whole action will be completed.....! Some like to use the word process but I do not because it implies the wrong conclusions.....**
- The leaven may be hidden but it is not passive - **it is subduing....the flour!**

Why because the Leaven is stronger than the flour!

3 - Until it was ALL leavened.....

- **Word all = means = ALL - nothing escapes!**

This is the nature of the Gospel of the Kingdom - it changes everything it touches.....

- So according to 1 Peter 1:23 *for you have been born again not perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God*

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- 1 John 3:9 *no one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in Him, he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.*

We have the Seed or the Leaven of the Eternity in us.....so that we may become

- 2 Peter 1:3-4
Partakers in what we were created for - to be partakers of the Divine Nature and escape the corruption of the world....

This Leaven is more powerful than the leaven of the World!

So what does this mean....?

Clear - The Gospel of the Kingdom of God - all that God has done for us in Christ...IS the Leaven beloved!

- **The all penetrating Power of the Gospel and its Economy is this Leaven!**

What does that mean?

1 - Your Past failure - influences and hurts.....are NO MATCH for the reconciling redeeming and restoring Power of the Cross beloved!

- **Hear this - you are not defined by your failures, mistakes of your own or the sin of others.....!**
- **Sin - Brokenness and Violation is NO MATCH for the Power of the Cross beloved!**

1 John 3:8

The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

Hebrews 2:14-15

14 Therefore, since the children share in [a]flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Romans 6:10-11

10 When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. 11 So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

2 - The Power of the Gospel means - NO amount of fallenness - depravity and moral corruption of the world we live in....has power over us....

- **It is NO MATCH for the Power of the Cross beloved!**
- **I submit what I confidently believe the Scripture declares : We can live and thrive in a fallen culture....beloved**

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why Paul said in Philippians 2:15-16

“children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16 as you hold firmly to the word of life.

3 - The Promise and Provision of the Gospel is Certain and Complete!

- **His passion is greater than ours...to present you without spot or wrinkle - Eph 5 but blameless and with great Joy!**

Song written by 2 English authors - considered a Creedal song of confession 'In Christ Alone'

**No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath.
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.**

Yet beloved -

We cannot look at this parable without a Sobering Recognition.....

- Matthew 16:11.....Jesus describes another kind of Leaven.....of the Pharisee.....matt 15:8-9
- This is the Leaven of religion - trusting in self effort and self righteousness to be enough....

Bottom line I want to submit -

- **The Power of Leaven is at work in your life -**
- **Flesh - works - leads to Death**
- **Grace - Faith - leads to life**

So here is the Power of our Choice....

This is why Paul said in Phil 3:8.....

nothing compares to the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.....

Col 3 - *Set your mind on things above....*

Beloved the Call I believe

- **Cultivate the Leaven of the Gospel in our heart and life!**
- This is called Repentance - change mind - life - **John 6:29**

My hope in all of life is this Power of the Gospel to Transform everything it touch's

- The power of Sin - Sickness and Separation!

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