

The Leaven of the Pharisees

A lesson from the making of bread



Book of Mark, Chapter 6,7,8

Mark 6:7,8 – calling the twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits...“take nothing for the journey except a staff – **no bread**, no bag, no money, no extra clothes...”

6:31 – “...come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and **get some rest.**”

6:37 – But He answered “You give them something to eat”. They said to Him “That would take 8 months’ of a man’s wages...”

6:38 – “How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.” They found 5 loaves of **bread** and 2 fish.

6:45 – Jesus made his disciples get into the boat while he went to a mountaintop alone **to pray. [more rest]**

6:51 – Then He climbed into the boat with them and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, (6:52) **for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.**

7:20 – not what goes into but “...what comes out of a man is what makes him unclean (7:21,22) For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, folly.

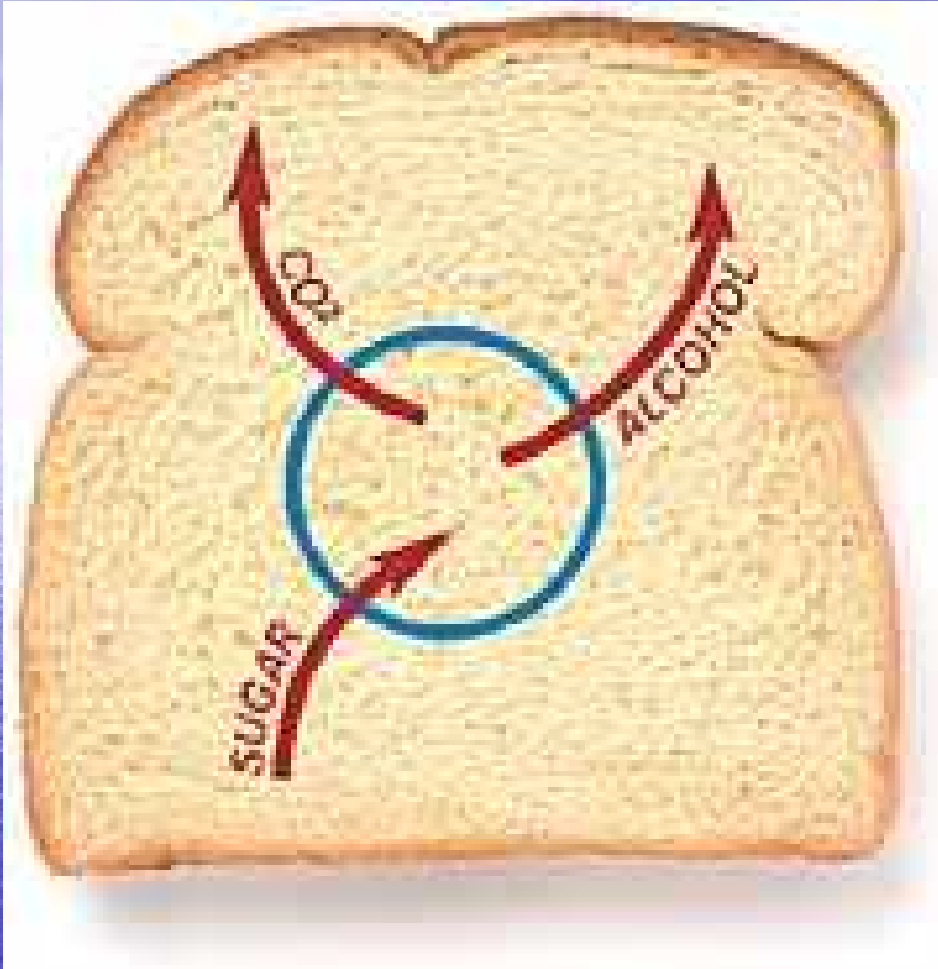
7:28 – “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “but even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.”

8:11 – The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test Him, **they asked Him for a sign from heaven.** (8:12) He sighed deeply and said “Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it.”

8:14 – The disciples had **forgotten to bring bread (!)** except for one loaf they had with them in the boat.

8:15 – “Be careful,” Jesus warned them. “Watch out for the **yeast of the Pharisees** and that of Herod.”

The role of yeast in making bread



-CO₂ puffs it up which changes the appearance and texture

-Alcohols cause flavour and aroma

- these appeal to the senses (smell, taste, touch, sight)

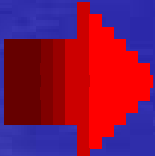
-Adds no nutritional value

How were the Pharisees adding **yeast** in our passage?

The Pharisees required obedience to rules, observances and tradition:

- Emphasis on **appearance** (lower nature)
- Embraced their rules to **defend** their position
- Done in the name of God
- Man's **best efforts** at holiness

The result?

Religious thinking  Religious behaviour.

What's the connection between the action of the Pharisees in our passage and the miracles of the **loaves**?

Question:

- would the Pharisees go out with God's authority over unclean spirits, doing wonders?

What spiritual authority do I exercise in my life? Is there a connection?

Where have all the Pharisees gone?

When I “leaven” the things of God, what am I missing?

What am I denying?

How do we avoid the yeast of the Pharisees? Especially if it's the *only way we know how to make bread?*

Religion

- Looks at the outside
- Compares oneself to others (competitive, accusatory, judgemental)
- Prefers the ease of a set of rules to the difficulty of responding to the heart of another
- Leads to crusades, holy wars, division
- Self-preservation
- Accumulates power

Relationship

- Cares about the inside
- Loves the LORD with all one's heart, soul, mind, strength AND one's neighbour as yourself
- Does what pleases the other as a natural response to love
- Martyrs, vulnerability, brokenness, *unity*
- Preferring the other over self
- Gives it away

Jesus said "I am the **Bread of Life**. He who comes to me will *never* go hungry. He who believes in Me will *never* be thirsty." (John 6:35)