

**Matthew 13: 33; “Leaven Taken & Hidden”, Session # 1 on the Parable of the Leaven,
presented by Pastor Paul Rendall, on October 9th, 2022,
in the Adult Sunday School Class.**

Matthew 13: 33 – “Another Parable He spoke to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”

This Parable, following on the heels of the Parable of the Mustard Seed, we should conclude that they are related to each other. This Parable of the Leaven also relates to the growth of the kingdom of God. But, while the Mustard Seed Parable is related to the outward, visible manifestation of the growth of the kingdom of heaven, growing from very small to very great, this Parable of the Leaven relates to the inward growth. In this Parable it is no less certain because the growth is based upon the certainty of grace bestowed by Christ in relation to the gospel and the word of God.

So what we are looking at here in this Parable is the growth and increase of the kingdom of heaven, both in the heart of the person believing in Christ, and also diffusion of the influences of truth and grace in the various nations and societies of the world to which the gospel comes with power. The growth inwardly is very mysterious, and sometimes slow in relation to our observation, but it is, because of God’s working, producing very tangible effects.

The writer of the Preacher’s Homiletic Commentary says this: “Both parables represent progress; but in the mustard seed progress means growth, in the leaven it means change.” “Again we have a small beginning and a large result.” “The real point of consequence is the alteration of the mass into a new character through a foreign substance introduced into the heart of it.”

1. What is leaven? Leaven is yeast that used in making bread.

What is yeast and how is it made? (I got this information on-line from food-info.net.)

“Yeasts consist of one cell, and belong to the taxonomic (concerned with the classification of things, especially organisms) group called fungi, which also contains moulds. There are many species of yeasts. The most common yeast known is *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, which is used in the baking – and brewing industry. Most yeasts used in the food industry are round and divide themselves through budding. This budding is a characteristic used to recognize them through a microscope. During budding the cells appear in 8-shaped forms.”

“Yeast cells – Yeasts need sugar to grow. They produce alcohol and carbon dioxide from sugar. This reaction makes yeast so important for the food industry. Yeasts also produce pleasant aroma components. These aroma compounds play a very important role for the flavor of the end product. In beer the yeast is needed to produce the alcohol and the carbon dioxide for the brim. In the bread industry, both alcohol and carbon dioxide are formed; the alcohol evaporates during baking.”

“Yeasts can be found everywhere in nature, especially on plants and fruits.” “After fruits fall off the tree, fruits become rotten through the activity of moulds, which form alcohol and carbon dioxide from the sugars in it. Yeasts are grown in the industry in big tanks with sugary water in the presence of oxygen. When the desired amount of yeast is reached the liquid is pumped out, and the yeast is then dried. Nothing else is added in the production of yeast.”

And this from www.busbysbakery.com/dough-fermentation-process/ - “As soon as yeast comes into contact with flour and water, the yeast fermentation process begins. Hydrated carbohydrates break down into simple sugars by enzymes and natural hydrolysis. These sugars supply the yeast with food for it to respire, aerobically or anaerobically. Carbon dioxide is the product most associated with yeast respiration to make bread. The CO₂ produces fills pockets of air in the gluten and as the pockets (alveoli) expand, the bread rises.”

All this is to say that yeast or leaven is what makes bread rise and become the tasty wholesome food that it is.

2. What is the Leaven in this Parable?

The leaven is the word of God’s grace and the Gospel of Christ accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit. The woman is Christ’s Church, His Bride, His wife, who by her ministers and her saints, preaches the gospel and the word of God. In this Parable she takes it and hides this gospel of grace, this leaven, in three measures of meal till it was all leavened. This figure of speech of 3 measures of meal represents the Church’s definite work; of preaching Christ and Him crucified, of taking the gospel in every generation to the ends of the earth, all during this Church Age. There are many ways of preaching Christ and Him crucified, and Christ risen from the dead, in word and deed.

You find an Old Testament example of 3 measures of meal in –

Genesis 18: 1-6 – “Then the LORD appeared to him (Abraham) by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.” “So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, ‘My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant.’” “Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.” “And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts.” “After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant.” “They said, ‘Do as you have said.’” “So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, ‘Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes.’”

Sarah went off to prepare this bread for her guests. She knew that three measures of fine meal would be more than enough to feed her 3 guests; the Pre-Incarnate Christ, and the 2 angels with Him. Even so, the gospel is more than enough to feed the whole world. And this is because the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Christians deliberately put this good leaven into their gospel message. They preach and share the word concerning His grace and His power. It is an essential part of it. (Romans 1: 16)

Romans 1: 16, 17 – “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’”

Even as Abraham and Sarah showed this hospitality to the Divine Stranger who came to them, accompanied by 2 angels, even so the Church shows hospitality to strangers with the gospel and good works, and in doing so, she is pleasing Christ Himself. The Church’s preaching the word and the

gospel to strangers is her showing Divine Hospitality through the gospel, in ministering to need of sinners, which is Christ. She feeds them the word of God by preaching and sharing it, and by doing good works of mercy and kindness. And in this good way, showing Christian love, she hopes to win them to faith in Christ.

Hebrews 13: 2 – Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.”

F. B. Meyer has written on Genesis 18: 6 – “May it not be that Christ comes to us often in the guise of a stranger? Does He not test us thus? Of course if He were to come in His manifested splendor as the Son of the Highest, every one would receive Him, and provide Him with sumptuous hospitality. But this would not reveal our true character. And so He comes to us as a wayfaring man, hungry and athirst; or as a stranger, naked and sick. Those that are akin to Him will show Him mercy, in whatsoever disguise He comes, though they recognize Him not, and will be surprised to learn that they ever ministered to Him. Those, on the other hand, who are not really His, will fail to discern Him; will let Him go, unhelped, away; and will wake up to find that “inasmuch as they did it not to one of the least of these, they did it not to Him.”

3. Why does the Woman “take and hide the leaven” in the meal?

The leaven or yeast of the gospel is the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit which the woman, Christ’s Church, takes and “hides” in the meal of truth. It is not as though she is hiding her light, for she is commanded to be the light of the world. Rather, she takes and “hides” her leaven in the meal by making her preparations in a private hidden way. She kneads the dough, and makes the cakes of her gospel presentation. Christ’s people think about how they hide their own glory, and set forth Christ’s glory as the Bread of Life in their gospel presentation. Christ’s Church in the preaching and sharing of the word shows herself to be Christ’s servant, even as Sarah did in making the bread for her Divine guest.

She places her knowledge of Christ’s yeast of wisdom and His resurrection power into what she is preparing to speak about in relation to Christ and the gospel. She labors secretly in faith and prayer for this. She preaches the law to break up the hard heart. She preaches humility in the reception of the word, so that the word will be Divinely planted. She preaches to herself by saying – Your word have I hidden within my heart, that I might not sin against You. (Psalm 119: 11) She “hides” this leaven in the preparations that she makes so that the recipe of her gospel preaching will turn out well.

She does this so that her presentation of this bread of the word and the gospel, when partaken of, will by the power of God, will, she hopes, bring about the change of the New Birth. The bread of the word and the gospel will be eaten, it will be digested, it will be acted upon, and the person saved, or built up, or changed to be more like Christ. It will bring about, according to the purpose of God, regeneration, (this rising from the dead, spiritually) because the Holy Spirit accompanies the word with power, according the Divine Purpose. It will bring about transformation by the diffusion of this substance of leaven, that is Christ’s power, to the life of the person believing in Him. The Church wants to see sinful people raised from their death in trespasses and sins. The Church wants to make disciples by the feeding Christ’s people with this bread. Since this bread is the staff of eternal life, she is careful with the ingredients of her recipe.

Matthew 4: 3 & 4 – “Now when the tempter came to Jesus, he said, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’ “But He answered and said, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God.’”

Colossians 4: 6 – “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”

Your speech being seasoned with grace, that is seasoned with salt, is a part of this hiding the leaven in the meal of your words that you are thinking about sharing with others. Leaven relates to the power of the word of Christ’s grace, salt relates to flavor, the wisdom and that discretion that is necessary for the shaping of the bread, and whether it will be desirable when it is tasted. In tasting of gospel bread the sinner must see that the Lord Jesus was loving, good, and kind to come down from heaven to do the will of God on their behalf. Faith can only be created in the heart of the sinner when they can taste and see for themselves that He is good. How blessed is the man who will fear Him, have regard for Him!

John 6: 57 & 58 – “As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.” “This is the bread which came down from heaven – not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead.” “He who eats this bread will live forever.”

Psalm 34: 8-10 – “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!” “Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints!” “There is no want to those who fear Him!” “The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the Lord will not lack any good thing.”