

Beware Of The Leaven

“It’s not about the bread!” One can almost hear the Lord Jesus say the words as He upbraided His disciples for their dullness of understanding and inattention to their frequent lessons. He was their Master and Teacher, they were His disciples and students. They had an obligation to be diligent and serious-minded about their studies. Yet despite thorough explanation of the parables, and powerful, illustrative demonstrations of Christ’s gospel by His miracles, the disciples were carelessly and idly failing to consider the lessons being taught.

Finding meaning in the message

These men were believers, men of true spiritual faith, Judas aside, yet there was a failure on their part to ponder and reflect on the significance of what they were seeing and hearing. They were living in the moment, marvelling with the crowds at the amazing works and healings of Christ yet failing to grasp the spiritual significance or properly recognise the meaning behind the symbol.

A timely reminder

The Lord’s rebuke of the disciples ought to chasten us, too. You and I must be careful and diligent about the lessons the Lord teaches us. There is purpose in each lesson. Our life of faith is not a random collection of unconnected challenges and blessings but a course in practical theology. We should treat each day as a day in the classroom with the Master and like a good student spend our Christian lives building upon each new insight the Lord gives.

Thinking on a higher level

The disciples were preoccupied with the immediate circumstances of their journey, but even here they were slovenly. They had forgotten to get provisions and now were embarrassed at having brought no bread. When the Lord mentioned leaven, which they all knew to be a constituent of bread, they at once imagined the Lord was getting at them for their lack of care in bringing supplies. But the Lord would have their thoughts raised to a higher level.

Practical benefit from God’s lessons

How often we are like these disciples. Despite the faithfulness of God, the kindness of Christ, our long experience of deliverance and frequent evidence of divine care, we still become anxious at the slightest trouble, and our peace drains away like water spilt on sand. The great doctrines of everlasting love, complete forgiveness and full assurance of faith are taught in scripture for us to lay hold on, believe in, meditate upon and imbibe into our souls until they change our mindset, alter our conduct, and soothe our fears.

God is in control

Large views of our God are appropriate. Certainly, our Father deals with us personally and individually but we are also part of the great forward movement of God’s eternal purpose of salvation in Christ. When the Saviour asked the disciples how many basketsful of fragments they had collected after each miracle He was reminding them not to take their eye off the bigger picture. I have no right to fret or worry when God is on His throne and my enemy is a defeated foe.

“It is not about the bread”

The leaven of the Pharisees was the sin of corrupt doctrine and proud self-righteousness. When human religion takes hold of a man or a woman it polishes up the outside of the house until it looks spic and span, but within there is no sight of the glory of God and peace is a delusion. Let us take time to consider the scriptural lessons of plenteous grace now and promised glory to come. May the Lord grant us faith to apply both grace and glory to the experiences of our daily lives. Let us do so with the prayer that the Lord will thereby lift our eyes from our own weaknesses to view His enabling strength and may this encourage us to put our hand to the plough of service as we pass through these days of our lives.