

BBC - 8/10/25 - Home Bible Study Outline – “Beware of the Leaven” – Mark 8:14-16

Due to sin, the heart of mankind is desperately wicked ([Jeremiah 17:9](#); [Matthew 15:19](#)). What God begins with perfection, man through Satan’s sin-influence corrupts. Consider the **7 Dispensations**:

- 1) Dispensation of Innocence (*Adam*) - God created perfectly ([Genesis 1:31](#)), but Adam & Eve fell.
- 2) Disp. of Conscience (*Enoch*) - Men called upon name of the LORD, then corrupted ([Gen. 4:26](#), [6:1-5](#))
- 3) Disp. of Human Government (*Noah*) - God rebuilt after the Flood, but Nimrods arose ([Gen. 11:1-9](#))
- 4) Disp. of Promise (*Abraham*) - God promised salvation, but man faltered ([Gen. 12:1-3](#), [15:1-4](#), [16:1-5](#))
- 5) Disp. of Law (*Moses*) - God instituted a sacrificial system for sin, but men unable ([Hebrews 10:1-4](#))
- 6) Disp. of Grace (*Jesus Christ*) - God sent His Son to save, but man rejected Him ([John 1:1-12](#), [3:19](#))
- 7) Disp. of the Millennium (*glorified Christ*) - Jesus reigns 1,000 yrs., then Satan is loosed ([Rev. 20:1-8](#))

Discussion: *Apart from God, does man have within him any means at all to remedy his sin problem?*

Jesus warns His Church of **Religious** and **Worldly** “leaven,” and gives *hope* from a **Heavenly** “leaven.”

[Matthew 16:6-7, 12](#) - *take heed & beware of the leaven of the Pharisees & of the Sadducees* - **RELIGIOUS**

[Mark 8:15-16](#) - *take heed & beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and leaven of Herod* - **WORLDLY**

[Matthew 13:33](#) *be a-ware of the Kingdom of Heaven’s leaven; as a woman mixing HEAVENLY leaven in dough*

Discussion: *Did the disciples’ response to Jesus ([Mt.16](#) & [Mk.8](#)) reflect a spiritual or earthly mindset?*

RELIGIOUS LEAVEN:

Jesus warned of the “leaven” (*hypocritical doctrine*) of the Pharisees & Sadducees ([Mt. 16:12](#) & [Lk. 12:1-2](#)).

- We believers can confuse “*faith*” with “*superstition*.” True faith isn’t fueled by fear of punishment.
- Like the Pharisees of Jesus’ day, religious “*legalism*” is a barrier to the walk of faith we’re called to. Legalism places “*tradition*” over Biblical truth. We must adjust our traditions to reflect Biblical truth.
- Jesus warned to avoid “*doctrines of men*” ([Mt 15:9/Mk 7:7](#); [Col 2:22](#); [Tit 1:14](#); [Eph 4:14](#); [Heb 13:9](#));
...and even worse, “*doctrines of devils*” ([Deut 32:17](#); [Lev 17:7](#); [Ps 106:35-40](#); [1 Cor 10:20](#); [1 Tim 4:1](#))

Discussion: *Are there any religious traditions we’ve lived by, but now realize don’t have Biblical basis?*

WORLDLY LEAVEN:

Jesus warned of the “leaven” of Herod. “Herod” refers to the Herodian dynasty of the Rome-appointed rulers over Judea. Herod the Great, and his sons Herod Archelaus & Herod Antipas ruled during Jesus’ earthly life & ministry. The “*leaven of Herod*” refers to godless worldly cultures & traditions.

- As true believers, we’re warned not to adopt a lifestyle of ungodly & worldly standards.
- The Church is warned not to embrace and integrate worldly thought & values into its worship.
- In our desire to be relevant to the world that we’re called to evangelize, we must be cautious not to compromise Biblical truth. We’re called to “*earnestly contend for the faith*” entrusted to us ([Jude 1-4](#)).
- In [Romans 12:1-2](#), Paul exhorts us not to be conformed to the world, but rather, to be transformed.
- We can do so by keeping His Word, abiding in Him (*Jesus*), and walk as He walked ([1 John 2:3-6](#)).

Discussion: *Is there any compromise in our lives that the Lord is highlighting for us to address?*

HEAVENLY LEAVEN:

[Matthew 13:33](#) (also [Luke 13:21](#)), is one of the shortest of Jesus’ parables, yet tremendously profound.

- Here, Jesus said the Kingdom of Heaven is like “leaven,” that a woman “hid” (kneaded) into 3 measures of dough (*a large 7.5 gallon/60-pound quantity*), until the whole loaf was leavened.
- We can discern the symbolism to teach that: **1) The woman** is the **Church**; **2) the “leaven”** is the **Word of God**; and **3) three measures of dough** is the **world** we’re called to evangelize & disciple.
 - We witness primarily by our life testimony, *not mere words*. First [Ps 119:11](#); then [119:25-27](#).
 - We are to preach the whole counsel of God; Father, Son, & Holy Spirit, in truth & in balance.
 - In God’s time, the faithful & accurate proclamation of Biblical doctrine will “leaven” the loaf.
- The Church is called to be “*salt & light*” into the world ([Matthew 5:13-16](#)). We must not fail!

Discussion: *How can we be better stewards, witnesses, & ambassadors of Christ in a lost world?*