

PUFFED: Choosing positive influences | OUTLINE

MARK 8:11-21

11 The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him. 12 Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, "Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." 13 Leaving them, He again embarked and went away to the other side. 14 And they had forgotten to take bread, and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them.

15 And He was giving orders to them, saying, "Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." 16 They began to discuss with one another the fact that they had no bread. 17 And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart? 18 "HAVING EYES, DO YOU NOT SEE? AND HAVING EARS, DO YOU NOT HEAR?"

And do you not remember, 19 when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?" They said to Him, "Twelve." 20 "When I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?" And they said to Him, "Seven." 21 And He was saying to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

SERMON IN A SENTENCE: *Jesus admonishes His followers to not be puffed with corrupting influences of pretense, pride, and pleasure but to be filled with faith and the power of the Spirit so that they would see the work of God increase among them.*

INTRO

- In n Out closed because they had bad buns. They stunk and tasted bad because the bakery used a new yeast supplier that cut corners and gave them a cheaper quality yeast. (all TX stores, June 24-26, 2018)
- Yeast in ancient Egypt (and Israel): starter dough – could make the dough stink, too much could puff the bread up and then – pop... half of it disappeared... and

there were some risks of sickness – occasionally serious sickness and death – from bad yeast.

- Yeast or leaven, as Jesus called it, can have positive or negative effects as it works itself through the dough.

DON'T GET PUFFED (instead, seek to be filled)

Leaven of the Pharisees: Pretense (Luke 12:1: “Beware the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”)

Quick history of Pharisees:

- Famous Pharisees that we know of: Nicodemus, Paul, Gamaliel. Jesus Himself was likely raised to be a good Pharisee.
- At their core, great; but they got hung up in exteriors to the point that they lost loving and knowing God and instead focused on the external rules they put in place, and their external enablements became entanglements and obstacles to loving and knowing God.
- If you had to choose a Jewish group that most resembled evangelical Protestants (after Christian, that's how I would identify myself), it would be the Pharisees.
- Well-meaning, but often hung up by themselves and the perpetuation of a system that worked great at one time, but now hung around like a ball-and-chain.

To the Pharisees Jesus said these words, recorded in Matthew 7... ³ **"Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?"** ⁴ **"Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?"** ⁵ **"You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."**

Leaven of the Sadducees: Pride (Matthew 16:6)

The Sadducees' approach to Scripture and spirituality was driven by their intellect and desire to maintain their positions in society.

Quick history of Sadducees (according to the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia, jewishencyclopedia.com):

- this Grecianized and Romanized name was originally Zadoki, after Zadok the priest during the reigns of David and Solomon.
- Virtually all we know about the Zadoki's is from the historians, which leaned toward the Pharisees.
- Intellectuals, adhered to the written Law of Moses but solely in a very intellectual higher-criticism kind of way, and denied that God would actively work in a supernatural way.
- "Instead of believing that the future was in the hands of God, took people's destiny into their own hands, fighting or negotiating with the heathen nations just as they thought best, while having as their aim their own temporary welfare and worldly success."
- Their intellectual approach allowed them to cling to the upper echelons of power, but distanced themselves from the common people who were much more prone to follow some of the populist teachers among the Pharisees.
- The theological liberals of their day.

To those with the prideful attitude of the Sadducees, the Apostle Paul says, **"Knowledge puffs up while love builds up."** (1 Corinthians 8:1)

Leaven of Herod: Pleasure

Herod traded away his values for a good time.

Unlike the Pharisees or the Sadducees, Herod was disconnected from religion.

Herod represents that part of our culture today that is driven by economics and entertainment and has absolutely no mooring in the teachings of Scripture.

Recount the story of the slaying of John the Baptist – King Herod, trapped by his own indiscretions, betrayed his own good intentions and had John the Baptist, whom he regarded as a righteous and holy man, executed to fulfill a promise he made to a dancer. (Mark 6:17-26).

Jesus and the disciples had moved pretty much non-stop since John's death. Maybe three days had passed since He had been informed of John's execution, and it's highly likely that John's disciples who came to tell Jesus about it were still among Jesus'

disciples. There was no doubt quite a bit of emotion in His voice when He warned His disciples not to succumb to the leaven of the Pharisees (who had just been arguing with Him) or Herod, who had just killed His close friend.

Jesus offers a better life. Joy instead of passing happiness, but only by the Holy Spirit working in their hearts can those who seek pleasure begin to seek the God who made all good things, including the pleasures they enjoy. To Herod and all those like them there is the message of John the Baptist, “Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!”

EMPTY STOMACHS

Sometimes our appetites and human needs get in the way of hearing what Jesus has to say.

The disciples thought Jesus was mad at them for forgetting bread because He was hungry, too.

Often, to hear Jesus speak in our lives we need to put ourselves aside.

How could the disciples have been less distracted by their hunger to really hear what Jesus was saying to them?

HARDENED HEARTS AND DIMINISHED FAITH

Do you have a hardened heart?

Mention link (Bible app links right to it!!!) <https://bacc.cc/5-ways-to-tell-if-you-have-a-hard-heart/>

Why do you think this question would have stung the disciples? (cf Jeremiah passage read earlier)

Jesus invites them to math class...

- 8:19 – feeding of the 5000. How many loaves? 5 loaves and three fish. How many baskets full of leftovers? Twelve.
- 8:20 – feeding of the 4000. How many loaves? 7 loaves of bread and a few “small fish” ... sardines perhaps? How many baskets full of leftovers? Seven.
- Why?
 - The faith of the disciples wasn’t growing, it was being contaminated by the leaven of negative influencers around them like the Hypocrites, the Arrogant Power-Huggers, and the Pleasure-Seekers.
- Are your influencers feeding your faith? Are they leading you to Jesus? Is your faith growing? Is the work of God around you < or >?

WHAT IF?

Instead of a hardened heart with little faith that accepts the corrupting influences of those around them, what if we had an open heart? Open to the Holy Spirit, seeking truth from Scripture and other voices that point us to Jesus Christ? And what if our open hearts were also hearts that leavened the dough around them?

You know Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever! He isn’t changing! Why are we??

Brothers and sisters, I pray that Jesus never has to ask us what He asks His disciples, but I fear He asks me this all the time: DO YOU NOT YET UNDERSTAND? May we have the grace to choose what builds up, not what puffs up, and to be filled with the power of the Spirit that leads to life, health, and love. Amen.