

## Matthew 13:33 The Parable of the Leaven

Introduction: This parable could be called “The Parable of the Sour Dough Bread.” The parable of the sower showed how Christianity spreads – by the presentation of the gospel. The parable of the tares shows the spread of false Christianity. The parable of the mustard seed shows the pollution of Christianity by heretical doctrine and practice. The parable of leaven continues that same thought.

### I. The presentation of the parable, Verse 33.

- A. Jesus gave the parable “unto them”; that is to the whole multitude.
- B. The kingdom is not like leaven itself, but like the whole story that is told about leaven.
- C. In this story the woman took a little bit of leaven and put it into three measures of meal.
  1. “Meal” here is not cornmeal, but wheat meal and flour.
  2. One “measure” is about a peck and a half.
  3. Thus three measures was about six or seven gallons of flour.  
(Must have been feeding an army.)
  4. The kind of leaven she used was “sour dough.”
- D. The little leaven eventually leavened the whole lump.

### II. A wrong interpretation of the parable.

- A. Some teach that the leaven represents the gospel and that the parable teaches the power of the gospel as it spreads. (The ultimate outcome according to this interpretation is that Christianity will prevail, the world will get better as Christianity spreads and that it will eventually take the world for Christ.)
- B. There are at least three things wrong with that interpretation.
  1. In every other place in scripture, leaven represents the forces of evil rather than good.
  2. The Bible does not teach that the world will get better, but rather worse and worse, I Timothy 3:13.
  3. Things are not getting better and better.

### III. What the parable is really taking about.

- A. Jesus is showing how extremely dangerous a little bit of false doctrine can be.
  1. It can grow and grow until an individual is a rank heretic.
  2. It can grow and grow until a whole church is in heresy.
  3. It can grow and grow until a whole association of churches is heretical.
  4. It can grow and grow until a whole denomination is lost to the cause of Christ and teaches heresy.
- B. Jesus is showing how insidiously Satan works.
  1. He works very slowly – a little here and a little there.
  2. He slowly spreads his poisonous heresy.
- C. Jesus is showing what would happen in Christianity.  
(Heresies would creep in and whole new denominations would develop.)
- D. Jesus was showing what a corrupt doctrinal mess Christianity would come to be in before the end of the age.
  1. Virtually all Christianity would become polluted with the leaven of heresy.
  2. The Laodicean church in Revelations shows the sorry spiritual condition of this age.
  3. That is one reason Christianity is filled with so many contradictory doctrines and that is why those who preach and teach truth are persecuted.

Conclusion:

1. We need to thank God again and again that we can have a pure church today.
2. We need the help of Almighty God to keep us from becoming polluted with leaven (as individuals.)
3. We need the help of Almighty God to keep even this church doctrinally pure.
4. Let us not be deceived into thinking that one church is as good as another. (One that has gone into heresy is not as good as one that is doctrinally pure.)
5. I offer the following counsel to all: (1) Be saved. Be true to God and to His word no matter what. (2) Study – rightly divide the word.

Preached at Pleasant Hill M.B.C. 3-18-84 A.M.