**Jesus Help Me Understand**

**By Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Mark 8:14-21**

**Wednesday Evening**

**March 13, 2019**

**14 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. 15 Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."**

Saints, Jesus had left his confrontation with the Pharisees abruptly, and the disciples went along with him. Apparently, at some point out on the sea, they realized that they had forgotten to bring any food.

As the disciples were worrying about bread, Jesus used the opportunity to teach of the danger of the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod. Yeast is a key ingredient in bread, for it causes the dough to rise. “Yeast” in this passage symbolizes evil. Just as only a small amount of yeast is needed to make a batch of bread rise, so the evil teachings and hypocrisy of the religious and political leaders could permeate and contaminate the entire society.

**Proverbs 2:6-15**

6 For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding; 7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;

He is a shield to those who walk uprightly; 8 He guards the paths of justice, And preserves the way of His saints. 9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice, Equity and every good path. 10 When wisdom enters your heart, And knowledge is pleasant to your soul,

11 Discretion will preserve you; Understanding will keep you, 12 To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things, 13 From those who leave the paths of uprightness To walk in the ways of darkness; 14 Who rejoice in doing evil, And delight in the perversity of the wicked; 15 Whose ways are crooked, And who are devious in their paths…

**Psalm 140:1-5**

1 Deliver me, O LORD, from evil men; Preserve me from violent men, 2 Who plan evil things in their hearts; They continually gather together for war. 3 They sharpen their tongues like a serpent; The poison of asps is under their lips.

Selah

4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; Preserve me from violent men, Who have purposed to make my steps stumble. 5 The proud have hidden a snare for me, and cords; They have spread a net by the wayside; They have set traps for me.

Jesus used yeast as an example of how a small amount of evil can affect a large group of people. The wrong teachings of the Pharisees were leading many people astray. Jesus warned his disciples to constantly beware of the contaminating evil of the religious leaders.

**2 Corinthians 13:5-6**

5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you are disqualified. 6 But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.

**Galatians 5:9**

“A little leaven leavens the whole lump.”

**Scripture frames the “Problem of Evil”**

Saints, the Bible makes it clear that evil is neither something God intended nor created. Rather, moral evil is a necessary possibility. If we are truly free, then we are free to choose something other than God’s will—that is, we can choose moral evil. Scripture points out that there are consequences for defying the will of God—personal, communal, physical, and spiritual.

**Genesis 1:31**

“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”

**Genesis 2:16–17**

16 “And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.’“

**Genesis 3:17–19**

17 “To Adam he said, ‘Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

**Proverbs 14:34**

“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin condemns any people.”

**Proverbs 19:3**

“A person’s own folly leads to their ruin, yet their heart rages against the Lord.”

**John 9:1–3**

1 “As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 2 ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, 3 ‘but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.’”

**Romans 1:18-32**

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;

32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

**Romans 3:23**

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

**Romans 5:12**

“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.”

**Hebrews 2:2–3**

2 “For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, 3 how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?”

Taken together, Scripture shows us that physical evils—sickness, famine, war, and death—are the result of moral evil.

And moral evil is something human beings are all responsible for, on a personal and a communal level. We suffer because of our own sins at times. Other times, we suffer because of the sins of others. In some situations, we suffer from simple cause-and-effect. And we sometimes suffer for a special purpose, in order to bring hope or help—or a warning—to others.

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

**16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have no bread."**

Saints, Jesus issued a warning, and the disciples quietly talked among themselves. They didn’t understand the warning and interpreted Jesus’ words in an odd manner.

The phrase might also be translated, “But we have no bread at all.” In other words, “How can we be in danger of their yeast if we don’t even have any bread?” Their literal understanding missed Jesus’ point entirely.

**2 Corinthians 13:7-9**

7 Now I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honorable, though we may seem disqualified. 8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. 9 For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete.

**17 But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? 18 Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?**

Saints, Jesus was saddened that the Jewish religious leaders, the people who should have rejoiced at Jesus’ arrival, had completely rejected him. It angered him that these religious leaders had the power to spread their unbelief throughout the nation.

Jesus’ disciples had not escaped the contamination, for even they consistently failed to realize who Jesus was. Jesus’ rebuke in these verses is a series of questions focusing on the disciples’ hardheartedness, blindness and deafness to the truth, and lack of memory regarding all that they had seen and experienced with Jesus. Each question was a stinging rebuke to the disciples.

**19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?" They said to Him, "Twelve." 20 "And when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?" And they said, "Seven."**

Saints, Jesus quizzed the disciples further over their lack of perception. Did they even remember the feeding of the five thousand? When he had broken only five loaves and fed more than five thousand, how many baskets full of leftovers did they collect?

They remembered that there were twelve baskets full. Then Jesus asked them what had just occurred when he had broken seven loaves and fed more than four thousand. The disciples knew that there were seven large baskets full. Both times they had collected more leftovers than food that they had at the beginning.

**21 So He said to them, "How is it you do not understand?"**

Saints, the disciples correctly answered Jesus’ questions. In doing so, the conclusion should have been obvious. His question, “Don’t you understand even yet?” was more of an appeal. The disciples needed to understand, and after all they had seen and heard, they should have reached the obvious conclusion that Jesus was their Messiah, the Son of God.

**Let’s Pray**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**