



Ask, What is the best kind of bread that you remember ever eating? (You may ask for the group members to reflect on a time that they made bread or had some scrumptious rolls?)

Many times we think of bread as a “comfort food” and yet in the last decade or two there has been increased emphasis on the perils of gluten and bread. Jesus in Luke 12 is addressing the disciples and a very large crowd about the perils of spiritual leaven. He has some strong words for us to heed.

“In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his disciples first, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops. “I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows. “And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.””

Luke 12:1-12 ESV

Beware the Leaven

(share about sourdough bread starters) Here is a link to a blog that you might even want to share about doing your own sourdough starter - <https://www.theclevercarrot.com/2019/03/beginner-sourdough-starter-recipe/>

- yeast is actually a fungus that gathers other particles from the air to cause the bread to rise
- Leaven grows and is stretchy

Jesus warns the disciples, the listening crowd and us of:

1. **The leaven of hypocrisy (v. 1-3)** Ask for someone’s best definition of a hypocrite – (Misrepresenting who you are. Pretending to be someone you are not. Beware thinking you can be one way in public and another way in private. God knows who you really are.
2. **The leaven of the fear of death (v. 4-7)** Many of us have a great fear of others. Jesus says that fear is misplaced. Fear God Who has the authority to send you to hell. Jesus goes on to say that humans matter to God much more than the sparrows. Don’t fear the temporal but the eternal.

3. **The leaven of the Fear of Man (v. 8-12)** When someone speaks of Jesus out of ignorance and does not really know Who He is, then they will be forgiven. Jesus has much more harsh words for those who know the truth and still campaign against God. Jesus says there will be no forgiveness and this is commonly known as blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

Beware the leaven that can steal true joy. This leaven is anything or anyone you seek to fill that place in your life that only Christ Himself can fill. Leaven can come in many forms/shapes/sizes and can even change throughout the seasons of our lives.

Ask, What have you thought was going to give you joy but actually led to heartache? (Give group members some time to reflect if they want to do so.) Remind them that reaching out to anyone or anything other than Christ for joy will result in disappointment.

Ask, Why did Jesus come? So that you and I can know true joy.

Some take-aways from this week's sermon:

- Know the joy of being one person. (Be the same in public and private.)
- Know the joy of eternal life. (Know that it is God Who is transforming you as you allow Him to do it.)
- Know the joy of owning our faith. (Know the joy of knowing Christ even in the midst of suffering and persecution.)

Take time to share prayer requests and spend time praying for one another.

Encourage each other to continue to participate in the 45 Days of Thankfulness.