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# BEWARE OF LEAVEN

**Mark 8:1-21**

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## INTRODUCTION

Over and over again, Jesus explains to His disciples that the real issues of life are the inner, spiritual ones—not the obvious physical ones. In this passage, we find three instances wherein Jesus tries to drive that point home. Like the disciples, we are prone to concentrate on our physical circumstances more than our spiritual condition.

Even though they have witnessed Jesus feeding the 5,000 not too many days earlier, the disciples are dismayed at the prospect of finding enough food to feed another large crowd of people. They look around and see no possibilities because they are only looking on the outside of things. They do not take into consideration who Jesus is or what He can do.

The Pharisees are even worse than the disciples in terms of how they view things. The Pharisees want Jesus to perform a sign, an attesting miracle that will convince them who He is and who He says He is. Like the friends of the deaf and dumb man, they want Jesus to do what they want Him to do: *Perform according to our terms, and we'll believe in You.*

But Jesus won't give them that kind of sign. What He does will not conform to their worldview; He will not affirm their perspective. He came to alter it. Besides, He is interested in ministering to people, not just putting on some spectacular sideshow.

Back in the boat once more, Jesus warns the disciples to be on their guard against the leaven of the Pharisees. “*What's He talking about?*” they want to know. “*He seems pretty upset. Do you suppose He's upset because we forgot to bring any of that leftover bread from the 5,000?*”

The disciples are still thick. Spiritually speaking, they don't understand that Jesus is interested what's going on “*inside.*” His focus is on the heart out of which come the issues of life.

*“Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.” ~Proverbs 4:23*

### **JESUS KNOWS OUR NEED; EVEN WHILE HE IS TEACHING US, HE TAKES CARE OF US**

At different times, we will have different roles to play. Sometimes we are among the 5,000 being asked to sit, and at other times, we will be one of those passing out the bread.

*Jesus gives us an excellent example to follow in ‘blessing the food’:*

- Giving thanks before we eat a meal is a way of blessing God.
- Being thankful for the little we have is better than complaining about it.
- (Mark 8:11-12)—The signs people ask God to perform in order to verify His existence or His love, care, etc., are usually more about the people being confirmed in their pre-existing perspective. In other words, they ask to verify their own rightness, rather than God’s existence.
- Herod’s leaven was to “*enjoy listening*” to spiritual truth without letting that truth make a difference in how he chose to live.
- It is possible to have the eyes to see and the ears to hear inner, spiritual truth, and yet choose not to use those eyes and ears. Spiritual folly is not usually because of someone not knowing any better, but of someone not choosing any better.