

Bible Study



Wednesday,
September 26, 2012

The Parable of the Leaven

MATTHEW 13:33

Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

There are two conflicting views among scholars concerning the meaning of this parable:

1. The leaven represents the truth, the Gospel, and the power of Christ's kingdom. When it is permitted to work, it will have a powerful and far reaching impact. (Albert Barnes, Adam Clark, John Gill, Matthew Henry).
2. The leaven represents apostasy and error, which, when introduced into the kingdom of Heaven, has the potential to infect and corrupt greatly. (AC Gaebelein, John Phillips, John R. Rice, CI Scofield).

Pastor's opinion: this parable illustrates a truth that contrasts with the parable of the mustard seed. Just as the truth, represented by the mustard seed, produces much good; error and apostasy, represented by the leaven, produces much evil.

Reasons for this opinion:

1. Leaven is ALWAYS used to illustrate sin or error throughout the rest of the Bible. If leaven were representing something good here, it would be the sole exception. Exodus 12:15; Matthew 16:6, 11, 12; I Corinthians 5:4-8
2. Leaven itself is the product of fermentation, corruption.
3. In other places in Scripture, when a woman presents truth she pictures apostasy and error. Revelation 2:20, Revelation 17:1.
4. This woman hid the leaven, implying that she was trying to get away with something, hoping it would go unnoticed.

The rest of the Bible certainly gives us plenty of warnings about allowing false doctrine into the church:

1. There will always be false teachers who will seek to plant their error among God's people. Matthew 7:15, Matthew 24:11, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, 2 Peter 2:1, I John 4:1, Jude 4.
2. When error is allowed to be implanted in the church, it will continue to spread. Acts 20:30, I Timothy 4:1,
3. If error is not combated by truth, it has the potential to infect the entire church.