



Secrets of the Kingdom 3

Yeast

Matthew 16:1 – 12

Yeast can be good in making bread, beer or wine but when airborne it can be a bad fungus and cause infectious diseases. This is why Jesus compares it to the Kingdom of Heaven in one of the parables of chapter 13. God loves to take the unremarkable and render it unstoppable.

- The Bible uses yeast in a negative light → for the spreading corruption of sin.
- Feast of Unleavened Bread was for the remembrance of covenant purity → Exodus 12:15, 19.
- Paul reminds us that little yeast works through a whole batch of dough.

- Jesus warns that Satan has a yeast of his own:
 - i. Yeast of the Pharisees → *Spirit of legalism*, which hopes for salvation through human works.
 - ii. Yeast of the Sadducees → *Spirit of human reasoning and compromise*, rejecting the authority of Scripture except for the five books of Moses.
→ Sadducees held office as God's priests, but denied his power.

- The yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees infected Judaism and made it dead and worldly; so much so that the Gospel could thrive better in Gentile lands.
- After being rejected by Pharisees, Jesus retreats to gentile areas where he performs miracles and the people praised God.

- This shows how this same yeast that infected first-century Judaism can easily affect churches of today unless we stay true to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus says he is the only one who can shut down a church (Rev 2:5) → like a surgeon who removes deadly cancer cells which are fatal to the rest of the body.
- But the Devil's yeast is outpaced by the yeast of God's Kingdom.

Jesus is fiercely committed to the true Gospel of salvation.

The Master-Questioner

Matthew 16:13 – 16

There is power in asking questions → often don't know how to communicate the Gospel because we over look this.

Learning from Jesus:

Consider the wise manner in which he led the disciples to confess him as the Son of God. He doesn't preach or give a lecture.

1. He starts with a third person question → unthreatening and makes people think they are an expert – “*Who do **people** say I am?*”
OR *Why do you think most people in our country never go to church?*
2. Next question is a second person question → goes much deeper – “*Who do **you** say I am?*”
OR “*Is that why you never go to church?*”
 - It's a direct, challenging question but it's easy to ask because the first question paved the way.
 - Peter replies that “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*”.
3. Jesus affirms what is right (God revealed this to you and I can build my church on your statement) before challenging what is wrong (get behind me Satan!).
 - Two simple questions, but a giant leap forward for the disciples. That is the power of asking people questions.
 - ❖ A ten minute testimony or gospel presentation often fails to have an effect as people raise defenses and disengage.
 - ❖ Jesus asked questions, drawing out what people believed.
 - ❖ Jesus uses third person question to pave way to second person question and follow-on questions. Listen with genuine interest, toughest questions provoke deepest reflection.

Jesus is Not a Carpenter

Matthew 16:13 – 17:13

Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, but he is very different from the humble carpenter he was on earth. He came to earth in a disguise → so human that no one suspected he was divine. We need to see beneath the disguise which was the point of his Transfiguration.

- Matthew 17:2 – ‘*his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.*’
- Seeing Jesus as he really is, was essential prep for the turbulent years ahead for Christians as disguised Jesus wouldn't have sustained them as apostles/preachers.
 - ❖ This vision gave them confidence to minister with authority.
- Their revelation that Jesus is the Son of God became the rock on which he could build his church through them.
 - ❖ The Greek word for Peter is *petros* the word Jesus uses for this is *petra*.
 - ❖ He does not so much build his church on Peter as he does the rock of Peter's confession that he is the Son of God.
 - ❖ Faith that hell will never prevent the advance of his Kingdom, and it convinced them that if they bound and loosed things on earth he was able to enforce it from his heavenly throne.

This **vision of the transfigured Jesus** also gave faith to obey commands through tough days which lay ahead.

- The Father spoke same words as at Jesus' Baptism but added ‘*Listen to Him*’.
- Peter had been struggling to do this but in light of this vision he would trust Jesus' wisdom and obey his strategy alone.
- Those who have seen Jesus in his heavenly glory reject ‘*the things of men*’ and embrace ‘*the things of God*’.

This **vision of the glorified Jesus** also gave them zeal to obey Jesus' commission when they found the first church in the aftermath of the Pentecost.

- The new church would break out of the Old Testament Israel and would bring the Kingdom of God into the world.
- The Father commands that the disciples listen to Jesus and obey his church blueprint, instead of their own.
- Therefore we need to gaze deeply into the face that shines brightly as the sun, and know the ascended Christ as the in his heavenly glory → the Master we must know and love.

Why Doesn't God Heal?

Matthew 17:14 – 21

When Jesus came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, he healed the epileptic boy instantly.

- God is not unwilling to heal as the disciples thought.
→ God was willing. They just lacked faith.

Healing the sick is part of the Gospel message.

- Matthew uses the words 'healing' and 'saving' interchangeably.
→ Healing is an integral part of God's Kingdom message.
- People often want to say that they are not being healed so that they can glorify God in their sickness.
→ **BUT!** the gospel shows that Jesus glorified God by healing people, NOT by leaving them sick.
 - ❖ Job remained sick because his friends failed to remember to pray for him because they were so busy theorizing about why God might not want to heal him.
- God wants to heal because he is compassionate and wants to show that his Gospel is true.
- James 5 vs.14 -15 → healing is for Christians and non-Christians.
- God is always willing to heal.
- People are often scared of failure and looking a fool and so avoid praying for a person.
- Jesus looked foolish on the cross and so did his followers in advancing the Kingdom.
 - ❖ Realise that God's Kingdom will only come through you when you are willing to look foolish too.
 - ❖ More people are saved through the preaching of the Gospel of healing.

Jesus gives diagnosis why people are not receiving healing in verse 20 → *"it is because you have so little faith."*

- We can increase our faith *"by praying and fasting"*, and it only takes a mustard seed of faith to push back Satan's defeated kingdom.

Jesus is looking for an army of followers who believe his Kingdom message, preach his Kingdom message, and demonstrate his power with miracles of healing. If we preach it as he gave it, he promises in verse 21 that *"Nothing is impossible for you"*.