

# Thursday Devotional

September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020

*“Jesus said to them, ‘Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.’”*

– Matthew 16:6-7

Have you ever been driving in the mountains and seen a sign that either says or indicates with a picture, “BEWARE! ROCKS FALLING!?” This sign may seem silly to some of us at first glance. However, it is not a silly sign when the rock falls on your car and damages the roof. Even small rocks could damage the windshield or windows and make it no longer safe to drive. A small crack can lead to a bigger crack which eventually will lead to a broken window. That sign warning you of rocks falling is no longer silly is it?

Jesus is giving the disciples a warning in this passage of Matthew 16. He is warning them against the doctrines and beliefs of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Both of these groups believed in a self-righteous, legalistic, works based faith. Simply put, they believed they could work hard enough and obey the law good enough that they could be saved from their sins. It is interesting to note the language Jesus uses to describe how these doctrines can sneak into the Gospel. He uses the word “leaven” to describe these false doctrines. Leaven is typically described as yeast, which is used to make dough rise. But you don’t use very much of the leaven in the dough. Rather, you just use a little pinch to permeate the entire loaf of bread. Jesus is saying that even a small amount of the false doctrines of legalism, works based faith, or self-righteousness infused into the Gospel, transforms it so much that it ceases to even be considered the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jesus did not only mean for this warning to be for the disciples, but it is equally as important for today’s Church. God’s people need to beware and guard against these false doctrines. We need to fight against these efforts to change the Gospel which are seeping into the Church and into our lives. We must take heed and be careful, that even a small amount will influence and change it completely. We must never try to change the Gospel or make it more interesting. We must stand firm to the truth that is found in Jesus Christ. The truth that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, and there is no other way to be saved from our sins.

For further study read through the seven I Am statement of Jesus: John 6:35-48; 8:12; 10:7; 10:11-14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1-5