

Sermon title: **'Watch Out.'**

Scripture: **Mark 8:11-21**

Clearwater Bay Church

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When I was 17 years old, I was living a double life. I had 2 sets of friends. I had my church friends and around them I played the church game....I talked like a Christian. Then I had another set of friends from my neighborhood that were trouble. Around them, I lived like them. I was 'riding the fence'. I wasn't hot or cold. I was lukewarm.

But things changed one day when I tried to share Christ with one of my non-Christian friends. We were playing basketball and my friend Rodney was upset about something and told me, *'I don't believe in God.'*

Now for some reason at that moment, I felt like I needed to take the opportunity to share with Rodney and show him the light. So I said, *"Rodney, there is a God and I'll prove it to you. I'll go far away and turn around backwards and try to make this basketball shot and if I make it, there is a God and if I don't, there's not a God."*

I was thinking, Elijah, Moses....I'm gonna show him. I got very far away and turned around backwards, threw up the ball without looking and..... SWISH!

I made the shot. Went right in! I turned red. Rodney turned white (he was a black man). I said, *"You see Rodney there is a God. I just proved it to you."* He put his finger in my face and said, *"Don't tell me you're a*

Christian. I watch your life everyday and you don't act like a Christian. You are a hypocrite."

I was stunned. I was in shock and I was ashamed.

Turn in your Bible to **Mark 8:11-21**

11 The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him.

12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." 13 And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

14 Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. 15 And he

cautioned them, saying, "**Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of**

Herod." 16 And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread. 17 And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?

18 Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? 19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They said to him, "Twelve." 20 "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven." 21 And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

The disciples always seem to be misunderstanding what Jesus says.

They talk a lot about the practical.
He talks a lot about the spiritual.

There was an argument.
A discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees again.
Not sure what it was.
And they finally get right to it.
They ask for a sign!
A sign for him to prove he is from God.

As if he hadn't done enough signs.
They wanted him to prove it to them.
He refuses and they leave quickly.

They leave so quickly that they forget to make sure they've got everything.
They don't stock up on bread.

Verse 14 says, "They had forgotten to bring bread and they had only one loaf with them in the boat."

Jesus uses this opportunity to teach them something.

He looks at the bread and he cautioned them, saying, "Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

That's why he said, but they heard him say something else.

What they heard was 'bread'.

The word leaven triggered their minds about bread....and they are like,

"Oh no, we forgot to buy bread."

Jesus' response is...huh?

What are you guys talking about bread for?

Are you completely clueless?

Don't you understand?

19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They said to him, "Twelve." 20 "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven." 21 And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

He's not concerned with bread.

He can make bread.

He's concerned about something else.

"WATCH OUT; BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND THE LEAVEN OF HEROD."

We need to ask some questions if we are going to understand this passage and see what Jesus wants us to see.

What is leaven?

It is an agent, usually yeast that is added to bread or something else to make it rise.

It works itself into the mix little by little and slowly.
It spreads and makes the whole thing rise.
A little yeast, a little leaven changes the whole thing.

Well, what is the leaven of the ‘Pharisees’- these Jewish religious teachers?

Look at Luke 12:1

12:1 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**.”

Look at Matthew 16:11-12, which is the parallel passage to Mark 8.

Matthew 16:11-12

How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” 12 Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of **the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees**.

There it is. The leaven of the Pharisees is hypocrisy and their teaching. It’s what they practiced and what they preached.

If we are going to fully understand so that WE can avoid it...

so that we can heed Jesus' words to WATCH OUT..
and BEWARE of this...

we need to look deeper to see what it looks like.....so
we can spot it in US.

Turn to **Matthew 23**. In this chapter Jesus takes the
Pharisee's actions apart and describes their hypocrisy.

verse 3: They don't practice what they preach.

verse 4: They put heavy burdens on people but are not
willing to help carry them.

verse 5: They do all their deeds to be seen by others.

verse 13: They shut the kingdom of heaven in people's
faces. Won't let them enter.

verse 15: They go on mission trips to convert
people....to hell.

verse 16-22: They focus on the forms and elements of
worship and yet are blind to God's holiness.

verse 23-24: They tithe (even their spices) but don't
care about people.

verse 25: Greedy. Self-Indulgent

verse 27-28: Outwardly righteous. Inwardly hypocrites
and lawless.

verses 29-36: They don't have an accurate view of their
own state. *"We would have never killed the prophets,
like our fathers did."*

They don't see themselves for who they REALLY are.
That's where I was when I was 17.
I thought I was one thing.
I was really something else.

And I still am.
The battle goes on.

That's why Jesus says to the disciples and says to us
today— --
“WATCH OUT” “BEWARE” of the leaven of the
Pharisees.

It'll work into us slowly.
It'll work in a little at a time and get into us and we will
be full of it.
It will rise up in us.

What does it lead to?

Religious practice without relationship.
Standards for people without sympathy.
Faithfulness without fervency.
Attendance without affection.
Preaching without practice.
Giving without generosity.
Sacrifice without selflessness.
Missions without making disciples.
Public prayers without private prayers.
Duty without delight.

Watch out. Beware.

Well, is there any way to avoid it?

Is there any way in the scriptures to show us HOW to make sure the leaven of hypocrisy doesn't get in?

1 Peter 2:1-2

2:1 So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

There's something about *guzzling* God's word...
marinating in God's word....*soaking* in God's word...and spending time with him there....that makes you more like him and less like a hypocrite.

Matthew 6

In Matthew 6 Jesus describe the hypocrites as doing things to be praised by others and to be seen by others....in giving, in praying and in fasting.

What's the opposite according to Jesus of hypocrisy?

Give without telling anyone..

Praying in the closet where no one sees.

Fasting with your head washed so that no one knows.

Doing things before 'Your Father who sees in secret.'

How do we avoid hypocrisy?

Devour God's word

Know God in the secret place.

Watch out; beware brothers and sisters of the leaven of the Pharisees.

Imagine if all us practiced what we preached.
Including me.

What COULD happen in our city if we lived that way?

What would it look like if we all did it?

Here's a challenge for the week!

Pray a simple prayer. **Psalm 139:23-24**

"Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!"