

**Mark 8:10-21 NASB**  
**“Using the right brand of yeast”**

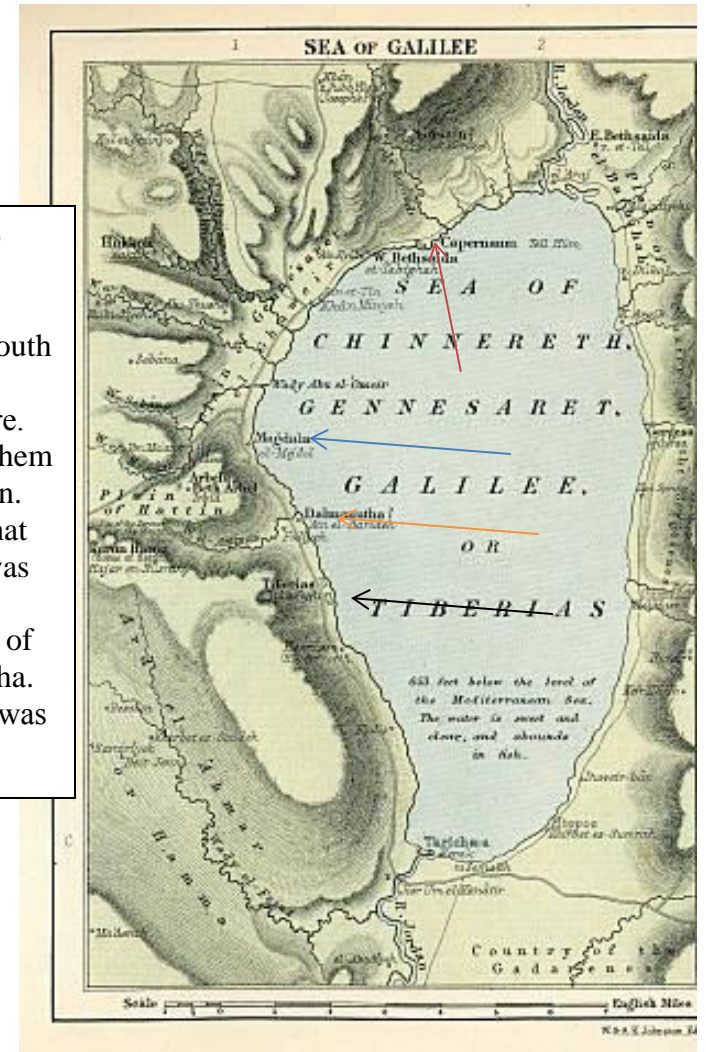
“And immediately He (Jesus) entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha. <sup>11</sup>The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him. <sup>12</sup>Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, ‘Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.’

“<sup>13</sup>Leaving them, He again embarked and went away to the other side. <sup>14</sup>And they had forgotten to take bread, and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them. <sup>15</sup>And He was giving orders to them, saying, ‘Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.’

“<sup>16</sup>They began to discuss with one another *the fact* that they had no bread. <sup>17</sup>And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, ‘Why do you discuss *the fact* that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart? <sup>18</sup>**HAVING EYES, DO YOU NOT SEE? AND HAVING EARS, DO YOU NOT HEAR?** And do you not remember, <sup>19</sup>when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?’ They said to Him, ‘Twelve.’

““<sup>20</sup>When I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?’ And they said to Him, ‘Seven.’ <sup>21</sup>And He was saying to them, ‘Do you not yet understand?’”

This ancient map provided by Getty Images shows **Dalmanutha** south of **Magdala** on Galilee’s west shore. Modern maps show them at the same location. You might recall that Mary Magdalene was from Magdala. **Tiberias** was south of Magdala-Dalmanutha. Jesus’ second home was in **Capernaum**.



**Imagine being a marriage counselor.**

**You meet with a prospective bride and groom.**

**They ask you what factors are most important to a happy, fulfilling marriage.**

**They're likely looking for a list of 3-10 points.**

**You hand them 20 pages emphasizing 50-100 issues crucial to a successful marriage.**

**Do you think that seeing all those issues at one time might overwhelm the couple?**

**I use the above illustration for a reason.**

**The Bible contains no unnecessary stories, subjects, or words.**

**The Lord didn't include unimportant in the words or stories in the Scriptures.**

**That's why I regard every sermon subject vital.**

**I read about a new minister, who asked a judge, who attended the service:**

**"So, judge, what did you think of my first sermon?"**

**"There were only three things wrong with it," replied the frank jurist. "Just three? Not bad for my first attempt. What were they?" he asked.**

**"First, you read it!" answered the judge.**

**"Second, you didn't read it well!"**

**And third, it wasn't worth reading anyway!"**

**Unlike preachers, Jesus did everything well.**

**Jesus and his twelve disciples set out in a boat on northern Israel's Lake Galilee.**

**Though often referred to as a sea, the lake is 13 miles at its longest and eight miles at its widest.**

**Galilee covers 64 square miles; much larger than Iowa's West Lake Okoboji.**

**Rowing or sailing across would take a few hours and food sources would be uncertain.**

**Whether any particular one of the twelve was responsible for food, we don't know.**

**But we do know that their inventory found one loaf for 13 men.**

**Their loaves of bread did not resemble the loaves we buy at grocery stores today.**



*Ancient style tannur or oven.*



*Loaves baked by ancient method.*

See Biblical Archaeology Society,  
Biblical Bread: Baking Like the Ancient Israelites,  
**Experimental archaeology at Tell Halif, Israel,**  
Cynthia Shafer-Elliott, November 18, 2023

**The *Gospel of John* informs us that when Jesus fed the five thousand, he started with five loaves of barley bread and two fish that a boy had brought for his meal.<sup>1</sup>**

One loaf of ancient bread was probably the equivalent of a 1/2 slice of a modern loaf.

**If it took five loaves to feed one boy, one loaf was woefully inadequate for 13 men.**

**Can you imagine the blame game going on?  
The word translated *discussed* also means “to argue,” which the disciples did a lot.**

**Jesus used the occasion as a teaching opportunity:**

“He was giving orders to them, saying, ‘Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees . . .’”

**What did Jesus mean when he talked of *leaven*?**

**My mother made “heavenly” bread and rolls.**

**I loved the rolls fresh from the oven, drenched with butter and strawberry jam.**

**Mom knew the right amount of yeast to add;**

**I learned a little patience as my siblings and I waited for the yeast to make the dough rise.**

Here are three important takeaways from text.

**First, the expression “leaven of the Pharisees” warned us about hypocrisy.**

---

<sup>1</sup> See John 6:9.

**Jesus clearly cautioned in **Luke 12:2 NIV:****

“Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.”

**If someone gave us the opportunity to choose who the really righteous people in the world are, could we select the real Christians?**

**Would we pick the same ones the Lord would?  
Could we get rid of all the hypocrites?**

**Some might say,**

**“I don’t know but I’d sure like to try.”**

Lord Byron observed,

**“Christians have burnt each other, quite persuaded  
That all the apostles would have done as they did.”<sup>2</sup>**

**We like to make our judgments, don’t we about the sincerity and goodness of others?**

Because we can’t reliably read minds, we human beings are incapable of righteous judgment.

**The English essayist and parodist Sir Max Beerbohm had one of his female characters say:**

**“I don’t know anything about music, really. But I know what I like.”<sup>3</sup>**



---

<sup>2</sup> *Don Juan*

We don't know accurately the motivations of others, but we do know the people we like.

### **Why did Jesus compare hypocrisy with yeast?**

**When Jesus referred to leaven or yeast, he mainly warned us about pretense.**



### **One Internet site said:**

“Yeast has two primary functions in fermentation: To convert sugar into carbon dioxide gas, which lifts and aerates the dough. To mellow and condition the gluten of the dough so that it will absorb the increasing gases evenly and hold them at the same time.”

**By leaven of the Pharisees, Jesus meant that there's more gas than substance to the person.**

“Beware,” **warned Jesus**, “of pretending to be something that you are not.”

**Hypocrisy is simply full of gas about ourselves; not faith in God and praise for Him.**

The actor John Barrymore told his regret in life:

**“One of my chief regrets during my years in the theatre is that I couldn't sit in the audience and watch me.”**

---

<sup>3</sup> Sir Maximilian Beerbohm (24 August 1872 – 20 May 1956) Zuleika Dodson, 16

### **Second, Jesus warned of Herod's leaven.**

**Jesus likely referred to compromise with the world, which means acting by human standards, not God's Word.**

In every era, the Lord has demanded obedience.

“An astonishing and horrible thing has happened in the land. <sup>31</sup>The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own authority; and my people love to have it so. What will you do in the end of it?”<sup>4</sup>

**If you live by the Vatican's rules or those made by John Calvin, John Knox, John Wesley, Martin Luther, or any politician, you will be in trouble in the end—on judgment Day.**

That's why Jesus warned his contemporaries:

**Matthew 15:9** “In vain . . . they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.”

**Do you follow God' Word or human authority?**

**Three, the apostles had recently witnessed two different miracles by Jesus –5000 fed—4000 fed.**

**They still didn't trust God's care.**

**They fretted about tomorrow's bread.**

**How many times has the Lord brought you through a tight situation?**

---

<sup>4</sup> Jeremiah 5: 30, 31 NLT

**In the next test of faith, did you fully trust Him?**  
**Life change comes when we check our own hearts, trust God, and follow His will.**

Not long after Jesus' resurrection, Peter gave the Jerusalem folks a faith diagnosis.

Their hard hearts had led to Jesus' crucifixion.  
They hypocritically condemned Jesus.

**Recall, how the Jerusalem mob yelled, "Crucify him!"?**

They screamed that even after the Governor Pilate examined the evidence and found Jesus not guilty.

It takes a lot of hard-heartedness, anger, and rage to accuse an innocent man and demand he die.

So, a few weeks later, Peter reminded those people of their hard-hearted, self-righteousness.

When Peter said that, the Jerusalem folks didn't point fingers or blame others.

**They didn't offer excuses.**

**They were cut to the heart and asked Peter what they should do.**

**Peter told them that they needed to quit acting hardheartedly toward God and in judging others.**

- **Stop accusing and judging others.**
- **Cleanse your own heart and soul.**
- **Replace any hate with forgiving love.**



- Be baptized into Christ to cover your sins.
- Then God will forgive you.

**Jesus is the only cure.**

**Only he can heal hard-hearted hypocrisy.**

**Open your heart to him; he'll help you.**

**He'll bring joy to you and your family.**

**How do you know if you've been cured of hard-heartedness?**

- **Do you follow God's will in Scripture or some human authority?**
- **Have you given up hate's angry drumbeats?**
- **Do you trust that our loving God will take care of you tomorrow?**
- **Do you joyfully praise God?**

**The music we sing reveals our heart.**

**Paul told the people of Ephesus:**

**"Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,"**  
**(Ephesians 5:19, 20 NIV).**

**HAVING EYES, DO YOU... SEE? AND HAVING EARS, DO YOU... HEAR?**

Bob Blair

PO Box 176

Cleghorn, IA 51014

[www.robertblairbooks.com](http://www.robertblairbooks.com)