

Lesson 07: Dangerous Doctrines and Distractions

Matthew 16:1-12

- I. **STRANGE BEDFELLOWS** (1-4; Acts 23:6)—normally bitter rivals, now allies against a common enemy
 - A. **The Pharisees**—the party of the Scribes, religious teachers
 1. **Conservative**—believed all the right things (scripture, resurrection, supernatural)
 2. **Traditional**—clung to the past, history, the wisdom of the elders
 3. **Legalistic**—took religion seriously; strict adherence to religious protocol, formalism
 4. **Pietistic**—stressed personal righteousness and duty to God
 - B. **The Sadducees**—Chief Priests
 1. **Liberal**—did *not* believe in supernatural or resurrection; only 5 books of Moses
 2. **Modernistic**—believed in changing with the times, assimilating with the world
 3. **Permissive**—morality was not their priority
 4. **Political**—stressed cultural involvement; cooperated with the Romans
 - C. **The Sanhedrin**—The official governing body of Jewish religion and culture, made up of Pharisees and Sadducees
 1. **Religious Authority**—Power over the people in religious and cultural matters.
 2. **Bitter Rivals**—total opposites, normally despised each other
 3. **United in Rejection of Christ**—keep the status quo, maintain positions of power
 - a. Join forces to **discredit** Him
 - b. Demand that He answer to ***their authority***
 - c. **Are both abandoned by Christ** (2-4) When the Holy Spirit stops striving with your conscience, your doom has been sealed.

II. **LITTLE FAITH** (5-11)—Jesus’ Disciples were slow learners!

A. **Didn’t Understand the Metaphor**—*literal mindset, stuck on the surface*

B. **Didn’t Understand the Miracle**—*still worried, cares of this life occupy their focus*

C. **Didn’t Understand the Gospel**—*God’s undeserved mercy and grace; their acceptance*

Both pride and self-loathing betray belief in works-based acceptance.

1. We are **already** accepted and loved. We don’t have to earn God’s favor.
2. We will **always** have to rely on Jesus. Jesus doesn’t need us; we need Him!
3. Jesus will always **be enough**.

III. **DANGEROUS DOCTRINES** (12)—The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

A. **Any Doctrine that Diminishes the Gospel of Grace**—*adding to or subtracting from*

1. Legalism adds rules and ignores grace.
2. Liberalism adds social action and abuses grace.
3. Both rely on human effort.

B. **Any Faith that Focuses Exclusively on This Life**—*no eternal perspective*

1. **Prosperity Gospel**—faith is about getting what you want in this life
2. **Social Gospel**—we can redeem society and create Shalom on earth by worldly means
3. **Therapeutic Gospel**—salvation is *self-actualization* through self-help and therapy

C. **Any Cause that Replaces Jesus** (Jn 17:3; Act 4:12)

Watch out for the Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees!
It creeps into our mindset and into our churches. It will take you far from Christ.