

Are We Contributing To The Growth Of Heaven?

Matthew 13:33

7/13/10

Introduction: We know that a newborn baby grows based on the nourishment it gets. A seed grows according to the water and fertilizer it receives. Likewise, we cannot expect the kingdom of heaven to grow without Christians laboring for it (**John 9:4**) (**Luke 10:2**). Today, we are going to look at a parable where Christ teaches this fact. As we study this verse, let us ask ourselves are we contributing to the growth of Heaven.

The Similarity

(Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven,)

Here the word “like” shows that there is a similarity between the kingdom of heaven and leaven. The text tells us that Christ spoke in another parable. A parable is an earthly story that has a **heavenly** meaning. The kingdom of heaven is an expression unique to Matthew’s gospel. The “kingdom of heaven” refers to God’s rule and reign over those who belong to Him. The purpose of leaven is to cause **fermentation** and expansion in a new dough or batter. In other words, it is an altering agent or has transforming power. In the New Testament, leaven has also been mentioned as a negative influence (**Mark 8:15**). However, since the leaven is being compared to the kingdom of heaven, we can understand that Christ is describing it in a **positive** light. Through this parable, Christ is teaching that the gospel (with the help of the Holy Spirit) that comes from heaven has the same characteristics as that of the leaven. As the leaven is a change agent, this source that comes from heaven has a **transforming** influence. Therefore like the leaven, we are to be change agents in the lives of others (**Matthew 5:13-15**). Are we influencing others or just going about our daily business, pursuing our own desires? (**Revelation 3:15-16**)

The Quantity

(which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal,)

We see the quantity of the meal (flour) and the leaven used. The three measures of meal are known as the Hebrew seah. This is the usual amount used for baking. This measure was used in the Old Testament several times (**Genesis 18:6**). A woman is mentioned because females were more likely to be involved in such an activity. The text tells us that she hid the leaven in the meal. This implies that compared to the amount of meal only a **small** quantity of leaven was used.

Likewise, Christ is teaching that only a small amount of the Gospel is needed to impact this world. We may think we are nobodies, but according to this parable, we have the same **Spirit** and Word “hid” in us. Therefore, we can affect many people. From the Bible, we know of individuals such as Abraham, Gideon, Moses, and many more that influenced this world mightily. Remember, God plus no one else is more than enough. However, notice the woman had to do some work. She “took” and “hid”. In the same manner, we cannot transform the world without **working** in the world (**Ephesians 2:10**). Every Christian has to do his or her part. God has called us to be separated from the world, but not isolated from the world. We have to love and reach out to others. Remember, (Christian) love is **inclusive** not exclusive. But, this can only happen when we choose to work for the kingdom of God and not against it. Let us not become content because we have received the 3 in 1 Heavenly Fire Prevention plan.

The Conformity

(till the whole was leavened.)

The text tells us that once the leaven was hidden the **whole** (dough) became leavened. This shows us the conformity of the dough to the leaven and the superiority of the leaven over the dough. This happens because the yeast slowly and quietly multiplies and permeates all that it contacts. The word “till” shows us a time period for the leavening to take place. How does the leavening of the dough take place? The living **organism** in the leaven grows overnight so that by morning the entire dough (bread) has been affected. We see two valuable lessons. First, the parable is teaching that through the Spirit of God upon the souls of men and through the Words of the Gospel, the invisible power affects many people. Secondly, we learn that the power of His Spirit starts with a small beginning in us. Over the course of time, (if we allow), this Spirit can affect us more and more making us more like Christ for His **glory** (**1 Peter 2:2**) (**Hebrews 5:12-14**). Christ’s disciples were left as leaven to influence this world (**Mark 16:14-15**). We have been given the same characteristics as this leaven. We are left here to influence the world for the kingdom of God. We have the leaven (His Word and His Spirit) in us and we are to become the leaven in this world. Just as when we place a tea bag in water we don’t see an immediate change in the water. But, gradually the color and taste of the water starts to change. Remember, God works in us and through us. Let us aim to become people of excellence through our radical obedience (**1 Samuel 15:22**) (**John 14:15**). God can do much with one obedient heart. But, do we have the heart to play an **active** role in contributing to the growth of Heaven?