



Gospel Life Communities Study Guide

Matthew 16:1-12

The Leaven of Legalism

From now until the end of June, we will be in Matthew 16-20 in a series called “Schooled By Jesus”. In these chapters, you will see Jesus speak to groups and individuals, and you may be surprised to see his tone. Jesus doesn’t look for ‘middle ground’ nor does he seek to resolve tension that can build in these situations. He is the Teacher of teachers, and when Jesus is teaching, we should all be ready to be schooled.

Our weekly studies will have four parts, following the four categories that we’ve set for GLC’s, and then end with prayer.

exploring

we will explore God’s word together, looking at the actual words of the passage.

digging

we will dig deeper into the word, discussing the context and meaning of the text.

growing

we will discuss how the passage is applied to our own lives.

going

we will discuss how the passage informs, challenges, and encourages our witness.



exploring

16 And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. 2 He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' 3 And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. 4 An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." So he left them and departed.

5 When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. 6 Jesus said to them, "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 7 And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, "We brought no bread." 8 But Jesus, aware of this, said, "O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? 9 Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? 10 Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? 11 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.

Matthew 16:1-12.

1. Read Matthew 16:1-12 as a group.
2. What phrases did you hear repeated? Are these significant in the understanding of the text? Discuss.

digging

3. Read Matthew 12:38-42 together. What similarities and differences do you notice with this week's passage?
4. Where else in the Bible do you see miracles that involve bread?
5. What do the "signs" that Jesus had already given say about Jesus?

growing

6. The big idea of the sermon was "Legalism leads people away from Jesus, not to him." This can happen in the way of the Pharisees, by adding to scripture, or in the way of the Sadducees, by taking away from scripture. Which of the two



ways are you as an individual more prone to? Give examples and share in the group.

7. In the sermon, Paul mentioned that the outcome of the 'leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees' inevitably ends up in things like failure, disappointment, anger, fear, and bitterness. Have you experienced that to be true, either in your own life, or in the lives of people around you? Discuss.

going

8. Near the end of the sermon, Paul gave a brief explanation of the story of the Prodigal Son from Luke 15:11-32. Have you historically been more like the prodigal younger brother, or the self-righteous older brother? How has the Holy Spirit guided you through that self-discovery?
9. If you talk with someone about Jesus or about church, and that person says something like 'church folks are all a bunch of hypocrites', how does this passage help you respond?

Pray together as a group

