

S.O.H.L.

WEEKLY MINISTRY MEDITATIONS

Pronounced "Soul"
December 8, 2014

Go Deeper

MATTHEW 16:5-12 NKJV – (5) Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. (6) Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." (7) And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "*It is* because we have taken no bread." (8) But Jesus, being aware of *it*, said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? (9) Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? (10) Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? (11) How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—*but* to 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 doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Being in the presence of Jesus or witnessing all of his miracles was not enough for the disciples to gain eternal life. Though the disciples were with Jesus daily and though they saw his miracles and good life, they were very slow to understand. They could not grasp even the simplest parable or understand the spiritual symbolism from the most spectacular act without Jesus taking the time to explain it to them – sometimes more than once. *On the occasion in the reading, Jesus had just fed thousands with only a little bread and then spoke about the yeast of the Pharisees.* The disciples were confused. They assumed that Jesus was concerned that they had forgotten to bring some of the leftovers with them and was voicing his concern in an incredibly cryptic way. Rather than understanding that Jesus was talking about the destructive nature of the Pharisees and Sadducees teaching, they looked no further than a surface explanation to what he was saying.

Though hearing his words, the disciples did not understand Jesus. Their lack of understanding and insight into Jesus' words points to the shallowness of the disciples' faith. It is possible for someone to see the moral benefits of Christianity and even adopt Christ's teachings while never coming to Christ. One can wrestle and overcome various sins throughout their entire lives, can say bold things every day, and brag about an unshakable faith in God and never find eternal life in Jesus because faith is a gift from God. Of course, none of this means that we should not long for or ask for faith. In fact, the very essence of true faith includes a heart that genuinely seeks and wants to spend an eternity with Jesus.

For those that have heard the Gospel in this age have been given a greater gift; we have the gift of hindsight and the benefit of learning the lessons of the disciples' hard struggles – which includes heeding Jesus' warning as they did. Don't just study His word but, "Go Deeper in your studies and relationship!"

SCRIPTURE READING: PROVERBS 3:1-2

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: We fail in our duty to study God's Word not so much because it is difficult to understand, not so much because it is dull and boring, but because it is work. Our problem is not a lack of intelligence or a lack of passion. Our problem is that we are lazy.