

Case of the Sneaky Housewife

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction.

A. Text: Matthew 13:33.

B. The disciples would have been struck that the woman in the parable hid leaven in a large amount of dough.

II. The parable of the leaven.

A. The kingdom of heaven is like the leaven.

B. The leaven was not a little gospel making the whole batch right.

1. There is more persecution of Christianity than in any other century.

2. The world is as pagan as ever.

C. Elements of the parable.

1. The meal.

a. This represented the meal offering that was to be unleavened.

b. This more specifically symbolized the fellowship of humanity sharing the life of God.

c. The key thing about the believers' lives was that they were called unto the fellowship of God's Son. (I Corinthians 1, I John)

2. The leaven.

a. Every Scripture taught that the three measures of the meal were to be unleavened.

b. Leaven always means something bad. (I Corinthians 5)

3. The bread.

a. The bread stands for openness and honesty.

b. Leaven is anything that distorts this.

c. Leaven is legalism in Galatians.

4. The woman.

- a. A woman represents authority in the home.
- b. The most precious thing is fellowship with God and His people.
- c. It is the leaders of the church who bring in the leaven into the body.

D. Openness is the solution because the church shares the life of God and has received His forgiveness freeing us to be one with someone else.

- 1. The church has emphasized preaching but has lost fellowship.
- 2. Outsiders see nothing different about the church.

E. Leaven manifests itself in many ways today—the philosophy of the world, materialism, immorality, etc.

Application questions:

1. What does the leaven symbolize and how is this brought in?

2. How can it be said that openness is a solution to evil lurking in the church?

3. Why is fellowship so important? How should fellowship look within the church today?
