

God's Servant Warns

Mark 8:1-21

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.” (Colossians 1:28-29 [ESV](#))

Main Idea: Jesus labors to make us disciples. We are not alone on this path, but He walks with us . . . teaching us, strengthening us and helping us to make progress day by day in our journey to become more like Him.

Labor #1: Jesus abundantly provides for His own.

Truth: Jesus always thinks deeply about His own. Always. We are constantly on His mind and heart. He not only knows our needs, but He FEELS them too!

Truth: If we are to grow as Jesus' disciple, we must learn to trust Him. Trust is the first lesson in what it means to follow Jesus. Trust is the most difficult lesson for us to learn. Jesus labors for us to grow our faith.

“Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.” (Jeremiah 32:17 [ESV](#))

“I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” (John 6:35 [ESV](#))

Truth: Friends, let us never doubt Jesus' love to desire our good and let us never doubt His power to supply our good! In Him, we find a boundless warehouse of grace and favor and mercy. He knows what we need, when we need it and how to get it to us.

Labor #2: Jesus openly confronts unbelief.

Truth: The desire for another display of God's power is not the same as a desire for Jesus. A desire for a power encounter flows not from faith, but from unbelief. Our longing for an experience with supernatural power will move us farther from Jesus and not closer to Him.

Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”” (John 20:28-29 [ESV](#))

Labor #3: Jesus kindly cautions His own.

Four parallels between leaven and evil

1. Both work quietly inside of us before it has any outward expression.
2. Both invade the whole of the body and not just a part.
3. Both cannot be removed once introduced.
4. Both begin very small and expand gradually.

The Leaven of the Pharisees is the life-destroying influence of externalism
The Leaven of Herod is the life-destroying influence of worldliness.

The Leaven of the Pharisees

- This leaven makes our soul proud of our own righteousness.
- This leaven condemns others for not measuring up to our standards.
- This leaven delights to accuse others of failure.
- This leaven expands upon the law of God to include man-made moral requirements.
- This leaven justifies and minimizes the heart sins of anger, bitterness, conflict and hostility.
- This leaven enjoys a good gossip session.
- This leaven makes us feel superior to others in our community.
- This leaven breaks fellowship with the church.
- This leaven trusts in our own good intentions and efforts to please God.
- This leaven devalues joy in the Lord or love in the community.

The Leaven of Herod

- This leaven weakens our view of God's holiness.
- This leaven compares our lives to others instead of to the LORD.
- This leaven compromises the integrity of our commitments.
- This leaven listens to the world's arguments for our moral choices.
- This leaven opens doors that should be kept shut.
- This leaven invites conversations about matters that are shameful.
- This leaven values pleasure and possessions over worship.
- This leaven regards God's Law as outdated.
- This leaven is quick to accuse others of legalism.
- This leaven denigrates the authorities that God has placed in our world for moral order . . . the authorities of government, parents and church leaders.
- This leaven pursues the best life right now with little regard for eternity.

Truth: Jesus does not warn us about dangers that we are immune to. Jesus warns about dangers that we are relevant to our lives.