

SABBATH HEALINGS

"The Kingdom Connection"

After the woman who had been bound for 18 years was delivered on the Sabbath, Jesus tells some parables.

Luke 13:18-19

18 Then Jesus asked, "What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to?"

19 It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches." (NIV)

The common wisdom regarding this parable is that it speaks of the Church having small beginnings that grow into far reaching results. This may be so. The problem with the "glowing" interpretation of this parable is the "birds of the air." A cursory look at birds even in Luke's writings can give us a different perspective.

Luke 8:5; 11-12

5 "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up.

11 "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God.

12 Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. (NIV)

Here, the devil is called a bird that eats seed. Birds that nest in mustard trees eat the seeds. This is worse than stealing fruit. It takes reproduction out of the church. In Matt. 13:4, 19 he is called the evil one. And in Mark 4:4, 15 he is called Satan. He and his agents are symbolically referred to as "birds."

Luke 9:57-58

57 As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."

58 Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." (NIV)

In biblical symbology, foxes do not have a good name. Generally it represents someone of sly and evil cunning. Jesus called Herod a fox in Luke 13:32. You can be assured that he wasn't being complimentary. Jesus was born of the spirit (Luke 1:35), not by the will of a husband (John 1:13). As such, he moved with the wind of the Spirit (John 3:8) and had no permanent address, nowhere to lay his head. The birds in Luke 9:58 are tainted merely by the company they keep and the glory of the one they are compared to!

Acts 10:12-14

12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air.

13 Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

14 "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." (NIV)

There must have been unclean birds in the sheet, birds God did not allow Jews to eat (see Lev 11:13-20; Duet. 14:12-20). An unclean bird in symbology is representative of an unclean spirit.

Unclean birds:

Prov 30:17

"The eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures. (NIV)

Hosea 8:1

"Put the trumpet to your lips! An eagle is over the house of the LORD because the people have broken my covenant and rebelled against my law. (NIV)

Eagles were used in prophetic imagery to describe those who would come down and conquer a people being punished by God.

Isa 34:9-11 (NIV)

9 Edom's streams will be turned into pitch, her dust into burning sulfur; her land will become blazing pitch!

10 It will not be quenched night and day; its smoke will rise forever. From generation to generation it will lie desolate; no one will ever pass through it again.

11 The desert owl and screech owl will possess it; the great owl and the raven will nest there.

God will stretch out over Edom the measuring line of chaos and the plumb line of desolation.

The unclean birds of Babylon:

Zech 5:5-11

5 Then the angel who was speaking to me came forward and said to me, "Look up and see what this is that is appearing."

6 I asked, "What is it?" He replied, "It is a measuring basket." And he added, "This is the iniquity of the people throughout the land."

7 Then the cover of lead was raised, and there in the basket sat a woman!

8 He said, "This is wickedness," and he pushed her back into the basket and pushed the lead cover down over its mouth.

9 Then I looked up-- and there before me were two women, with the wind in their wings! They had wings like those of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between heaven and earth.

10 "Where are they taking the basket?" I asked the angel who was speaking to me.

11 He replied, "To the country of Babylonia to build a house for it. When it is ready, the basket will be set there in its place." (NIV)

Zechariah 5:9

[There came out two women] It may be that there may be no symbol herein, but that he names women because it was a woman who was so carried; yet their wings were the wings of an unclean bird, strong, powerful, borne by a force not their own; with their will, since they flew; beyond their will, since the wind was in their wings; rapidly, inexorably, irresistibly, they flew and bore the Ephah between heaven and earth. No earthly power could reach or rescue it. God would not. It may be that evil spirits are symbolized, as being like to this personified human wickedness, such as snatch away the souls of the damned, who, by serving them [evil spirits],

have become as they [evil spirits]. (from Barnes' Notes)

Isa 13:19-22

- 19 Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the glory of the Babylonians' pride, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah.
20 She will never be inhabited or lived in through all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there, no shepherd will rest his flocks there.
21 But desert creatures will lie there, jackals will fill her houses; there the owls will dwell, and there the wild goats will leap about.
22 Hyenas will howl in her strongholds, jackals in her luxurious palaces. Her time is at hand, and her days will not be prolonged. (NIV)

Jer 50:35-40

- 35 "A sword against the Babylonians!" declares the LORD-- "against those who live in Babylon and against her officials and wise men!
36 A sword against her false prophets! They will become fools. A sword against her warriors! They will be filled with terror.
37 A sword against her horses and chariots and all the foreigners in her ranks! They will become women. A sword against her treasures! They will be plundered.
38 A drought on her waters! They will dry up. **For it is a land of idols, idols that will go mad with terror.**
39 "So desert creatures and hyenas will live there, and there the owl will dwell. It will never again be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation.
40 As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah along with their neighboring towns," declares the LORD, "so no one will live there; no man will dwell in it. (NIV)

What are idols but demons? (See 1 Cor 10:18-19)

Rev 18:2

With a mighty voice he shouted: "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. (NIV)

In light of birds:

James 3:7

For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: (KJV)

Whether or not a tree is a natural form for the church to take is not the point of discussion in this teaching. One thing is for sure, though, the birds are demons that have planted themselves in the organizational structure of the church. The man who was keeping the woman penned in her stall was the ruler of the synagogue.

Luke 13:20-21

- 20 Again he asked, "What shall I compare the kingdom of God to?
21 It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough." (NIV)

Here again, the general language of the commentators is to put a positive spin on this. The fact of the matter is that leaven is almost never used in a positive sense. Vine's note on this section of scripture (and its companion in Matt. 13:33) is in agreement with the usual use of this concept.

Vine's-

In the OT "leaven" is not used in a metaphorical sense. In the NT it is used (a) metaphorically (1) of corrupt doctrine, <Matt. 13:33> and <Luke 13:21>, of error as mixed with the truth (there is no valid reason for regarding the symbol here differently from its application elsewhere in the NT); <Matt. 16:6,11; Mark 8:15> (1st part); <Luke 12:1>; that the kingdom of heaven is likened to "leaven," does not mean that the kingdom is "leaven." The same statement, as made in other parables, shows that it is the whole parable which constitutes the similitude of the kingdom; the history of Christendom confirms the fact that the pure meal of the doctrine of Christ has been adulterated with error; (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words) (Copyright (C) 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Matt 16:6, 11-12

6 "Be careful," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

11 How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

12 Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (NIV)

Luke 12:1

Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. (NIV)

The leaven of hypocrisy is to be guarded against in the church. We are not to be "do as I say, not as I do" Christians. The fact that he stated that the leaven was hypocrisy in Luke 12, then called those in the synagogue who would not have him heal on the Sabbath hypocrites, and then told the parable of the woman mixing leaven (hypocrisy, corruption) into the bread dough (doctrine) should speak loudly enough. Matt. 23 is a scathing reproof of their hypocrisy.

Matt 23:2-4

2 "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

3 So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.

4 They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. (NIV)

Other types of leaven:

The leaven of sexual immorality:

1 Cor 5:1-8

1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not

- occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife.
- 2 And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?
 - 3 Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present.
 - 4 When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present,
 - 5 hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.
 - 6 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?
 - 7 Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast-- as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.
 - 8 Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth. (NIV)

The leaven of legalism:

Gal 5:4-9

- 4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.
- 5 But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.
- 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.
- 7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?
- 8 That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you.
- 9 "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." (NIV)

In that it is a woman mixing in the leaven, the one adding to the dough cannot be the Lord. There are two basic types of women in biblical symbology, the wise woman and the foolish or strange woman. The wise woman is the bride, the clean and spotless church. The foolish woman is the adulteress, the harlot, Jezebel of Babylon. Which one do you think would be adding leaven to church doctrine?

So we see from the healing of the woman bound the kingdom warning against being penned up away from the water of life. Unhealthy church structures dominated by doctrines of demons will pigeon hole people and introduce them to the leaven of hypocrisy, sexual immorality, and legalism. There is a way of avoiding all of this and making it to the Sabbath rest awaiting God's people. His name is Jesus and the path he walks is narrow and the gate He is is small. We need to make every effort to enter therein.

Luke 13:22-30

- 22 Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.
- 23 Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He said to them,
- 24 "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.
- 25 Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and

pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.' "But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from.'

26 "Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.'

27 "But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!'

28 "There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out.

29 People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

30 Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last." NIV