

**BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE
SERMON OUTLINE**

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#3- Series on the Parables

THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED AND LEAVEN

Matthew 13:31-33

Satan opposes the kingdom by trying to snatch the Word from hearts (Matt. 13:4, 19). Satan is primarily an *imitator*: He plants false Christians, he encourages a false growth, and he introduces false doctrine.

The tares - false Christians (vv. 24-30, 36-43).

The mustard seed - false growth (vv. 31-32).

The leaven - false doctrine (v. 33).

Mustard Seed and Leaven are two of the most difficult and controversial of all of the parables and the most misinterpreted and misunderstood of all of the parables.

These two parables that we are looking at today form a pair and go together. The former deals with the **outward** development of error in the church; the latter deals with the secret and **inward** development of error.

I. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED vs.31-32

In eastern culture, the mustard seed symbolizes something small and insignificant. The mustard in the parable refused to remain an herb; instead it became a tree. Herbs and trees are entirely different kinds.

The mustard seed in the parable showed two things: **a weird growth and a worldly grandeur**. First:

A. What the Mustard Showed vs.31-32a

- ◆ **A WEIRD GROWTH** - For an herb to become a tree suggests a growth and development foreign to its nature.
- ◆ **A WORLDLY GRANDEUR**- The church was never intended to set up a worldly empire, it certainly was intended to be something that would stand out. Trees are the picture of majesty and grandeur. It was this that the mustard plant in the parable aspired to be.

Second notice:

B. What the Mustard Seed Sheltered v-32b

In the parable of the sower the Lord had used birds to depict evil spirits snatching away seed that fell by the wayside. Birds were used in the same sense in the parable of the mustard seed. They represent evil spirits.

II. THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN V.33

The popular but misinterpreted explanation of the parable of the leaven is that it depicts the gradual, silent, and unobtrusive permeation of society by the saving and sanctifying work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches the opposite. Paul said, "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse" (2 Timothy 3:13).

So we see . . .The Woman in V-33 and in that we see:

A. The Activity of the Leaven

The Loaf - the three measures suggested a life in which all the fullness of the godhead dwelt bodily (Colossians 2:9).

THE LEAVEN

1. **Is a Belief Corrupted by Evil** - Leaven is yeast, and that causes fermentation, and fermentation is literally corruption. In the Gospels Jesus spoke of three kinds of leaven: the leaven of the Pharisees (Luke 12:1); the leaven of the Sadducees (Matthew 16:6,12); and the leaven of Herod (Mark 8:14-15).

- ◆ The leaven of the **Pharisees** spoke of *separatism* – *their legalism, their dogmatic hairsplitting*.
- ◆ The leaven of the **Sadducees** spoke of *skepticism*. The Sadducees were the agnostics, the humanists, the theological liberals.
- ◆ The **leaven of Herod** spoke of *secularism*.

2. Behavior Corrupted by Evil – look what Paul said in 1 Cor. 5:7-8

A. The Action of the Woman

I believe she stands for confusion in worship. What she did was a **devilish** act and it was a **deliberate act**. Notice in verse 33, the Bible says she “took and hid”.

The activity of the leaven, the corrupting of truth and testimony by evil, was all foreseen by the Lord. He also knew how the leaven would get into the loaf. The Lord was not speaking of a literal woman. The woman in the parable represents a religious system that is corrupted inwardly.