

# Words of Life

(March 7, 2007)

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*Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread."*

*Matthew 16:5-7*

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*The disciples had just witnessed the feeding of four thousand men besides women and children with seven loaves and a few little fish. Afterward, they crossed the sea with Jesus to the region of Magdala (Mt 15:39). Upon their arrival Jesus was met by some religious leaders who demanded He show them a sign from heaven. I guess feeding several thousand people with seven loaves of bread and a few fish wasn't a sign enough for them! Their sin was unbelief and hypocrisy and Jesus confronted them on it. Then, once alone again with the disciples, Jesus warned them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

*When the disciples heard Jesus' words they began to reason among themselves to understand what He was telling them. Leaven had to do with bread which they had forgotten to bring along for the journey. They must have felt pretty stupid. It would have been like going on a family camping trip and arriving at the campsite only to learn that the person responsible for the ice chest forgot to bring it along.*

*This is a fascinating account to me because it points out a principle that can make a huge difference to us in being able to hear and understand God's voice as He speaks to us. One of the greatest desires of every Christian is to learn how to hear God's voice. We read about how God spoke to the men and women in the Bible and we want to experience that same clarity and know for certain it is God speaking to us.*

*When the disciples heard Jesus speak they immediately drew a link between what He was saying to them and their personal circumstance. This is where the problem came in. Jesus was not speaking about the fact that they forgot bread. He was speaking about something else. Many times our personal circumstances command so much of our attention that we are always trying to fit God's word into the pressing need of our life at the time. In doing so, we may be missing entirely what He is wanting to say to us because we are more interested in what we want to hear from Him.*

*When we go to His word and ask Him to speak, we should do so desiring to know what He wants to say, not what we want to hear from Him. He may have something completely unrelated to our current situation He wants to say to us. And if we are so consumed with our own immediate needs, we will miss it.*

*It's like being in a conversation with someone and trying to manipulate the subject around to what you want to talk about instead of what they want to say. You can be successful in such a manipulation, but in the process will miss 90% of what the other person has said to you because you wanted your issues to be talked about. We mustn't play that game with God. If we truly come to Him each day and erase the slate of our minds long enough to listen to what He wants to say to us, then we will be amazed at how much more clearly we will hear His voice.*

*Pastor Ted.*

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*The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*

*John 6:63*