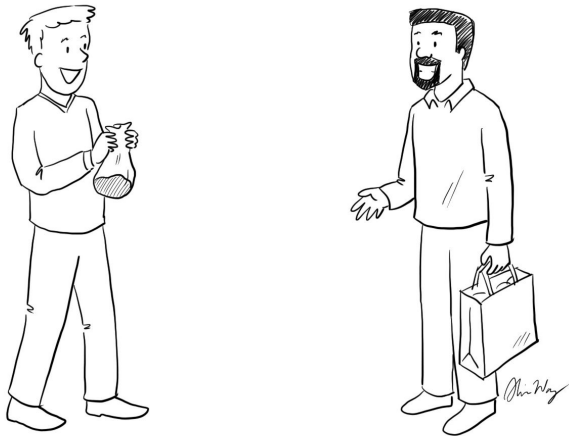


God was incarnate in Jesus Christ, who announced good news to the poor, proclaimed release for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, let the broken victims go free, and proclaimed the year of the Lord's favor. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost; in his life and death for others God's redeeming love for all people was made visible; and in the resurrection of Jesus Christ there is the assurance of God's victory over sin and death and the promise of God's continuing presence in the world.

God's redeeming and reconciling activity in the world continues through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who confronts individuals and societies with Christ's Lordship of life and calls them to repentance and to obedience to the will of God.

The Church of Jesus Christ is the provisional demonstration of what God intends for all of humanity. The Church is called to be a sign in and for the world of the new reality which God has made available to people in Jesus Christ.

Presbyterian Book of Order 2004



*"Thanks for the starter!"*

*"It's the yeast I could do."*

## Monday Morning

Now Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured and not on the Sabbath day."

But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it to water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame, and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things being done by him.

He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches." And again he said, "To what should I compare the kingdom of God? **It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.**"



Luke 13:10-21  
New Revised Standard Version

The parable of the woman and the leaven runs closely parallel to that of the man and the mustard seed (vv 19–20). What this woman has is no ordinary leaven; she has “super leaven,” which, she is confident, will make its way, without being mixed in, through this huge lump of dough (the dough will make enough bread to feed around 150 people!). The presence of the kingdom of God in the ministry of Jesus has a potency that belies its small-scale operation. In the end, because of this beginning, the whole world will be transformed; the end-time kingdom of God will come.

Word Biblical Commentary

Yeast is old, fermented dough that is added to a fresh lump of dough in order to start the leavening process in it. Twice Paul quotes or alludes to the proverb “A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough” (Gal 5:9 NRSV; 1 Cor 5:7); in both instances it is a warning about the permeating effect of evil in the Christian community. Each year at the Passover, moreover, Jewish families followed the prescriptions of Exod 12:15–16 by throwing out all of the leaven from their homes. Thus yeast was used as a metaphor for uncleanness or a corrupting influence.

Luke says that the woman “hid” rather than “mixed” the yeast in the flour (cf. NIV and NRSV). The verb implies secrecy rather than a normal part of preparing bread for baking. For whatever reason, the woman attempts to hide the yeast in a great quantity of flour. The humor of the situation is readily apparent. The three measures would be equivalent to nearly 50 pounds of flour, enough to make bread for 150 people! Many parables have an incongruous or exaggerated element. The large amount of flour accords well with the woman’s desire to conceal it, but the result is an enormous amount of leavened dough. Desiring to hide the yeast, the woman put it in flour, but now she has 50 pounds of leavened dough.

The point of the parable is made in a humorous fashion. Like the yeast, the kingdom is powerful and irrepressible. Its enemies may seek to conceal it, but like the yeast it will eventually leaven the whole lump. While the parable of the mustard seed dramatizes the presence of the kingdom in its insignificant beginnings, the parable of the yeast reminds us that even small beginnings are powerful and eventually change the character of the whole. Can one dare to believe that what began with just a handful of followers in Galilee will eventually change the whole world?

New Interpreter’s Bible New Testament

Here is the progress of the gospel foretold in two parables, as in Mt 13. The kingdom of the Messiah is the kingdom of God. May grace grow in our hearts; may our faith and love grow exceedingly, so as to give undoubted evidence of their reality. May the example of God's saints be blessed to those among whom they live; and may his grace flow from heart to heart, until the little one becomes a thousand.

Matthew Henry (1662-1742)

The second parable, “the leaven,” treats of the mighty inward transformation which the kingdom of God will effect in the hearts of men and women. Chemically speaking, leaven is a lump of sour dough in which putrefaction has begun, and, on being introduced into a far greater mass of fresh dough, produces by contagion a similar condition into the greater bulk with which it comes in contact. The result of the contact, however, is that the mass of dough, acted upon by the little lump of leaven, becomes a wholesome, agreeable food for all. It was a singularly striking and powerful simile, this little commonplace comparison, and exactly imaged the future progress of “the kingdom.” Quietly, silently, the doctrine of the Master made its way into the hearts and homes of women and men.

The Pulpit Commentary (1880)