



Counterfeits in the Kingdom ~2

Prayer

Text: Matthew 13:31-33

Icebreaker: Discuss how you might answer those who reject Christ because of all the hypocrites in the Church.

1. How did Jesus illustrate that Christendom (the Kingdom of Heaven), would begin in a very small way but grow into worldwide prominence? Verses 31-32

2. How does this parable illustrate exaggerated and unnatural growth in the Kingdom of Heaven? Mark 4:30-32

When Jesus said the mustard seed was the smallest of all the seeds which a Galilean farmer might plant in His field He was not saying that the mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds. There are smaller seeds in the plant kingdom, but none of them would be planted by farmers in Israel. Remember that Jesus is using a parabolic illustration his audience could identify with.

3. How was a tree used to illustrate the worldwide power and dominance of Nebuchadnezzar and His Kingdom? Everyone read Daniel chapter 4 at home.

4. What do the large branches in Christ's parable of the mustard seed represent? Mark 4:32

5. Do all the various branches of Christendom teach God's Word correctly? 1 Timothy 4:1-2; 2 Peter 2:1-2

6. What symbol does Jesus use in this parable to illustrate that false teachers and evil influence would find a platform in which to nest? Mark 4:32; Matthew 13:3-4, 19; Revelation 18:2; Jeremiah 12:9

7. How did Jesus illustrate the effects of sin and false teaching in the Kingdom of Heaven? Verse 33

8. Explain how the symbol of leaven is used in the following verses.

Luke 12:1 _____

Matthew 16:6-12 _____

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 _____

Galatians 5:7-10 _____

9. What happens to bread dough if the leavening process is not stopped by baking the bread in a hot oven? Galatians 5:9

Over the centuries Christendom has been permeated by wrong teaching, hypocrisy, unbelief, and conformity to the world, which tends to inflate the church, making it larger in appearance than it really is. Leaven inflates the dough, but adds nothing of substance to the loaf – only air.

The history of Christianity has fulfilled the predictions of Jesus in these three parables. Christendom, large and powerful though it may be contains counterfeit Christians. There has been counterfeit growth as the Kingdom of Heaven has expanded into many branches, and has become permeated by the leaven of sin and false teaching.

Jesus said this would happen. Our job is to stay faithful to Him, faithful to His Word, and faithful to a local church where the Bible is being taught accurately.

10. How can we recognize and know how to deal with counterfeits in Christendom?

2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 17:11; Jude 1:3

Think about it this week:

When someone blames hypocrites, and makes excuses for not going to church share the following:

Ten Reasons Why I Never Wash

1. I was forced to as a child.
2. People who wash are hypocrites – they think they are cleaner than everybody else.
3. There are so many different kinds of soap; I can't decide which one is best.
4. I used to wash, but I got bored and stopped.
5. I wash only on special occasions, like Christmas and Easter.
6. None of my friends wash.
7. I'll start washing when I get older and dirtier.
8. I can't spare the time.
9. The bathroom is never warm enough in winter or cool enough in summer.
10. People who make soap are only after your money.