

A Study of the Book of Matthew: Chapter 16 v. 1-12

After the miracle of feeding the 4,000, Pharisees and Sadducees come to Jesus and demand a sign from Heaven from Him. (v. 1-4)

- Jesus has obviously performed many miracles at this point that these men would have heard about. Why are they asking Him to perform more miracles?

_____ (v. 1)

- Why is it important to note that they are specifically asking for signs from Heaven?

- The Pharisees and Sadducees aren't coming forward with "good intentions", but are instead trying to find a way to accuse Jesus in order to get rid of Him.

- How does Jesus respond to them? _____ (v.2-3)

- What are different ways that help us predict the weather?

- At this point Jesus had performed numerous miracles that should have been more than enough to prove who He was. However, the Pharisees missed these things because instead of trying to see Jesus as their Messiah, they worked only to disprove Him.

- How do we respond to people that claim to be believers but actively try to deny God's word? Read 1 John 4:1-3 _____

- Jesus ultimately tells them they won't receive sign. Why won't Jesus show them what they are asking for? _____ (v.4)

- Just as Jesus discerned the hearts of the Pharisees and Sadducees, we must make sure we use discernment when studying and speaking to others about God's word.

Jesus then goes on to warn the Disciples to watch out for the discord and problems the Pharisees and Sadducees were trying to sow. (v. 5-12)

- When Jesus mentions the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, what do the disciples think Jesus is referring to? _____ (v. 5-7).

- In moments like these within scripture, it helps to show that despite the disciples constantly being around Jesus, they didn't always understand or get things right. As believers we can also realize that it's ok when we don't always get things right.

- Why would Jesus mention the miracles of feeding the five thousand and the feeding of the four thousand? _____ (v.8-10).
 - In both of these instances, Jesus easily performed a miracle to fulfill the physical needs of people. Despite the folly of the disciples, filling their empty bellies would not be something that Jesus would have trouble fulfilling, or need to teach them about.
 - In order for us to discern what God is telling us or what His will is, we must make sure our hearts and minds are in the right place. If we find our focus on the things of Earth or ourselves, we can miss what God is trying to show or teach us.

- Jesus then reiterates his warning to the disciples; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (v. 11-12)
 - What leaven is Jesus speaking of here? _____
 - Why is leaven used as an example here? _____
 - Leaven can be added into a lump of dough without a baker even knowing, until it has become too late and the dough has begun to rise. In the same way, if we allow a little wrong doctrine, sin, or other distractions into our lives we can find ourselves astray and away from God's will.
 - How do we as a Church protect ourselves from this?
