

# Companions IN PRAYER



Sisters of St. Clare  
Saginaw, MI

## *Parable of the Yeast*

He spoke to them another parable.

*"The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened." Matt 13:33*

Jesus liked to challenge his listeners by telling parables that made them think. There are no easy answers in the parables. Those who heard always had to say to themselves, "What do these words mean? How do they relate to my life?"

I find the same is true today. For example, this parable comparing the kingdom of heaven to yeast is puzzling. Yeast, or leaven, was sometimes seen in the time of Jesus as a symbol of something evil. In Luke 12:1 Jesus said "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy." And yet, in this parable when Jesus compares the Kingdom of Heaven to be like yeast that makes the bread rise, the yeast seems to be a symbol of growth and goodness.

If yeast does represent evil in this parable, what might that mean? Is Jesus associating the Kingdom of Heaven with evil or something unholy? That is unlikely. On the other hand, maybe Jesus is challenging his listeners not to associate God with only holy things. Jesus may be suggesting that God can be found in "unholy places." It made me realize that God is active in all of life, the good and the bad. The Kingdom of Heaven does not only have to do with perfection. God can be found with us in our tragedies as well as our moments of joy.

Indeed, we often feel distant from God when crisis breaks into our lives. We may not feel God's presence and feel very alone when we face financial worries,

illness, divorce, or death of loved ones. However, I believe this parable assures us that God has a hand in all aspects of our lives, both the sadness and the joy.

I have felt God's hand in my life when I faced a personal crisis. However, usually it is after the crisis has past that I can see how God shaped my experience and was present with me through it all. Like hidden yeast actively causing the dough to rise, God quietly and mysteriously creates something good out of what seemed so bad. Perhaps you have had similar experiences.



PARABLE OF THE YEAST. JAN LUYKEN

I believe that in this short parable, Jesus challenges us to see God in unholy places as well as the holy places of our lives. We are also reminded of God's extravagant power and love. We are told that the mysterious yeast in the parable acts upon three measures of flour, enough to feed fifty people.

This parable teaches me that God is with us in all of our experiences. I am reminded that God acted in Jesus' life as well. Jesus experienced a cruel and unjust death. However, God transformed that evil by raising Jesus from the dead. Jesus was never alone. The good news of the Gospels is that we also can experience God's extravagant power and love in our lives as well. We are never abandoned or alone. God is always with us in both our sad times and our moments of joy.

God's love will triumph over all adversity.

(We are interested in your thoughts. Let us know at: <http://srsclare.com/about-us/companions-in-prayer-newsletter>)

*Sr. Laura and Sisters*

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