

## Homegroup Discussion

Series: Questions Jesus Asked

Following the themes from Sunday mornings: You don't need to have been in the service to engage with the discussion, but it gives chance to take the themes and passages and go even deeper, applying them to our own lives and sharing thoughts with one another.

- 1) Icebreaker: If you could instantly become elite (one of the world's best) in one thing, what would it be?
- 2) When you think about going deeper personal relationship with God, what things get in the way?
- 3) Read Matthew 16:1-4

**For context:** *Sadducees and Pharisees were Jewish religious groups that did not like each other. Both were sticklers for the rules. The Sadducees often longed for power and wealth. The Pharisees were all about looking good and following rules but often missed the real point.*

### The Pharisees and Sadducees Demand Signs

16 And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. 2 He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' 3 And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. 4 An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." So he left them and departed.

- 4) What do you think their motives were in asking Jesus for a sign?
- 5) In verse 4, Jesus says that only the sign of Jonah will be given to them. Thinking about what happened to Jonah and how long he was in the fish, what could this be referring to?
- 6) Read Matthew 16:5-12

5 When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. 6 Jesus said to them, "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 7 And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, "We brought no bread." 8 But Jesus, aware of this, said, "O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? 9 Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? 10 Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? 11 How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12 Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

- 7) Can someone summarise what's just happened in this passage? What do the disciples get wrong?

- 8) The 'leaven' or the yeast that would cause the bread to be leavened is a symbol for the things that the Pharisees and Sadducees do or teach to 'contaminate' the truth. Considering each of the groups, we know about their teachings from other parts of the bible.
- a. Pharisees: Their 'leaven' was hypocrisy. Do you see hypocrisy getting in the way of people's faith now (could be your own or others')?
  - b. Sadducees: Their 'leaven' was being materialistic, being worldly and not truly believing in anything supernatural. Do you ever get so bogged down in the worldly stuff that it gets in the way of your own faith?
- 9) How can we stay close to what is true and not let ourselves be swayed by these things, and the things we said earlier (in response to question 2)?
- 10) Pray together, particularly around going deeper in faith, not being distracted and staying close to what is true.