

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Oct 17th 2014

Today's Gospel has a lot of mysterious language for which I'm sure Biblical scholars have many wise interpretations. Nonetheless, I am going to forge ahead!

For starters, Jesus tells those gathered to "Beware of the leaven – the hypocrisy – of the Pharisees."

Why does he call the Pharisees' hypocrisy leaven? Perhaps because their hypocrisy is spread throughout their ministries and lives – permeating every aspect of their message to the Jewish people? He may have been teaching us that once a person practices hypocrisy – preaching one thing yet doing the opposite – it has a tendency to pervade everything one does and says. It is like poison to our souls.

His next mysterious proclamation – "There is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be proclaimed on the house tops" – sheds a little more light on the dangers of hypocrisy or deception. In other words, what we think we are covering up or faking isn't really hidden. The truth will always come out eventually. But does he literally mean that after we die, everything we have done or said that wasn't completely truthful will be exposed for all to witness? Mysterious.

The final teaching Jesus gives – "Even the hairs of your head have all been counted. Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows" – while still a little perplexing, is comforting. He tells us that God is aware of every sparrow on the Earth and knows the number of hairs on each human being's head. If you take these statements literally, they may seem impossible, fantastical, although nothing is impossible for God. But I believe Jesus also was speaking somewhat metaphorically, expressing how much God cares for each of us and how much awareness he has of all of our needs – mental, physical, emotional and spiritual. That is a pleasant mystery definitely worth thinking about.

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