

## Matthew 16:1-12

### No pearls before swine



Jesus returns (15:39) to more Jewish territory, where it seems he is immediately accosted by a joint party of Pharisees and Sadducees. Representing very different approaches to religion (Pharisees we could nowadays call “legalists”, while the Sadducees would be “liberals”), they would normally have been mutual enemies, but they unite in trying to “test” Jesus – to provoke a public failure disproving his claims.

Notice Jesus' response: he simply walks away, departing again to a Gentile area. He refuses to continue to “cast pearls before pigs” (7:6). And then he **warns his disciples of the insidious disbelief common to both Pharisees and Sadducees.**

#### ➤ Disbelief and departure (1-4)

What were the “signs of the times” that were being ignored?

Are there present-day “signs of the times”?

- and, if so, how can we interpret them?
- or should “the sign of Jonah” be enough for us, too?

*“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts ...”* (Hebrews 3:15). Is there something concerning which *you* are hardening *your* heart?

#### ➤ Little faith, but learning (5-12)

The disciples are initially thrown by Jesus' reference to “leaven” (yeast). *This has to be some kind of dig about our forgetting to bring food!* Isn't it possible to be too hard on ourselves, treating as sins things that are just human weaknesses? *False* guilt!

But do we also too easily forget what Jesus *has* done – like the Twelve forgetting the food provided for 9000+ people?

So are legalists and liberals really just the same underneath, both failing to understand the grace of God?

How can we prevent infection by their deadly teaching?