

Text Outline Mark 8:1-21

- I. ¹During those days another large crowd gathered.**
- A. Since they had nothing to eat,**
- 1. Jesus**
- a) called his disciples to him*
- b) and said,*
- c) ²“I have compassion for these people;*
- (1) they*
- (a) have already been with me three days*
- (b) and have nothing to eat.*
- (2) ³If*
- (a) I send them home hungry,*
- (b) they will collapse on the way,*
- (c) because some of them have come a long distance.”*
- 2. ⁴His disciples answered, “But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?”**
- 3. ⁵“How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked.**
- 4. “Seven,” they replied.**
- B. ⁶He**
- 1. told the crowd to sit down on the ground.**
- 2. When**
- a) he had*
- (1) taken the seven loaves*
- (2) and given thanks,*
- b) he*
- (1) broke them*
- (2) and gave them*
- (a) to his disciples to distribute to the people,*
- (b) and they did so.*
- 3. ⁷They had a few small fish as well;**
- a) he gave thanks for them also*
- b) and told the disciples to distribute them.*
- 4. ⁸The people ate and were satisfied.**
- 5. Afterward**
- a) the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.*
- b) ⁹About four thousand were present.*
- C. After he had sent them away, ¹⁰he got into the boat with his disciples**
- II. and went to the region of Dalmanutha.**
- A. ¹¹The Pharisees**
- 1. came and began to question Jesus.**

2. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven.

B. ¹² He sighed deeply and said,

1. “Why does this generation ask for a sign?
2. Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it.”
3. ¹³ Then he left them, got back into the boat

III. and crossed to the other side.

A. ¹⁴ The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat.

1. ¹⁵ “Be careful,” Jesus warned them. “Watch out for the yeast
 - a) *of the Pharisees*
 - b) *and that of Herod.*”
2. ¹⁶ They discussed this with one another and said, “It is because we have no bread.”

B. ¹⁷ Aware of their discussion,

1. Jesus asked them:

- a) *“Why are you talking about having no bread?”*
- b) *Do you still not see or understand?”*
- c) *Are your hearts hardened?*
- d) ¹⁸ *Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear?*
- e) *And don’t you remember?*
- f) ¹⁹ *When*

(1) I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?”

(2) “Twelve,” they replied.

g) ²⁰ *“And when*

(1) I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?”

(2) They answered, “Seven.”

2. ²¹ He said to them, “Do you still not understand?”

Conceptual Outline

Theme: Jesus demonstrates his power to meet our needs & invite us to a steadfast faith.

I. Feeding of 4,000

A. The need

1. **Jesus' compassion for the people**
 - a) *Jesus initiated care*
 - b) *His empathy of their physical needs*
 - c) *His concern for their safety*
2. **The disciples' reality**
 - a) *Focus on limitations of remote location*
 - b) *Focus on enormity of needs*
 - c) *Willingness to assess availability*
 - d) *Willingness to share limited resource*

B. Miracle performed as a result of compassion

1. **Orderly crowd control**
2. **Taking what they had**
3. **Thanksgiving for bread**
4. **Distribution by the disciples**
5. **Repetition with fish**
6. **People were satisfied**
7. **Abundance of surplus**
8. **Crowd sent away**

II. Denying the Pharisees' request of a sign

A. Pharisees demand

1. **Question Jesus**
2. **Test & asked for a sign**

B. Jesus' response

1. **Sadness (signed deeply)**
2. **Questioned their motive**
3. **Refusal**
4. **Departure**

III. Warning against the yeast of the Pharisees

A. Warning

1. **Yeast of the Pharisees & Herod**
2. **Disciples' misinterpretation reveals their lack of understanding**

B. Questions to help them understand

1. **Wrong focus**

2. **Lack of understanding**
3. **Hardness of heart**
4. **Spiritual blindness & deafness**
5. **Forgetful of grace**
6. **Invitation to recall God's grace**
 - a) *Feeding of 5000 with 12 basketful of surplus*
 - b) *Feeding of 4000 with 7 basketful of surplus*
7. **Invitation to believe**

Questions:

Background:

Jesus is in the vicinity of the Decapolis (Mk 7:31) which is a region of 10 cities along the west of the Sea of Galilee, where majority of the population is Greek, not Jews. The same series of events is also recorded in Matt 15:29-16:12.

Prior to this text, Mark 6:30-44 recorded a similar miracle where Jesus fed 5000 with 5 loaves & 2 fish. Majority of the people in Mark 6 were Jews. Later, He entered the gentile region where He cast out demon from a Greek woman's daughter at Tyre and healed a deaf & mute man at the Decapolis. In this text, Jesus will perform another miracle similar to Mk 6 among the gentiles.



The Decapolis

Relating:

What is the biggest need you have in your life now? In a scale of 0-10, can you rate your level of confidence that Jesus can meet your need? In a scale of 0-10, can you rate the level of Jesus' concern for your need?

Reading Mark 8:1-21:

1. Invite someone in your group to read the passage slowly once.
2. Invite one person to read vs. 1-10 & Matt 15:29-39 slowly & dramatically Jesus' parts, another to read the disciples', and a third to narrate. Invite to rest of the group to imagine themselves being at the scene & try to experience the different emotions at the time using their different senses.

At the end of the reading, invite different people to share about some of their observations and feelings. What might be the experiences of Jesus, the disciples, the crowds, & the Pharisees?

Vs. 1-10

1. From the description, what do we know about this crowd? How are they like? What do they have to give up to be with Jesus? What keeps them with Jesus for so long?
2. In v. 2, Jesus says that He has compassion for the people. How does Jesus show that he understands the need of the people? What are their needs? Can you identify some of the ways He shows His compassion?
3. What is the disciples' response when Jesus shares with them about the people's need? What is their focus? What does their response reflect about their love for these people and their faith in Jesus?
4. Despite the disciples' skepticism & the people's lack of awareness of their own needs, Jesus performed a miracle. What are some of the steps He took to perform the miracle? Why do you think He needed to ask for their contributions? Why do you think He used the disciples to distribute? What is He communicating with the surplus?
5. What purpose does this miracle serve? What would you conclude about Jesus & His ability and willingness to meet your needs after reading this passage?
6. Some have questioned the validity of this miracle & the feeding of 5000 by saying that when the disciples started to distribute what was initially offered, other people donated their reserves and a massive collection fulfilled the people's appetites. Another theory claimed that Jesus only gave a token amount as a sacrament to everyone. From the text, can you find proofs to contradict these theories?

Vs. 10-13

1. Vs. 10-13 records Jesus being back in Jewish territory. As soon as He landed, there's another group of people waiting for Him. Who are they? What do they want from Jesus? How is their need different from the needs of the crowd?
2. What is Jesus' response to their demand for miracle? Why is He not interested in proving Himself with a miracle?
3. Mark's record of the two departures in vs. 9 & 13 are quite different. Can you identify the difference and the reason for such difference? What are they each leave with? When you leave your encounter with Jesus tonight, what would you like to leave with?

Vs. 13-21

1. These next few verses is a record of Jesus' private conversation with His disciples. What is His warning to them & possibly to us? What is the "yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod"?
2. In vs. 17-21, Jesus asks the disciples a series of questions? How many are there? What were they? What do they represent? How can the first 5 of these be infectious, contagious, and damaging to the Christian life? Why is recalling God's grace so important in counteracting unbelief?
3. What is a potential spiritual infection you need to beware of? What are some of God's grace to you that you need to recall today to renew your faith?

Questions & Potential Answers

Background:

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At the end of the reading, encourage different people to share about some of their observations and feelings. What might be the experiences of Jesus, the disciples, the crowds, & the Pharisees?

Vs. 1-10

1. The Crowd:
 - From the description, what do we know about this crowd? How are they like?
 - It's a large crowd of 4000. According to Matt, it's not counting women and children.
 - They gathered bring people for Jesus to heal according to Matt.
 - They had nothing to eat for 3 days.
 - They were hungry but there's no record of them complaining about their hunger.
 - Some of them came a long distance.
 - They were amazed and praised God even before the feeding.
 - They were satisfied with bread & fish.
 - What do they have to give up to be with Jesus? What keeps them with Jesus for so long?
 - Comfort, hunger, heat, travel long distance.
 - They knew Jesus could meet their need. There's special power in Jesus' teaching. Jesus' love was satisfying for even the children for 3 days.
2. In v. 2, Jesus says that He has compassion for the people. How does Jesus show that he understands the need of the people? What are their needs? Can you identify some of the ways He shows His compassion?
 - He recognizes & paid special attention to their needs.
 - He thinks about their future, what might happen to them on their way home & their long journey.
 - He verbalizes his compassion.
 - He asks His disciples to help.
 - He takes action to meet their needs.
3. What is the disciples' response when Jesus shares with them about the people's need? What is their focus? What does their response reflect about their love for these people and their faith in Jesus?
 - They seem indifferent and annoyed by Jesus' request.

- Their focus seems to be the reality of the circumstance - a remote location, and the impossible - getting enough to feed them.
 - They certainly lack Jesus' compassion & seem to have forgotten what Jesus can do. All the miracles don't seem to have increased their faith. Do they treat the healing in front of them as common? Are they numb to them?
 - To their credit, they were willing to take inventory of what they had & offer them to Jesus.
4. Despite the disciples' skepticism & the people's lack of awareness of their own needs, Jesus performed a miracle. What are some of the steps He took to perform the miracle? Why do you think He needed to ask for their contributions? Why do you think He used the disciples to distribute? What is He communicating with the surplus?
- Steps:
 - Orderly crowd to sit down on the ground
 - Taking what they had
 - Thanksgiving for bread
 - Distribution by the disciples
 - Repetition with fish
 - People were satisfied
 - Collecting the abundance of surplus
 - Crowd sent away
 - He allows us to take part in what He's doing. He enjoys working through His people to accomplish His purposes. It's His blessing to us to be His partner in ministry.
 - He "is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" Eph 3:20. He is God who can supply our needs.
5. What purpose does this miracle serve? What would you conclude about Jesus & His ability and willingness to meet your needs after reading this passage?
- Jesus is powerful to meet our needs even before we can be aware of them. The miracle demonstrates He has divine power. He is in control.
 - He is compassionate. He cares & will take action to help us. We can believe and depend on Him. He is worthy of our trust & praise.
6. Some have questioned the validity of this miracle & the feeding of 5000 by saying that when the disciples started to distribute what was initially offered, other people donated their reserves and a massive collection fulfilled the people's appetites. Another theory claimed that Jesus only gave a token amount as a sacrament to everyone. From the text, can you find proofs to contradict these theories?
- Donation
 - v. 2 They had been there 3 days and have nothing to eat. Even if some have brought food. They might already have been used up.
 - v. 1 The gathering of the crowd in a remote area seems random and unplanned.
 - vs. 5 & 7 recorded all they had.

- Token amount
 - v. 8 The people ate and were satisfied. Token amount would be hard to feel satisfied after 3 days of fasting. If that were so, it would be another miracle.
 - v. 8 The seven large basketfuls would be far from token amount.
 - To divide 7 loaves of bread and a few fish to 4000 would still be close to impossible. How small can the token amount get? This is a pretty ridiculous idea.

Vs. 10-13

1. Vs. 10-13 records Jesus being back in Jewish territory. As soon as He landed, there's another group of people waiting for Him. Who are they? What do they want from Jesus? How is their need different from the needs of the crowd?
 - The Pharisees are waiting for him.
 - They want Jesus to show them a sign from heaven.
 - Besides wanting to prove Jesus being a fraud, they don't have any other need. Their need is to kill Jesus. They have put themselves as judges with authority over Jesus.
2. What is Jesus' response to their demand for miracle? Why is He not interested in proving Himself with a miracle? Since as God, Jesus knows all things, why does He bother to land there to be harassed by the Pharisees?
 - Jesus was saddened by their unbelief and confronted the Pharisees about their evil intent. Then, He refused to show Himself true to them & left them.
 - Their thoughts & plans are evil. They have no authority to demand anything from God. If Jesus yields to their demand, then He will not be God. Besides, it is not Jesus' time to be killed yet. Things happen according to God time table, not men's.
 - Maybe He had hope that by confronting them, the Pharisees would wake up to their senses. More likely, He'll use them as a warning for the disciples and for us as well.
3. Mark's record of the two departures in vs. 9 & 13 are quite different. Can you identify the difference and the reason for such difference? What are they each leave with? When you leave your encounter with Jesus tonight, what would you like to leave with?
 - The crowd was sent back to where they came from. They left satisfied and praising God. They left knowing that they have encountered God. The sending would make them eye-witnessed, testimonies, and missionaries of the gospel.
 - The Pharisees were left by Jesus. How sad! They had an opportunity to meet face to face with the Savior but because of their prideful self-centeredness, they were blind to the Savior. They continue to treat the Savior as they enemy. They chose to be alienated from God forever. Let's take them as a warning. May we be tender-hearted each time we open the Word of God.

Vs. 13-21

1. These next few verses is a record of Jesus' private conversation with His disciples. What is His warning to them & possibly to us? What is the "yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod"?

Yeasts are microorganisms classified in the kingdom Fungi. Just a small amount of yeast will affect all of the bread. Yeasts can double in a few hours.

Pharisee: a member of a Jewish sect noted for strict observance of rites and ceremonies of the written law and of their own oral traditions. Jesus spoke of the yeast of hypocrisy, religious legalism, self-righteousness and unbelief (which is the focus of this passage.)

Herod: represented corrupt political power. In carnality, foolishness, and pride Herod be-headed & murdered John the Baptist.

- Mt 16:12 "Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees." His warning for us is against unbelief, hypocrisy, & self-righteousness. This kind of teaching/attitudes in infectious, contagious, and dangerous.
2. In vs. 17-21, Jesus asks the disciples a series of questions? How many are there? What were they? What do they represent? How can the first 5 of these be infectious, contagious, and damaging to the Christian life? Why is recalling God's grace so important in counteracting unbelief?
 - There are 8 questions:
 1. Wrong focus
 2. Lack of understanding
 3. Hardness of heart
 4. Spiritual blindness & deafness
 5. Forgetful of grace
 6. Invitation to recall God's grace
 - a) *Feeding of 5000 with 12 basketful of surplus*
 - b) *Feeding of 4000 with 7 basketful of surplus*
 7. Invitation to believe
 - Focusing on physical desires can dual our focus in heaven leading to not understanding God's heart. When we're not spiritually sensitive, our hearts will be hardened, numb, and dull. Eventually, we'll be blind & deaf spiritually & forget God & His grace.
 - Jesus invites us to remember God's grace, what He has done for us that are so undeserving. When we pause to remember, our hearts can be soften. We'll then praise Him. His invitation to all of us is to trust in Him at each stage of our spiritual journey.
 3. What is a potential spiritual infection you need to beware of? What are some of God's grace to you that you need to recall today to renew your faith? Would you please share one of His grace to you with us?