

Mark Part 15 - "Jesus feeds the Hungry" (8-3-25)

Main Text: Mark 8:1-21 (parallels: Matthew 15:32-16:12)

Let's explore today's Passage . . .

1) Feeding The 4,000

Mark 8:1-3 (ESV)

[1] In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, [2] "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. [3] And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away."

Note: (vs. 2) **Compassion** - To feel deeply or viscerally, to yearn, have compassion, pity.

Jesus **feels deeply the circumstances** of these people, He recognizes that they had sacrificed much to be with him there for 3 days. He has been tending their souls by feeding them with His Words, and based on Matthew's account he has also worked miracles of healing as well.

*Notice Jesus doesn't immediately offer the solution, He invites the disciples to consider their need with him.

Mark 8:4-5 (ESV)

[4] And his disciples answered him, "How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?" [5] And he asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven."

Note: Jesus - How many loaves do you have? He looks to involves us. Take stock, what's in your hands. To us it looks like "not much."

So what do we do with our "not much"?

Mark 8:6-7 (ESV)

[6] And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. [7] And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them.

Note: Take what we have, give it to Him, and let him direct us with how to use it.

Blessing, provision, and miracles comes when we take what we have in our hands, and give it to Him.

How often were the disciples following the simple advice that Jesus' mother Mary had given at the wedding at Cana? "Do whatever he tells you." - Mary (to the servants at the wedding)

Mark 8:8-9 (ESV)

[8] And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. [9] And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away.

Note: All the people were filled, and the disciples had more than they started with. From 7 loaves and a few "small" fish, to seven full baskets!

2) Pharisees demand a sign

Mark 8:10-13 (ESV)

[10] And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha. [11] The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. [12] And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.” [13] And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

Note: What a contrast! From people hungering for an encounter with Jesus. Listening to Him, learning from him. Touched, healed, and fed by him. but now in **Dalmanutha** - region of Magdala (Mary Magdalene) . . .

The Pharisees gather, not to learn or be fed, but to argue, challenge, and test Him. They “demand” a sign.

“Sighed Deeply” - Jesus is once again moved (the **groan** from last week, but with an additional “deeply”), not with compassion but a deep frustration with the skepticism and testing from the “spiritual leaders”

After days of ministry and miracles - when the sign is demanded to prove something Jesus has no time or compassion for that.

3) Beware the Leaven of the Pharisees and Herod

Mark 8:14-16 (ESV)

[14] Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. [15] And he cautioned them, saying, “Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.” [16] And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread.

Note: The disciples are caught up in the minutia of the moment, but Jesus is concerned about their hearts!

Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees and Herod . . .

Pharisees - The Spiritual, Religious Leaders, Legalistic & Hypocrites

Herod - a false Messiah, political “king” for Israel, compromising in his morals, hoping to grab “power” for the Jews (but really himself) in the midst of a Roman dominated world. **Herodians** - a political party, supporters of the dynasty of Herod

Remember earlier in Mark (chapter 3): These 2 different “kingdoms” or mindsets, had aligned with 1 common purpose where they shared no other common ground - to fight against the Kingdom of Jesus. . .

Mark 3:6 (ESV)

The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Note: So the religious leaders aligned with the political leaders (on the Sabbath!) to seek to destroy Jesus.

All the kingdoms of this world disagree with each other, except when they align together for 1 purpose!

Jesus uses this example of Leaven, as something to be concerned about, why?

- **Leaven** - gets worked into the batch and changes the dough’s structure & identity.
- Almost exclusively in the Bible leaven is bad. Outside of Jesus telling us His Kingdom has this same penetrating quality, there are warnings over and over of unhealthy leaven working its way into us!
- What we base our life upon becomes a part of us. It’s changes our nature. And when that is called out, we feel called out. Leaven is dangerous because it becomes part of us, and therefore it’s difficult to purge!

Be aware: Something is shaping you!

- As you interact with it, it influences your thought life, your focus, and your aims.
- Ultimately it permeates down into your actions & your re-actions!

Mark 8:17-21 (ESV)

[17] And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? [18] Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? [19] When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” They said to him, “Twelve.” [20] “And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” And they said to him, “Seven.” [21] And he said to them, “Do you not yet understand?”

Note: Are your hearts hardened? Do you not yet understand?

Remember - Jesus has a soft heart for the people in need, and a heart sensitive to and frustrated with the skepticism and opposition of the Pharisees.

Hearts Hardened - The verb means to harden, make hard like a stone, or callous and insensible to the touch. In the NT applied only in a spiritual sense to the hearts or minds of men.

This verb is from a noun: “a small piece of stone broken off from a larger one.” A chip off the old block!

Beware the leaven that permeates the whole batch and changes its structure!

The disciples were in danger of missing the miracles right in front of them . . .

Mark 6 - Jesus fed 5,000 very similarly (disciples were intimately involved). This was followed by another boat trip, that Jesus joined later after he walked on the water, joining them in a wind storm that immediately ceased when he got in the boat. Note their reaction then . . .

Mark 6:51-52 (ESV)

[51] And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, [52] for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

Conclusion: Let's close by reflecting on Jesus' question to His disciples . . .

Mark 8:17b (ESV)

“Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?” - (Jesus questioning his disciples)

Jesus understands his purpose, Has compassion on those in need, and has no patience for the the pessimism, distractions, and ultimately attacks of the skeptics. As his disciples, will we learn to bring what we have in our hands, and invite him to permeate our hearts. Or will we keep our eyes only on what we can see, like our limitations and our overwhelming challenges, and find our hearts hardened in the process?