

Theme: Even after Jesus miraculously fed a multitude a second time in the wilderness, the Pharisees refused to believe and the disciples still lacked understanding of Jesus and His ways.

I. Intro - Deja Vu

- A. This feeding story is like deja vu - seen it before!
- B. All of Mark is parallel with Mark 6:31-7:37 (William Lane)

Mark 6-7 text	Topic	Mark 8 text
6:31-44	Feeding the Crowd	8:1-9
6:45-56	Crossing the Sea	8:10
7:1-23	Conflict with Pharisees	8:11-13
7:24-30	Parable About Bread	8:14-21
7:31-36	Healing	8:22-26
7:37	Confession of Faith	8:27-30

- C. Jesus (and Mark!) are patiently teaching us so that we might grasp His ways and the truth!

II. Feeding In the Wilderness - Part 2!

- A. Another feeding in the wilderness?
 - 1. Mark 6:32-46 & Mark 8:1-10 have a lot in common
 - a. Deserted meetings with a hungry multitude
 - b. Jesus has compassion on the multitude
 - c. Disciples baffled as to how to meet the need
 - d. The command to sit before eating
 - e. Jesus takes, gives thanks, breaks, and gives
 - f. The food is multiplied and there are leftovers
 - g. Jesus dismisses the crowd and there is a boat trip

- 2. A lot of differences between the passages as well
 - a. Mark 6 is in Jewish territory, this is predominantly Gentile
 - b. In Mark 6 the crowd was with Jesus for one day; in Mark 8 for three days
 - c. There are different numbers of loaves and fish
 - d. In Mark 6 the people are broken into groups but not in Mark 8
 - e. The number of baskets of remaining food is different

B. Clearly a distinct feeding - with big lessons!

- 1. A parallel structure in ALL of Mark 6:31-8:30 (intro)
- 2. There are similarities but also clear differences between the two miraculous feedings
- 3. This feeding clearly advances the themes we have been tracing
 - a. The Pharisees consider the Gentiles unclean but Jesus is ministering to them
 - b. Surprisingly Gentiles are often more receptive than the Jewish leaders!
 - c. The crumbs are falling from the Master's Table - and the Gentile "dogs" are being fed!
 - d. The Jews and Gentiles are receiving food from the King together and are eating together - a picture of the Church!

- C. I will not cover the feeding in a detailed way today - see the teaching on Mark 6 for an in-depth discussion of the feeding there.

III. Jesus Returns to Jewish Territory

A. The Pharisees greet him with hostility

Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. Mk 8:11

1. The word question (συζητεῖν) can indicate dispute, argue, or debate - though it can also simply mean to ask a question.
2. They are tempting/testing Jesus
 - a. The word can mean to test someone, either positively or negatively
 - b. It also means to tempt - a clear negative purpose
 - c. As we will see their attitude is wicked

B. A wicked generation that tests God

The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. ¹² He sighed deeply and said, "Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it." Mark 8:11-12

1. Jesus sighs deeply - groans deeply in His spirit
2. This generation - an important phrase
3. They are testing God just like the wilderness generation
Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at **Massah** in the desert, ⁹ where your fathers **tested** and tried me, though they had seen what I did. ¹⁰For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways." ¹¹ So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest." Psalm 95:7-11

- a. Psalmist is remembering the wilderness generation
 - b. 'Massah' is the same word - tempt or test
 - c. They tested the LORD - same word as Mark 8:11
 - d. In Exodus 17 they tested God after He had fed them in the wilderness - which is exactly what Jesus had just done!
 - e. God swore on oath that this wicked testing meant they would never enter His rest!
 - f. Jesus now swears that this same attitude will not be rewarded by God - no sign will be given!
4. The problem is not that Jesus had not given evidence - they had all the evidence one could possibly need!
 - a. He had healed a leper and sent him to testify as a sign to them (Mark 1:44)
 - b. He had healed the paralytic as a sign of His authority (Mark 2:1-10)
 - c. He had consistently shown them the true meaning of Scripture (Mark 2:15-28; Mark 7:1-23)
 - d. He healed the man with a shriveled hand on the Sabbath to show them His authority - and they began to plot to kill them! (Mark 3:1-6)
 5. The Pharisees and others simply refuse to believe - and Jesus will not play their game.
 6. Their minds are dull and do not understand, and their hearts are hard and they refuse to accept the ways of God.
 7. They prefer their legalism and religion to God Himself.
 8. After Hours - Signs, Wisdom, and the Way of the Cross

IV. Do You Still Not Understand?

A. A parable - the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod

The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. ¹⁵ “Be careful,” Jesus warned them. “Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.” Mark 8:14-15

1. Yeast/leaven is often a symbol for sin in Scripture
2. Jesus is using a parable about bread - like with the Syro-Phoenician woman after the last conflict with the Pharisees
3. He wants them to meditate and understand just how wrong and destructive are the ideas of both the religious and political leaders surrounding them.
4. Note: Matthew 16:12 spells this out - Mark wants us to meditate on the parable until we understand.
5. These ideas are like yeast - they spread throughout the whole loaf, infecting everything until a person can not understand or embrace God and His ways.

B. The disciples still don't understand!

They discussed this with one another and said, “It is because we have no bread.” ¹⁷ Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: “Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? ¹⁸ Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? Mark 8:16-18

1. The disciples totally miss the parable!
2. This story is parallel to the Syro-Phoenician woman who understood the parable about bread, while the disciples utterly misunderstand.

3. Jesus' exasperated questions - what are you talking about? Do you still not understand? Are your hearts hard? Are you unable to truly see and hear?
4. They have seen miraculously produce food twice - and yet they are worried about not having enough bread! They still lack understanding!
5. The disciples recite the facts of the feedings - but still need help to see, hear, and understand.
6. The great need is not simply knowing the facts of Jesus' work, but to see, hear, and understand in the heart!

V. Applying the Word

A. Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod

1. Jesus warns the disciples - and us! - about this!
2. He does not directly explain what this yeast is
3. Matthew tells us it is their teaching (Matthew 16:12)
4. We know of the Pharisees' legalism which led them to reject others and Christ Himself!
5. But they also had a theology of glory - not the cross!
6. They wanted a Kingdom of power now - and this was not what Jesus offered.
7. This has been a temptation down through the ages - and still is today
8. Interestingly he links this conservative religious group with political power - and warns against it!
9. Is my heart tempted by a theology of power?
10. Has this yeast spread in my heart?

B. The importance of a soft, understanding heart

1. Amazingly the disciples still lacked understanding!
2. This is a reminder of our need for God's grace to open our ears and eyes, to soften our hearts, and to give us understanding!
3. Even as disciples our hearts and minds can be closed off to God, His kingdom, and His ways.
4. But Jesus is patient with us - thank God!
5. We need to daily cry out for the Spirit to soften our hearts, and give us open ears and eyes.
6. We need fresh understanding each day, week, and season so that we might live faithfully before God.

C. The Table of Revelation

1. At this Table, we are fed by the Lord
2. The miraculous feeding and the Lord's Supper
When he had **taken** the seven loaves and **given thanks**, he **broke** them and **gave** them to his disciples to set before the people, and they did so.
Mark 8:6
 - a. The 4 verbs - took, gave thanks, broke, gave
 - b. This miraculous feeding is a preview of the Lord's Table, where God's people - Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, male and female - are all fed
 - c. At this Table our eyes are opened and we see Christ
When he was at the table with them, he **took** bread, **gave thanks**, **broke** it and began to **give** it to them.
³¹ **Then their eyes were opened** and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. Luke 24:30-31

3. Come and have your eyes opened, your heart softened, and receive the Spirit's revelation of Jesus

Do You Still Not Understand?

Mark 8:1-21
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Communion
Ephesians 1:17-19

Teaching keywords: Miraculous gifts and signs; Christology; Jesus; legalism

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, ¹⁸ so that you may know him better having the eyes of your heart enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. Ephes. 1:17-19

During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, ² “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. ³ If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance.” ⁴ His disciples answered, “But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?” ⁵ “How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked. “Seven,” they replied.

⁶ He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people, and they did so. ⁷ They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. ⁸ The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ⁹ About four thousand men were present. And having sent them away, ¹⁰ he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

¹¹ The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven.

¹² He sighed deeply and said, “Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it.” ¹³ Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.

¹⁴ The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. ¹⁵ “Be careful,” Jesus warned them. “Watch out for the yeast of the

Pharisees and that of Herod.” ¹⁶ They discussed this with one another and said, “It is because we have no bread.”

¹⁷ Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: “Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? ¹⁸ Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don’t you remember? ¹⁹ When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?” “Twelve,” they replied. ²⁰ “And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?” They answered, “Seven.” ²¹ He said to them, “Do you still not understand?” Mark 8:1-21