



Mark - Lesson 8A

Chapter 8:1-10

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- As we move into Chapter 8 of Mark, we find ourselves, still, in Gentile territory.
 - Up to this point, Jesus and His disciples have been in the area for some time.
 - That journey began in Tyre with the Syrophoenician woman whose child was cruelly demon possessed.
 - It was through this woman's faith in Jesus, recognizing His unique title as the "Son of David" that she goes home to find her daughter had been healed.
 - From there, the text told us that Jesus and His disciples took a few days journey around Sidon to the region of the Decapolis.
 - You might recall, this was the region where Jesus healed a man possessed by a legion of demons (Mark 5:1-20).
 - Only this time, Jesus is now met by a man who was both deaf and mute.
 - We witnessed Jesus showing this man compassion by meeting his needs through healing him.
 - What made this healing so unique, amongst the others, was that Jesus used His saliva – something He hadn't done until now.
 - It was at the conclusion of that healing that the man and the crowd left with overwhelming joy at the miraculous healing.
 - Although, Jesus cautioned the men not to tell anyone, because of the nature of the healing, the men could not contain themselves and spoke of the mighty work all around.
 - Tonight, we will find ourselves in a separate event within the same region, yet with the similar circumstances from a previous miracle in Mark 6.
 - And what we will discover is this event is not just a demonstration of the compassion of our Savior, but a teaching moment for the disciples to have compassion for those around them while moving closer to understanding the Kingdom Program.
 - If we were to outline tonight's teaching, it would be structured in the following way:
 - 1. The Compassion of Jesus
 - 2. The Provision from Jesus
 - 3. The Satisfaction in Jesus
 - And what you may discover in tonight's lesson is that this teaching moment is not just for the disciples, but it is necessary for every believer and every church, today.
 - I want to simply title our teaching tonight: "The Feeding of the 4,000: Even me and Even You"
 - Open your bibles and meet me in Mark 8:1-10 and let's start by reading the text together.

Mark 8:1 In those days, when there was again a large crowd and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples and *said to them,

Mark 8:2 "I feel compassion for the people because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat.

Mark 8:3 If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come from a great distance.”

Mark 8:4 And His disciples answered Him, “Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people?”

Mark 8:5 And He was asking them, “How many loaves do you have?” And they said, “Seven.”

Mark 8:6 And He *directed the people to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people.

Mark 8:7 They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He ordered these to be served as well.

Mark 8:8 And they ate and were satisfied; and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces.

Mark 8:9 About four thousand were there; and He sent them away.

Mark 8:10 And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha.

- Let’s Pray.
- This week, after dropping off my kids to school, I stopped for some tea at Starbucks, a coffee and tea shop.
 - While waiting for my tea, I sat down to do some work and reading.
 - While working, I noticed in my periphery a lady in the corner of the store sitting on the couch gazing at some pictures on the wall.
 - Some time passes and I now have my drink, and continue working.
 - However, I notice, still in the same seat, in the same position, the woman on the couch.
 - Still no drink, no food – just her wrapped in a blanket of some sort.
 - Soon a gentleman comes in, places his order, and sits down next to the woman at a table.
 - A few minutes pass by and while working I hear the man ask the woman if she has eaten.
 - He proceeds to escort her to the counter, has her give her order, pays for it and returns to his seat.
 - And all the while in my mind, I ask myself: “How did you miss that?!”
 - There had been at least 15 people who had gone in and out for their orders and it didn’t dawn on me or anyone there to ask a simple question:
 - “Ma’am, do you have a need?”
 - Needless to say, I left embarrassed and convicted because I had overlooked a need because I was so focused and fixated on my own stuff.
 - Yet, in that conviction I could feel the grace of the Lord remind me that there is always opportunity to find a need and meet it.
 - It will simply require me to look beyond myself and “keep my eyes open”.

- We are going to witness Christ demonstrate great compassion in the feeding of the 4,000 while at the same time see the disciples' dismissal of the need.
 - Although the disciples have been walking with Christ for some time, there is much more training to be done and for them to see what Christ is preparing for them to do.
- Let's see how Christ compassionately corrects the disciples while lovingly leading them in the process.
 - Let's begin, pick me up again at verses 1-3.

Mark 8:1 In those days, when there was again a large crowd and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples and *said to them,

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Mark 8:3 If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come from a great distance."

- Mark begins with this transition to the next chapter of events by using the phrase "In those days".
 - With a start like this, it begs the question: "What days is Mark referring to here? What has occurred within this period of time?"
 - As we discovered, 2 significant events have occurred within the last chapter alone and in both contexts they have taken place in a predominantly Gentile region.
 - And based upon the most recent context we find ourselves in geographically, it makes sense to assume that we are still somewhere within the region of the Decapolis.
 - Notice that within this "period of time", Mark denotes there is a **large crowd** that has been following Jesus during His time there.
 - The question that we should ask ourselves is: "Where did this large crowd come from?"
 - Maybe it could be assumed that due to the healing of the Syrophoenician woman and the deaf and mute man, that word traveled fast regarding Jesus' miraculous works.
 - If this is to be true, then Jesus' ministry is gaining more traction.
 - Now if you have been tracking with us for the past few teachings, you might be thinking: "How is it that Jesus' healing in the Decapolis has garnered such following?"
 - According to Mark's account, there is only 2 indications of healings up to this point.
 - Now, we could make generalized assumptions, or we could look in the text and find the answer to the "**how**".
 - We need look no further than Matthew's gospel in which clarifies this "**cause**" of immense following of Jesus in the Decapolis.

- This is what Matthew 15:29-31 states:

Matthew 15:29 Departing from there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, He was sitting there.

Matthew 15:30 And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them.

Matthew 15:31 So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

- Matthew's account mentions these events having occurred after the healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter.
 - **So it appears the very passing and presence of Jesus in the region continues to grasp the attention of many who were in need.**
 - What is most interesting regarding Jesus' healing journey throughout the Decapolis is, as verse 31 mentions, the people were **"glorifying the God of Israel"**.
 - This word "glorified" is the Greek word *doxazo* which means "To positively acknowledge, recognize, or esteem one's character, nature, and attributes."
 - We can't move past this too quickly because Matthew's mention of the people "glorifying the God of Israel" points to a critical theological theme.
 - **It helps the reader understand that this Gentile crowd recognized Jesus' unique Person and Power.**
 - But beyond that the people were connecting the blessing in which they were receiving in that day with these promises found in the Hebrew Scriptures.
 - One could only surmise that they were coming to this conclusion beyond simply seeing Jesus do these miracles. Was He teaching as well? Potentially!
 - I say potentially because Mark mentions in verse 2 that the people had been following Jesus for some time – as they had been with Him now for about three days.
 - The text continues by stating that the people's resources have run low during their journey with Jesus.
 - In response to their needs, Jesus shows compassion by preparing to supply and fully satisfy their needs.
 - Understand, with following Jesus, there was no itinerary, per se. There could have been a change at a moment's notice.
 - "Today we are going here and tomorrow we are going here."
 - So this crowd had to pick up quickly and would faithfully follow Jesus to His next assignment.
 - **In other words, the people simply want to be where Jesus is because where His compassion is seen, there His grace is found.**
 - However, watching from a distance are the disciples observing the compassion that Jesus is showing the Gentile people.

- This compassion in which Jesus has for the people is that Greek word *splanchnizomai* (splanchniz-ome). This “deep within the bowel” sympathy for those in need.
 - **It’s the same word in which Jesus uses in Mark 6 in the feeding of the 5,000.**
- It’s at this moment that Jesus makes known, **verbally**, to His disciples that He has compassion for the people.
 - Well, this is different! Because this is the first time in which Jesus lets His disciples know **how He felt** regarding the Gentile people.
 - Why would Jesus need to tell the disciples **how He feels first** before He moves to meet the need?
 - This explanation requires that we recall a detail from the feeding of the 5,000.
- In Mark 6, **we see that the disciples verbally** recognized the need to let the people go to eat in a timely manner.
 - **Yet they failed to realize that Christ was able to provide the means by which they needed to be sustained in that desolate place as He had provided for them in their first mission trip.**
- But now we have Jesus, in the feeding of the 4,000, addressing the needs of the people which will lead to another grand meal for the multitudes.
 - The question at this point becomes: “What is the cause for Jesus’ compassion towards the crowd to be made known **vocally**?”
- In the feeding of the 5,000 **the disciples** speak up and have something to say, however in the feeding of the 4,000, they have nothing to contribute in the conversation until asked “how many loaves are available”.
 - **Why is this the case? It all goes back to the cultural conflict of the day.**
- Remember, the relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles is a strained situation to say the least.
 - So imagine at this point, the Gentiles are following Jesus around the Decapolis like puppies behind their Master – “waiting for the crumbs to fall” (Are you seeing what Mark is painting here?)
- All the while there is this festering ugliness within the hearts of the disciples.
 - So how do you grasp the attention of the disciples to get them to see what you see and get the purpose of the mission? You give a verbal clue to make known the point.
- **Where the disciples’ compassion meter is extremely low, Jesus sees it and redirects their focus.**
 - Jesus’ emphasis on compassion towards the crowd was a visible light for the disciples to see regarding the Kingdom Program and how the disciples would need compassion to carry out the mission.
 - Check out verses 4-5 on Jesus’ method of provision. The details may sound quite familiar.

Mark 8:4 And His disciples answered Him, “Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people?”

Mark 8:5 And He was asking them, “How many loaves do you have?” And they said, “Seven.”

- By now you should be seeing more of a familiar pattern unfolding here from Mark 6.
 - And that familiar pattern is all the more revealed in what seems to be the frustration of the disciples regarding Jesus’ familiarity with the crowd. (Gentiles specifically).
 - But more importantly this similar story reveals, yet again, a lack of the disciples understanding of this Kingdom Program training.
 - It’s as if you want to give a good pop on the back of their necks in order for them to understand what Jesus is trying to get them to see.
 - Jesus uses the exact set up here in Mark 8 as He did in the feeding of the 5,000 in Mark 6.
 - And what this repetitive event does for the reader is present us with a key observation, and that is:
 - **The Lord’s use of a particular event becoming repetitive in the disciples’ lives is a means to teach them something that they are obviously missing.**
 - It’s evident that there was still some character development that needed to be accomplished in their lives as disciples/apostles.
 - Isn’t it funny how the Lord uses this same pattern of correction and instruction in our lives as well today. For example:
 - When the Lord is trying to correct some character issues in your life to conform you more to Christ; the more it comes up the more it shows you’re still missing it.
 - And Christ is fervently committed through the inward working of the Spirit of God to get you right where you need to be.
 - This reality should be deeply encouraging for us because it shows us that the Lord is compassionate towards us even in our lack of understanding.
 - The patience of Christ is evident towards His disciples in their moments of training.
 - I love what Paul states in 1 Corinthians 13:4-6. Check out the text.

1 Corinthians 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

1 Corinthians 13:5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

1 Corinthians 13:6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

1 Corinthians 13:7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

- So in a loving draw towards compassion, Jesus appeals to the disciples once again.

- He proceeds by asking them “How many loaves do **you** have?”
- Don’t miss this small yet significant detail.
- Remember, it is at the first feeding that the disciples searched through the crowd for what they could find.
 - Now the disciples are called to search among themselves for the very resources that Jesus would use to provide for the people.
 - Have you ever heard the saying: “Kill them with kindness”. There is definitely some truth to that statement.
- What better way to learn compassion towards others who you disregard or don’t get along with and vice versa, than by giving them the last of what you have for the sake of them benefiting?
 - Understand that sacrifice is a defining attribute of those who claim to be followers of Christ.
 - We can be sacrificial because of witnessing the greatest sacrifice – Christ dying on the cross for our sins.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us this sacrificial truth:

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- Again, this is training ground and leadership lessons being taught to the disciples while in training for the Kingdom Program, yet they still aren’t getting it.
 - By this time, many people would have given up on these 12 men because it seems that their rate of retention is quite low, yet Christ is committed to these men.
 - In Philippians 1:6 Paul tells us this:

Philippians 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

- Now before we move on, I want to draw your attention to some numerical details.
 - You may be noticing that between the two feedings (Mark 6 and Mark 8) that the values of some of the items have changed.
 - In one way, this speaks to the validity of Mark’s account as the feeding of the 4,000 being a **separate event** from the feeding of the 5,000.
 - But secondly, it brings about some key theological implications to the forefront.
 - We will see in our last section of the text tonight what these theological implications are. Check out verses 6-10:

Mark 8:6 And He *directed the people to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people.

Mark 8:7 They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He

ordered these to be served as well.

Mark 8:8 And they ate and were satisfied; and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces.

Mark 8:9 About four thousand were there; and He sent them away.

Mark 8:10 And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha.

- We continue to see the feeding of the multitude playing out as expected at this point, but as we mentioned, there are some variations.
 - Notice in Mark 8, Jesus tells the crowd to “recline on the ground” just as He instructed the crowd in Mark 6.
 - However, notice the difference in description of “grounds” in both passages. Mark 6 speaks to the people reclining on green grass, whereas Mark 8 speaks to the people reclining on “the ground”.
 - You might be asking: “What’s the point of making this detail known?”
 - If you recall our teaching on the Feeding of the 5,000 in Mark 6, the “green grass” detail contained significant ties to the Hebrew scriptures.
 - The connection we drew was an interesting parallel between Moses and Jesus – **Jesus being the greater/better Moses**.
 - It was Christ who provided the **abundance of bread** in which surpassed Moses’ provision.
 - At this point, we are forced to juxtapose the two feeding events to see what Mark is showing us, by the leading of the Spirit.
 - In one way, we can see a clear distinction between the Children of Israel and the Gentile people.
 - And I will be as so bold to say that this distinction here addresses, head on, the improper teaching that the church somehow replaces Israel.
 - That is known as Replacement/Covenant Theology and is unbiblical.
 - God has a plan and purpose for both Israel (nationally) to know Him and for the Gentiles to be blessed by God through the Jewish Messiah.
 - The blessing for the Gentiles (non-Jew) is that by God’s grace we can be recipients of salvation found only in Christ by faith.
 - Mark continues in verse 6 by stating that Jesus takes the 7 loaves from the disciples, and both breaks it and blesses it.
 - Now what may be missed here, if not carefully observing the text, is that the blessing over the meals are different.
 - Where Jesus prays the Jewish blessing over the bread in Mark 6, Jesus gives a simple “thanksgiving” here in Mark 8.
 - Again, signifying the fact that although both groups are distinctly different, they are both partakers of this gift of salvation as “One in Christ”.
 - **And again this not based upon their merit, but solely upon faith in Christ alone.**
 - It’s after the blessing of the food that the disciples distributed the food to the

people.

- Not only will the Apostles pass out the bread to the Gentiles in the immediate context, but they will ultimately share the “bread of life” (gospel) with the Nations in a missiological effort.
- Check out the reaction of the Gentiles after they have eaten.
- Mark states not only were the Gentiles satisfied through the provision of Christ, but that there was an “abundance of leftovers”.
 - Within the feeding of the 4,000, the text mentions that there were 7 large baskets full of broken pieces.
 - We will see the significance of these numbers momentarily.
- So it’s at the end of this meal that Jesus sends the people away and departs with His disciples to “the district of Dalmanutha (Dal-ma-nutha)”
 - The district of Dalmanutha is believed to be within the vicinity of Magdala.
 - However, when you read through Matthew’s gospel, we see in verse 39 of Chapter 15 that when Jesus and the disciples left, that they went to “the region of Magadan”
 - With three different names mentioned, many critics have suggested that this account couldn’t be accurate.
 - Others suggest that Mark was not familiar with the regions and therefore couldn’t get this detail right.
- Friends, the critics couldn’t be far from the truth.
 - Within the last ten years, UK Archeologist discovered Dalmanutha, a town dating back more than 2,000 years.
 - **It was in fact discovered on the northwest coast of the Sea of Galilee in Israel’s Ginosar valley.**
- I believe this further proves the fact that Mark is the first Gospel written, because Mark gives us some precise details and location as to where Jesus and the disciples sailed to amongst other things.
 - Jesus and His disciples will now be headed back to the Jewish side of the Galilee.
- **What Mark is doing here is laying, very methodically, this visual aid of the Kingdom Program and how the Gospel message would eventually go forth.**
 - Lastly, I want to show us a summary breakdown chart of the two feeding accounts (Mark 6 and Mark 8).
 - Notice the similarities and differences, yet how it all paints a beautiful tapestry of God’s promises and redemptive plan through history.

Scripture Ref.	Event:	Feeding of the 5,000	Feeding of the 4,000
Mk 6:30-44, Mk.8:1-10	Crowds Following	Jewish	Gentile
Mk.6:31, Mk 8:4	Location	Desolate Place	Desolate Place
Mk.6:34, Mk 8:2	Compassion towards the crowd: Reason?	"...they were like sheep without a shepherd"	They had needs
Mk.6:36-38, Mk 8:2-4	Recognition of the needs	The disciples speak to the late hour and need for the people to eat in a timely manner	Jesus acknowledges the needs of the people
Mk. 6:38, Mk.8:5	# of loaves and fish	5 barley loaves and 2 fish	7 loaves and "some fish"
Mk.6:42, Mk.8:8	Provision from the meal	"all ate and all were satisfied"	"and they ate and were satisfied"
Mk.6:43, Mk.8:8	# Basket of leftovers	12 baskets (kophinos)	7 baskets (spyris)

- We can sum up Jesus' two feedings of the crowds in two points:
 - **1. Jesus came to Israel first, not only.**
 - Meaning, Jesus came for Israel, but also for the world and ultimately it will be the Church that maintains this missional focus. (Romans 1:16)
 - When I say world here this is not to mean geographically, but rather ethnically.
 - The Jewish people weren't opposed to ministering to others around the world, they were simply focused on ministering to other Jews.
 - As we have seen throughout these teachings, Jesus is wanting His disciples to embrace faith shown from whoever presents it through the response of the Gospel.
 - The disciples held the Syrophoenician woman's ethnicity against her as we witnessed in Matthew's gospel, her being called a Canaanite woman.
 - What they failed to realize was this Gentile woman was worthy of mercy just as much as the next Jew.
 - God's grace reaches beyond our faults and meets us right where we are.
 - We see this reality also imbedded in the numbers of the miracles themselves.
 - In the first miracle, the feeding of the 5,000, the number 5 in scripture means grace.
 - And lo and behold what was Jesus teaching these men during their time in Decapolis: "How to love and show compassion towards others!"
 - In the second miracle, the feeding of the 4,000, the number 4 in scripture is representative of the whole world, in the sense of "Nations"/"Nationalities."
 - This ultimately was showing the disciples that your ministry and training

is not just for those in your ethnic group, but it goes out to the world.

- **And it would be through the Church that the world would be evangelized, hear the gospel and do the work/deeds Christ called her to accomplish.**
- Isn't it fascinating that in Matthew 28, Jesus commands the disciples to "Go therefore and make disciples of all Nations."
- That word "Nations" in the Greek is *ethnos*. In other words, go out amongst the non-Jewish world and tell them about the Gospel.
- And in your sharing the Gospel and making it known, make disciples – make students for My Glory.
- **2. When the Lord teaches a lesson, it would behoove us to watch carefully and listen closely.**
 - We often hear people say that they graduated from the school of "hard knocks" or that life is a good teacher – and in a way it is.
 - However, the objective of tests and trials is not to stay stuck in the same trial as a cycle.
 - But rather, it is key that you learn what God is teaching you in the trials and tests you face so that you don't have a new trial with the same lesson.
- The comforting thing in it all is when you find yourself in this cyclical test/trial, seek the Lord as to what you are missing so that you may pass the test.
 - As we have eyes for eternity remember that this life is simply preparation for the next.
 - Are you serving compassionately now?
 - Are you working well to the glory of God, now?
 - Are you loving your neighbor well even if they don't vote like you?
 - There are needs all around and the greatest need that all have is to know the Gospel.
 - As Charles Spurgeon said in his book, "The Soul Winner":

"I believe that much of the secret of soul-winning lies in having bowels of compassion, in having spirits that can be touched with the feeling of human infirmities."

- Let's Pray.

Citation:

- Bailey, p. 80.