

## Mark 8:1-21 Spiritual Lessons for Dull Disciples

8 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, <sup>2</sup> “I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. <sup>3</sup> 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.” <sup>4</sup> And his disciples answered him, “How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?” <sup>5</sup> And he asked them, “How many loaves do you have?” They said, “Seven.” <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. <sup>8</sup> And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. <sup>9</sup> And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away. <sup>10</sup> And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.<sup>[a]</sup>

### The Pharisees Demand a Sign

<sup>11</sup> The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. <sup>12</sup> 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.” <sup>13</sup> And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

### The Leaven of the Pharisees and Herod

<sup>14</sup> Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. <sup>15</sup> And he cautioned them, saying, “Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”

### Differences with Feeding of 5,000: Mk. 6:30-44

:1- Jesus is one who brings up the food shortage issue vs. disciples

:2 – three days longer than one day

:5 Seven loaves vs. five; 2 fish vs. several small fish

:8 word for basket here is a large basket large enough to contain a man (see Acts 9:25)  
- In chapter 6 = a “provision” basket

:9 - 5,000 men vs. 4,000 people

Conclusion:**I. Jesus' compassion never runs dry.**

Psa. 103:13 -

As a father shows **compassion** to his children, so the Lord shows **compassion** to those who fear him.

Lam 3:22 – KJV -

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his **compassions** fail not.

**ESV:** The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;<sup>[a]</sup>  
his mercies never come to an end;

Isa. 49:13 -

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the Lord has comforted his people and will have **compassion** on his afflicted.

**II. Jesus's power never runs out.**

Healed and delivered thousands

Explain: the divinity of his person

*The miracle of the incarnation is that this one person became everything we are without ceasing to be everything he is. – Blair Smith*

Phil. 2:6-8 - <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant,<sup>[c]</sup> being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man **coming on the clouds** of heaven with power and great glory. Matt. 24:30

***The Pharisees want Messianic proof on their own terms. V. 11-13*****The Leaven of the Pharisees and Herod – v. 14-15**

OT examples of leaven...

Exo. 12:15 - Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

Lev. 2:11 - <sup>11</sup>“No grain offering that you bring to the Lord shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey as a food offering to the Lord

**Positive use:** Luke 13:20-21 - <sup>20</sup> And again he said, “To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? <sup>21</sup> It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened

1 Cor. 5:6-8 - <sup>6</sup> Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? <sup>7</sup> Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> Let us `but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Gal. 5:7-8 - <sup>7</sup> You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? <sup>8</sup> This persuasion is not from him who calls you. <sup>9</sup> A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

Matt. 16:11-12 - Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” <sup>12</sup> Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Luke 12:1 - In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his disciples first, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is **hypocrisy**.

In Mark 7:1-23 - washing cups and neglect inner life.

Teach doctrines of men

Corban

**Herod:** his sins

**<sup>16</sup> And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread. <sup>17</sup> 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?**

*Problem among God’s people:*

**Cf. Isa. 6:9-10** - <sup>8</sup> And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.” <sup>9</sup> And he said, “Go, and say to this people:

“Keep on hearing,<sup>[c]</sup> but do not understand;  
keep on seeing,<sup>[d]</sup> but do not perceive.’

<sup>10</sup> Make the heart of this people dull,<sup>[e]</sup>  
and their ears heavy,  
and blind their eyes;  
lest they see with their eyes,  
and hear with their ears,  
and understand with their hearts,  
and turn and be healed.”

**<sup>18</sup> Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember?**

“Remembering was a major element in Israel’s religious experience. The disciples, like Israel, had failed to remember.” PI. 130

***How do Christians develop spiritual understanding, and not just surface, or material understanding?***

***How to we overcome spiritual dullness?***

***Gracious work of the Holy Spirit:***

Eph. 3:14

<sup>14</sup> For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom <sup>(AI)</sup>every family<sup>[c]</sup> in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup> that according to <sup>(AJ)</sup>the riches of his glory <sup>(AK)</sup>he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit <sup>(AL)</sup>in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> <sup>(AM)</sup>so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being <sup>(AN)</sup>rooted and <sup>(AO)</sup>grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may have strength to <sup>(AP)</sup>comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and <sup>(AQ)</sup>height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ <sup>(AR)</sup>that surpasses knowledge, that <sup>(AS)</sup>you may be filled with all <sup>(AT)</sup>the fullness of God.

Faith and prayer and the Word; humility before God and man.

Listen before speaking too much.

Seek to know the essence of the Word of God which is to know Jesus and grow in the knowledge and personal relationship with him.

Grow in the grace

Work out your own salvation...

Be aware of our sin, repent.

Listen carefully, listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit

**Seek the face of God with all your being**

James 4:6-10 - <sup>6</sup> But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” <sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

### **Congregational worship**

Col. 3:16 - <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Eph. 4:11-16 <sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds<sup>[c]</sup> and teachers,<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood,<sup>[e]</sup> to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Fellowship with believers

Seek the face of the Lord

<sup>[A]</sup>the fullness of God.

### **God-given vision of the greatness of this salvation:**

Eph. 1:17ff

<sup>6</sup> I <sup>(A)</sup>do not cease to give thanks for you, <sup>(B)</sup>remembering you in my prayers, <sup>17</sup> that <sup>(C)</sup>the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, <sup>(D)</sup>may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, <sup>18</sup> <sup>(E)</sup>having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is <sup>(E)</sup>the hope to which he has called you, what are <sup>(G)</sup>the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, <sup>(H)</sup>according to the working of <sup>(I)</sup>his great might <sup>20</sup> that he worked in Christ <sup>(J)</sup>when he raised him from the dead and

### **Hunger and thirst for righteousness**

1 Pet. 2:2-

<sup>2</sup> <sup>(A)</sup>Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual <sup>(B)</sup>milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—

Heb. 5:11-14 - <sup>11</sup> About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.<sup>12</sup> For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, <sup>13</sup> for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

**Move on in our Christian lives**  
**A danger of going back, of taking the easy, comfortable route**

Heb. 6:1-3 - Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, <sup>2</sup> and of instruction about washings,<sup>[a]</sup> the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. <sup>3</sup> And this we will do if God permits.

**Remember: Jesus is Worthy!**

Worthy of every sacrifice, self denial, and hardship. These will seem as nothing compared to the joy of seeing him and being in his holy presence.

**These are some Spiritual Lessons for Dull Disciples – for them and for us!**

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