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The Gospel of Mark was likely written by John Mark, a companion of Peter, around AD 60-70 and probably written for Roman believers, many of whom faced persecution under Nero. Themes of suffering, endurance, and the cost of discipleship would have spoken directly to their struggles. Whether read in the first century or today, Mark’s message remains the same: In that, Jesus is the true Messiah and following Him requires faith and sacrifice.

The Gospel of Mark is a fast-paced, vivid account of the life and ministry of Jesus. The chapter of Mark highlights Jesus’ authority, miracles, and call to discipleship. In studying this chapter, I learned that each chapter builds upon the last, showing us, the growing opposition Jesus faced and the deeper revelation of who He is.

In earlier chapters, we saw Jesus perform powerful miracles, confront unbelief, and teach His disciples about the Kingdom of God. Mark’s passion emphasizes the urgency of Jesus’ mission and the need for people to respond in faith. Unlike the other Gospels, Mark focuses on action more than lengthy discourse, drawing the reader into the unfolding story of Christ.

Mark 8 is pivotal in the Gospel, because it moves from physical miracles, like feeding and healing, to deeper spiritual truths, like Peter’s confession and Jesus’ prediction of His death. This chapter challenges you to see Jesus clearly and to recognize the cost of following Him. So, as we delve into this meaty chapter of Mark 8, I want you to prepare your heart to be stretched, confronted, and encouraged. Your journey through Mark 8 can bring fresh insight into your walk with Christ.

This chapter bridges the two halves of the Gospel: the first half focuses on who Jesus is, and the second half on what He came to do.

## Feeding the Four Thousand (8:1-10)

Message Translation: 8 1-3 At about this same time he again found himself with a hungry crowd on his hands. He called his disciples together and said, **“This crowd is breaking my heart. They have stuck with me for three days, and now they have nothing to eat. If I send them home hungry, they’ll faint along the way—some of them have come a long distance.”**

4 His disciples responded, “What do you expect us to do about it? Buy food out here in the desert?”

5 He asked, **“How much bread do you have?”**

“Seven loaves,” they said.

6-10 So Jesus told the crowd to sit down on the ground. After giving thanks, he took the seven bread loaves, broke them into pieces, and gave them to his disciples so they could hand them out to the crowd. They also had a few fish. He pronounced a blessing over the fish and told his disciples to hand them out as well. The crowd ate its fill. Seven sacks of leftovers were collected. There were well over four thousand at the meal. Then he sent them home. He himself went straight to the boat with his disciples and set out for Dalmanoutha.

This scene opens with a hungry crowd gathered around Jesus. Their physical needs set the stage for Jesus to demonstrate His compassion. This reveals Jesus, deep awareness of human needs. He is not distant but attentive, drawing His disciples into the problem to teach them reliance on Him.

As we dissect the first few versus, we learn this is the second feeding of a multitude. All four Gospels speak of feeding the five thousand. However, only Matthew and Mark record this event, and it is not difficult to distinguish it from the other miracle of the multiplying of bread and fish.

- The first miracle took place in Galilee, near Bethsaida and involved predominantly Jews
- This miracle of feeding the four thousand took place near Decapolis and involved mostly Gentiles.

The first miracle, Jesus started with five loaves and two fish, while here He had seven loaves and a few fish.

- The five thousand had been with Him for one day
- The four thousand had been with Him for three days
- Twelve baskets of fragments were left over after feeding the five thousand
- Seven baskets after the four thousand were fed

I thought it was fascinating that there were even two different lands of baskets used: for the five thousand, small wicker lunch baskets, for the four thousand, large hampers, big enough to hold a man. After their hunger was satisfied, Jesus sent them away, cared for and provided for. The event leaves a lasting testimony of His power. Large numbers are no obstacle to God's ability to provide.

The disciples reveal their doubt and limitation. Despite having seen Jesus' feed five thousand earlier, they focus on the impossibility of the situation. This reflected on their human weakness and exposed the tension between human inability and divine sufficiency. We often forget past blessings when faced with new challenges. We are to trust in Jesus rather than in our circumstances.

Jesus is so orderly in what He does, as His actions reveals His authority and reliance on the Father. Every miracle of provision begins with gratitude. Ministry is not about creating power but carrying what Christ has provided. When gratitude sanctifies what we have God makes it sufficient. Faith in action! Large numbers are no obstacle to God's ability to provide.

Jesus' work is ongoing! The feeding of the four thousand reminds us that Jesus knows your needs before you even speak to them.

### **The Pharisees Demand a Sign (8:11-13)**

**11-13** When they arrived, the Pharisees came out and started in on him, badgering him to prove himself, pushing him up against the wall. Provoked, he said, **“Why does this generation clamor for miraculous guarantees? If I have anything to say about it, you'll not get so much as a hint of a guarantee.”** He then left them, got back in the boat, and headed for the other side.

The Pharisees approach Jesus not with faith, but with a spirit of testing. They demand a sign from heaven, showing their refusal to accept the miracles He already performed. Their hearts hardened, seeking proof beyond what God had already revealed. This exposed the danger of their unbelief, lacking in their faith, reflected rebellion, and a reminder without humility, no miracle will convince a hardened heart.

Jesus refused to satisfy their demand for a heavenly sign. He exposed their spiritual blindness of that generation. Faith cannot be forced through signs; it requires an open heart. Jesus teaches that God will not perform miracles to entertain doubt, but to only reveal truth to those willing to see.

Jesus withdraws from the Pharisees, choosing not to engage further. Their hardened hearts close the door to deeper revelation. His departure shows that persistent unbelief leads to missed opportunity. When people continually reject the truth, Jesus will not force Himself upon them. This reminds us to respond when God speaks, for rejecting His word repeatedly can lead to silence and separation.

Question: Do you approach Jesus with faith, or do you demand proof before believing? True disciples trust His word even when they cannot see everything clearly. Like the Pharisees, it is easy to resist when faith feels difficult. Jesus calls you to surrender doubt and open your heart. Believe in what He has already revealed, and you will see Him more clearly.

### **Jesus Warns Against the Yeast of the Pharisees (8:14-21)**

**14-15 But the disciples forgot to pack a lunch. Except for a single loaf of bread, there wasn't a crumb in the boat. Jesus warned, "Be very careful. Keep a sharp eye out for the contaminating yeast of Pharisees and the followers of Herod."**

**16-19 Meanwhile, the disciples were finding fault with each other because they had forgotten to bring bread. Jesus overheard and said, "Why are you fussing because you forgot bread? Don't you see the point of all this? Don't you get it at all? Remember the five loaves I broke for the five thousand? How many baskets of leftovers did you pick up?"**

**They said, "Twelve."**

**20 "And the seven loaves for the four thousand—how many bags full of leftovers did you get?"**

**“Seven.” 21 He said, “Do you still not get it?”**

The disciples realize their lack of bread as they travel with Jesus. Their concern over physical provision sets the stage for Jesus to give them a deeper teaching. They are focused on material needs rather than spiritual truths.

- The disciples were preoccupied with bread when the Bread of Life was with them.
- How easy it is for us to overlook the sufficiency of Jesus by focusing on our temporary lack.

Jesus gives a warning using the metaphor of yeast. He points to the corrupting influence of the Pharisees’ hypocrisy and Herod’s worldly mindset. In other words, their teachings and example could spread like yeast (wildfire) corrupting hearts and faith.

- Yeast represents hidden but powerful influence
- Jesus warns that unbelief, hypocrisy, and worldly compromise can spread quietly but ruin faith completely.
- His command is to watch out, guard our hearts and remain discerning in what we accept as truth.

The disciples totally misunderstood Jesus’ warning of the yeast, because they thought He was still speaking about physical bread. This really highlighted their lack of human understanding as it pertained to the dullness of their spiritual maturity.

How many times have we discussed a concern with someone else. He confronts the disciples and challenges their lack of spiritual perception and questions the state of their hearts. Jesus’ desire it to open their eyes.

- A hardened heart cannot perceive God’s truth, even when it is clearly present
- Stubbornness and fear can keep us from recognizing Christ’s sufficiency.

Jesus points to their senses and memory. They have witnessed miracles but still fail to grasp their meaning. Their inability to connect past experiences with present challenges reveals a gap in faith.

Forgetting God's past works leads to present unbelief. Spiritual blindness is not about lack of evidence but failure to remember and apply what God has already done. Verse 18 urges us to recall God's faithfulness in times of doubt.

Memory alone is not enough; understanding must follow. Jesus' questions guide His disciples to connect past provision with present trust. Twelve baskets symbolize God's sufficiency for Israel, showing His provision for His people.

Jesus points to the second feeding miracle. The disciples again recall the number of baskets collected. Seven symbolizes fullness and completeness. Jesus wants His disciples to see that His provision was not accidental but purposeful and abundant. Each detail of the miracles, points to His divine sufficiency.

Do you still not understand? Despite their memories, they still miss the truth of His power and sufficiency. This question leaves them and us to reflect on faith and understanding.

Jesus' question is not about information but revelation. Understanding comes when faith connects God's past works to present trust. Every believer is to move beyond memory into deeper faith in Christ's ongoing provision. Remember His works, believe His promises, and rest in His sufficiency.

### **Healing a Blind Man at Bethsaida (8:22-26)**

**22-23 They arrived at Bethsaida. Some people brought a sightless man and begged Jesus to give him a healing touch. Taking him by the hand, he led him out of the village. He put spit in the man's eyes, laid hands on him, and asked, "Do you see anything?"**

**24-26 He looked up. "I see men. They look like walking trees." So Jesus laid hands on his eyes again. The man looked hard and realized that he had recovered perfect sight, saw everything in bright, twenty-twenty focus. **Jesus sent him straight home, telling him, "Don't enter the village."****

As Jesus arrives in Bethsaida, a blind man is brought by others who intercede for him. Their begging shows faith in Jesus' power to heal. The man dependence on others highlights both his need and their compassion.

Sometimes we must carry others to Jesus when they cannot come on their own. The blind man's friends demonstrate faith not only in words but in action, believing Jesus could transform his life.

Jesus personally leads the man away from the crowd. He uses a physical act of spitting and touching, then asks the man about his vision. This healing involves a process rather than an instant change.

Jesus' personal touch shows intimacy and care. Healing sometimes comes in stages, reminding us that growth in faith and clarity can take time. By asking if he sees anything, Jesus involves the man in his own healing, showing that faith engages the whole person.

The man begins to see, but not clearly. His vision is blurred, describing people as trees. His healing is partial at this stage.

- Partial sight symbolizes incomplete spiritual understanding.
- Coming to Christ may begin with glimpses of truth before full clarity is given.
- Jesus patiently works with us, guiding us from confusion into full vision of who He is.

Jesus touches the man again, and this time his healing is complete. His eyes are fully opened, his sight restored, and his vision made clear. The process ends in total transformation.

- Complete healing comes by the continued work of Christ.
- What begins in partial understanding can be perfected through persistent faith and Christ's power.
- Jesus is not limited to one method but works according to His wisdom and timing.
- The miracles were never meant as spectacles but as signs pointing to His identity.
- True healing leads to quiet obedience, not empty display.

Like the blind man, you need the continual touch of Christ. Trust Him to complete what He has started in you. He will lead you from confusion into clear sight, shaping your vision of God and His will.

### **Peter Confesses Jesus as the Messiah (8:27-30)**

**27 Jesus and his disciples headed out for the villages around Caesarea Philippi. As they walked, he asked, “Who do the people say I am?”**

**28 “Some say ‘John the Baptizer,’” they said. “Others say ‘Elijah.’ Still others say, ‘one of the prophets.’”**

**29-30 He then asked, “And you—what are you saying about me? Who am I?” Peter gave the answer: “You are the Christ, the Messiah.”**

**30 Jesus warned them to keep it quiet, not to breathe a word of it to anyone.**

Jesus leads His disciples to the area of Caesarea Philippi, a region known for pagan worship. On the journey, He asks them what people are saying about His identity. The question forces the disciples to reflect on the opinions surrounding Jesus.

The world has many opinions about Christ, but each person must answer for themselves. This verse reminds us that knowing what others think is not enough; personal recognition of Jesus is required. We must know Him for ourselves.

The disciples share popular views. Some thought He was John the Baptist resurrected, others Elijah, or another prophet. These answers show that people admired Jesus but misunderstood Him.

Appreciation without true recognition still falls short of faith. This verse warns us that respect for Jesus without confessing Him as Messiah is incomplete and cannot save.

Jesus shifts and ask the disciples directly. Who do you say that I am? Peter speaks boldly on their behalf, declaring Jesus as the Messiah. This confession is the turning point of the Gospel.

Peter’s confession reveals the heart of discipleship: recognizing Jesus as the Christ. Faith becomes real when we personally declare Jesus as Lord and Savior. Every believer must answer this question, and eternity depends on the response.

Jesus instructs His disciples to keep His identity quiet for the time being. The full understanding of His Messiahship would only be clear after His suffering,

death, and resurrection. To speak prematurely would risk misunderstanding His mission.

People expected a political Messiah, but Jesus came to suffer and redeem. Timing in God's plan matters, and His mission unfolds according to divine wisdom.

This calls us to bold faith. In a world filled with competing voices and opinions about Jesus, your declaration of Him as Christ is both a confession of faith and a commitment to follow Him fully. Who do you say that I am?

### **Jesus Predicts His Death (8:31-38)**

**31 He then began explaining things to them: "It is necessary that the Son of Man proceed to an ordeal of suffering, be tried and found guilty by the elders, high priests, and religion scholars, be killed, and after three days rise up alive." 32 He said this simply and clearly so they couldn't miss it.**

**But Peter grabbed him in protest. 33 Turning and seeing his disciples wavering, wondering what to believe, Jesus confronted Peter. "Peter, get out of my way! Satan, get lost! You have no idea how God works."**

**34 Calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am.**

**35 Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to saving yourself, your true self. 36 What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you? 37 What could you ever trade your soul for?**

**38 "If any of you are embarrassed over me and the way I'm leading you when you get around your fickle and unfocused friends, know that you'll be an even greater embarrassment to the Son of Man when he arrives in all the splendor of God, his Father, with an army of the holy angels."**

Jesus begins to openly reveal the path ahead. He speaks of His suffering, rejection, death, and resurrection. This is the first clear prediction of His mission as the suffering Messiah.

He reveals the necessity of His suffering and death reveals that redemption comes through sacrifice, not earthly triumph. This teaches that the cross is

central to God's plan, and resurrection follows obedience to the Father's will. He speaks openly and without parables or hidden meaning. Peter in his carnal mind is unable to accept this revelation and rebukes Jesus. Human perspective clashes with God's plan. We learn that true faith requires submission, not the reshaping of God's plan to fit our carnal expectations.

Jesus rebukes Peter strongly, calling out the influence behind his words. By resisting the cross, Peter echoes the temptation of Satan. Jesus makes it clear that human concerns cannot override God's will.

The rebuke shows the seriousness of opposing God's plan. To reject the cross is to align with Satan's agenda rather than God's purpose. This emphasizes the importance of setting our minds on God's concerns, not on human comfort or ambition.

Following Jesus means

- self-denial,
- taking up the cross,
- and walking in obedience.

The path of Christ is one of sacrifice and surrender.

When we think about discipleship it is not about convenience but about costly commitment. To take up the cross means

- to embrace sacrifice,
- suffering,
- and loyalty to Christ above self.

The essence of following Jesus is full surrender to His will, even when it requires pain.

Those who cling to self-preservation will lose everything, but those who surrender for Christ will gain true life. Eternal salvation outweighs temporary security.

To lose life is not about destruction but about surrender. True life is found only in Christ, and it comes by giving up control and trusting Him fully. The gospel demands sacrifice but promises eternal reward.

Earthly gain is worthless if it costs one's soul. The soul's eternal destiny is more important than worldly success.

- No wealth,
- power,
- or achievement can compensate for the loss of the soul.

It challenges us to examine where our priorities truly lie and to treasure eternal life above all else. Jesus stresses that nothing can buy back a lost soul. No payment, effort, or trade can redeem what has been forfeited. Only His sacrifice can provide salvation.

The soul's value is beyond measure. Once lost, it cannot be redeemed by human means. This reminds us of the futility of relying on wealth or works and points us to the necessity of Christ's redemption alone.

Jesus concludes with a warning about loyalty and boldness. Those who are ashamed of Him will face His rejection at His return. Faithfulness determines our standing in eternity.

This reveals the seriousness of confessing Christ before others. Shame toward Christ leads to eternal loss, but courage in faith leads to eternal honor. It challenges us to live unashamed of the gospel in a world that rejects it.

You are to embrace the cost of discipleship. Following Jesus requires surrender, sacrifice, and boldness. It is not an easy path, but it is the only one that leads to life.

I encourage each of us to weigh the value of our soul against the temporary pleasures of this world. Choosing Christ means denying yourself, taking up your cross, and living unashamed of Him. The reward is eternal life in His presence. I choose to be a follower of Christ.

This chapter of Mark 8 bridged miracles with spiritual insight, revealing Jesus' identity, His compassion and demands of true discipleship. While challenging us to trust in God's provision, recognizing Jesus as the Messiah, and truly embracing the cost of following Him in our daily lives. Discipleship!

We, got to see beyond our physical needs and understand the deeper spiritual truths of our faith, our obedience and our commitment to Christ.

References:

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