

Mark 8:1 ¶ In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and saith unto them,

Mark 8:2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:

Mark 8:3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

In this snapshot, Mark shares yet another time when Jesus miraculously feeds a multitude. It is noted that these people had been with Jesus three days, listening to him teach. They had run out of food. He didn't want to send them away because He knew that many would faint along the way for lack of nourishment because they had come so far to see and hear Him.

Mark 8:4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness?

Mark 8:5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

Mark 8:6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before *them*; and they did set *them* before the people.

Mark 8:7 And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them*.

Mark 8:8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets.

Mark 8:9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

The disciples failed in yet another opportunity to show that they had grown in their faith. The disciples responded to Jesus' remarks by asking how they could possibly feed so many people there in the wilderness. Wouldn't you think that they would have remembered the feeding of the 5,000?

Sometimes when I am reading, I can't help but think about how patient Jesus was with His disciples. To my shame, I haven't always shown that kind of patience to others. I am so thankful that the LORD is far more patient with me than I have proven to be with others. I am so thank that He loves me unconditionally!

Once again Jesus asked them how many loaves of bread were available; they answered seven. He commanded the people to sit down on the ground and took the seven loaves, giving thanks for them. He then broke the bread and gave it to His disciples to give to the people. I even have a hard time trying to picture this in my mind. Did Jesus break all the bread into baskets or did He break a part of a loaf and then give it to the disciples to begin sharing by breaking off a piece of a never-ending loaf to each person? It doesn't really matter how; it's simply amazing!

They had also collected a few fish, so He gave thanks for those as well and commanded that they distribute that as well. Everyone ate until he was satisfied, and they gathered seven baskets of leftovers. Mark notes that He fed about 4000

(men, not counting women and children—per Matthew) before sending them away.

It occurred to me as I was reading that Jesus always gave the bread to His disciples to give to the people. It reminded me of this verse in Luke.

Luke 4:4 "And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

Just as Jesus gave to the disciples to feed the people, He gives to us the truth of His word and expects us to share it with those in need of its life-saving message.

I almost forgot to note that these people stayed with Jesus for three days to hear Him teach. I am sure this required personal sacrifice of some sort by each person—certainly of their time and comfort. It made me think about how much we value our time with the LORD. How much are we willing to sacrifice to spend time in reading and meditating on His word and in fellowship with Him in worship and prayer?

Mark 8:10 ¶ And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

Mark 8:11 And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

Mark 8:12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

Mark 8:13 And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

After feeding the 4000, Jesus and His disciples got into a ship and headed to the area of Dalmanutha at Magdala (according to Matthew).

It's always amazing how quickly the Pharisees (and Sadducees, according to Matthew) show up on the scene. This time they tried to tempt (test, prove) Jesus by asking Him for a sign from heaven, a specific kind of miracle (to prove He was the Messiah I assume).

Jesus sighed deeply in His spirit; He was grieved at the hardness of their hearts I think. He asked them why "this generation" sought a sign. Then He said that He would give no sign to "this generation."

I think that term "this generation" is significant in reference to the religious leaders of Jesus' day. They were supposed to be those learned in the scripture. There was plenty of information in their scripture that pointed to Jesus as their Messiah as evidenced by His miracles. Daniel even foretold the very timeframe during which they could expect Him to appear on the scene.

Matthew tells us a bit more about how Jesus answered them.

Matthew 16:2–4 “He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.”

Jesus pointed out that they recognized that a red sky at night was a sign of fair weather. They also knew that a red sky overcast with clouds was an indicator of bad weather for the day. He then called them hypocrites because they could understand the signs in the sky concerning the weather but they could not discern “the signs of the times.” I think that reinforces my thoughts regarding “this generation” above.

Jesus went on to call them part of a wicked and adulterous generation to be seeking yet another sign. The only sign they could expect was the sign of the prophet Jonah.

In a previous encounter with the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus had explained what this meant a bit more.

Matthew 12:39–40 “But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Jesus was basically saying that just as Jonah was in the whale’s belly for three days and three nights before experiencing new life, He would spend three days and three nights in “the heart of the earth” before resurrecting to new life. One definition from Webster defines heart as, “The nearest the middle or center; the part most hidden and within....” I think this is probably a reference to Paradise / Abraham’s bosom with the believers held captive there until He could take them to heaven as Peter and Paul seem to indicate.

1 Peter 3:18–19 “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison....”

Ephesians 4:8–9 “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?”

Jesus even told the thief on the cross that he would be with Jesus that very day in Paradise.

Luke 23:39–43 “And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he

*said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, **To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.***"

Once again, I can't help but notice how blunt Jesus is when addressing these religious leaders. He calls them hypocrites, wicked and adulterous. Hypocrites because they profess a morality that their behavior belied. Wicked because they abused and/or rejected the truth of God's word. Adulterous because they professed a relationship with God, yet their actions aligned more with the god of this world—Satan. Remember, even Satan appears as an angel of light.

2 Corinthians 11:14–15 "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

Chuck Smith made a good observation: "Jesus did not perform miracles just to satisfy the curiosity of the crowd. The purpose of His miracles were always the helping of the helpless. He always used His power to minister to the needs of people. He did not use them to minister to His own needs. He did not use them just to make some spectacular display to draw attention, or the attention of people to Himself."

So Jesus left in the ship to go to the other side.

Mark 8:14 Now *the disciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

Mark 8:15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

Mark 8:16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have no bread.

The next snapshot takes place on the trip back on the ship. The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, and they only had one loaf among them. Jesus warned them to pay attention and beware (perceive, understand) the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod. They immediately connected the mention of leaven to the fact that they had no bread.

Mark 8:17 And when Jesus knew *it*, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

Mark 8:18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

Mark 8:19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

Mark 8:20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

Mark 8:21 And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

Jesus was referring to what they had just witnessed between Him and the Pharisees. They were seeking more signs in spite of all the miracles He had

already done giving testimony to who He was. He felt that they should understand by now unless their hearts had hardened. Jesus then reminded the disciples of the feeding of the 5000 and the 4000 and how they even had leftovers.

Throughout scripture, leaven is a picture of sin, especially pride. The sin of pride in the Pharisees and Herod blinded them from recognizing the truth before them. He didn't want the disciples to fall into such sin.

Mark 8:22 ¶ And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

Mark 8:23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

Mark 8:24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

Mark 8:25 After that he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

Mark 8:26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell *it* to any in the town.

When they got to Bethsaida, a blind man was brought to Jesus with the request that He touch Him (and heal him is implied). He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. He then spit on his eyes and laid hands upon him, asking him if he could see anything. The man looked up and said that he could see men that looked like walking trees. Jesus put His hands on the man's eyes again and made him look up; his eyesight was fully restored, and he could see clearly.

This is the only miracle I remember reading about in which the person wasn't healed immediately. I'm not sure why.

I liked Gill's comments: "Christ's taking the blind man by the hand, and leading him out of the town, and spitting on his eyes, and putting his hands upon him, and then asking him if he saw ought, are emblematical of what he does in spiritual conversion, when he turns men from darkness to light: he takes them by the hand, which expresses his condescension, grace, and mercy, and becomes their guide and leader; and a better, and safer guide they cannot have; he brings them by a way they know not, and leads them in paths they had not known before; makes darkness light before them, and crooked things straight, and does not forsake them....his putting spittle upon his eyes, may signify the means of grace, the eye salve of the word, which, when attended with a divine power, enlightens the eyes; and which power may be represented here by Christ's putting his hands upon the man...."

Jesus sent the man back home, telling him not to go back into town and tell anyone what had happened. We aren't told how this man responded, so maybe he actually did as Jesus asked him.

Mark 8:27 ¶ And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do

men say that I am?

Mark 8:28 And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

Mark 8:29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

Mark 8:30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

In this next snapshot Jesus and the disciples are headed to the towns in the area of Caesarea Philippi. As they were walking, Jesus asked the disciples who the people thought He was. They told Him that some thought He was John the Baptist; some thought He was Elijah; others thought He was another one of the prophets (like Jeremiah, per Matthew). His next question may have surprised them. He asked them who they thought He was. Peter immediately spoke up, declaring Jesus to be the Christ, the Messiah. Jesus acknowledged that was true when He told them not to talk about that to anyone else.

Jesus' affirmation was more specific as recorded by Matthew.

Matthew 16:16–17 "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Matthew tells us that Peter not only identified Jesus as the Messiah, but also as "the Son of the living God." Jesus told Peter that He was blessed because the only way He could understand that truth was because His Father in heaven had revealed it to him.

I am reminded that spiritual truth can only be understood by those who are receptive to the ministry of the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus as their Messiah.

John 16:13–15 "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

1 Corinthians 2:12–14 "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Mark 8:31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Mark 8:32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

Mark 8:33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he

rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

At this point, Jesus began to teach the disciples about His coming death and that He would be resurrected three days later. Peter didn't like what Jesus was saying and rebuked Him. Like most people of that day, he was probably expecting the Messiah to deliver them from the rule of Rome and assume the throne of David.

Jesus immediately turned and looked at all the disciples as He sternly rebuked Peter. He compared Peter to Satan because what he had expressed was in agreement with Satan; it certainly didn't reflect the heart of God.

Peter must have been devastated. He went from being highly praised to sternly rebuked so quickly, from a spiritual mountain top to a painful drop into the valley.

Guzik made two good observations: "We can be sure that Peter *was not aware* that he spoke for Satan, just as a moment before he was not aware that he spoke for God. It is often much easier to be a tool of God or of the devil than we want to believe." And "Peter is a perfect example of how a sincere heart coupled with man's thinking can often lead to disaster."

Mark 8:34 And when he had called the people *unto him* with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Mark 8:35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

Mark 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Mark 8:37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Mark 8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

I'm assuming this next snapshot comes from Caesarea Philippi. Jesus called the people together along with His disciples to share some important truth that would be hard to absorb. The points He made were:

1. Anyone who wants to follow Him must deny self and take up his cross.

In other words, those that follow Jesus must be willing to put Him first in their lives no matter what. He compares it to taking up a cross because it is in our nature to put self on the throne. To "take up" one's cross is to "put away" (from the Greek) self and sin.

*Romans 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the **Lord** Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."*

2. Anyone that wants to save his life must be willing to lose it.

I think this is an exclamation on the first statement. To gain eternal life in Jesus, one must be willing to die to self—or even sacrifice one's life.

John 11:25 "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live...."

3. Anyone that loses his life because he follows Jesus and believes the gospel will really save it.

Jesus is saying that one who loses his life as a result of following Jesus and faith in the gospel will gain eternal life. Life now is but a shadow of what awaits one in eternity.

John 11:26 "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

4. There is no profit to the man that gains the world yet loses his soul.

No matter how rich or successful a person becomes in this world, it does not profit him after death. If he rejects Jesus and loses his soul, he's lost everything; there is nothing to which he can look forward in eternity.

Matthew 6:19–20 "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal...."

5. There is nothing a man can do to redeem his soul.

There is not one thing that a man can do to redeem his soul for eternity. Only Jesus can do that.

John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

6. Anyone that is ashamed (disgraced) of following Jesus and living according to the truth of His words (and, therefore, do not is implied) will find that Jesus is ashamed of them when He returns in the glory of His Father with the angels.

Only those who embrace Jesus as their Savior through faith will be proudly acknowledged as belonging to Him when He returns to earth.

When I think of Jesus return with the angels, I usually think of the verses in Revelation, but Matthew also references this truth in his version of this snapshot.

Matthew 16:27 "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

The last phrase of v27 ties directly to those of whom Jesus will be ashamed. Believers are judged on the “work” of believing by grace through faith in Jesus for the salvation.

John 6:28–29 “Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”

Ephesians 2:8–9 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Unbelievers will be judged according to their works based on the law—not grace. Scripture is clear that to offend in one point of the law is to be guilty of all.

James 2:10 “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”