

Lesson 15: The Gospel of Mark Chapters 7 and 8

In our last lesson we saw that **lack of faith among the people of Nazareth** made it difficult for Jesus to perform miracles there. He sent the Apostles out in twos to preach and expel demons. They anointed the sick as well. Jesus fed over 5000 people who had gathered to hear him preach. This he did after blessing five loaves of bread and two fish! **As you read on in this lesson note the importance of bread in the Gospel** as it prefigures the Eucharist. Chapter 6 ended with Jesus walking on water and more healings. But still the disciples do not understand who this Jesus really is.

1. Read Mark 7:1-15.

- a. **Share with your group, any verses you find here, that reflect *important elements of Jesus' teaching and message.* (Cite the verse numbers.)**
- b. **Read 7:1-16 again and share footnotes from this section with your group.**
- c. **In verses 7:1-7 what are the Pharisees and scribes accusing Jesus of this time?**
- d. **What is Jesus' response to them in verses 1-7?**
- e. **Read Mark 7:8-15 and Deuteronomy 5:16 below. What does it mean to "honor" your father and mother? Deut. 5:16 ¹⁶ *Honor your father and your mother*, as the LORD, your God, has commanded you, that you may have a long life and that you may prosper in the land the LORD your God is giving you.**
- f. **Jesus says that the Pharisees and Scribes are not following this basic commandment. What do some of them do instead? (Check for footnotes on verses 8-15.)**

2. Read Mark 7:15-23 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes.

- a. **Why does Jesus say food, (even non-Kosher food,) cannot defile a person?**
- b. **What is it that defiles a person according to these verses?**

c. Read about Peter's vision in Acts 10:10-16 below.

Reflection: Why do you suppose it took so long to understand Jesus' message about food?

Acts 10:10-16 He (Peter) was hungry and wished to eat, and while they were making preparations he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and something resembling a large sheet coming down, lowered to the ground by its four corners. ¹² In it were all the earth's four-legged animals and reptiles and the birds of the sky. ¹³ A voice said to him, "Get up, Peter. Slaughter and eat." ¹⁴ But Peter said, "Certainly not, sir. For never have I eaten anything profane and unclean." ¹⁵ The voice spoke to him again, a second time, "What God has made clean, you are not to call profane." ¹⁶ This happened three times, and then the object was taken up into the sky.

d. How does this vision help Peter *finally* to *embrace* a ministry that includes Gentiles?

3. Read Mark 7:24-30 and footnotes. Share footnotes that are helpful.

- a. **What do we know about the woman who approaches Jesus here?**
- b. **What is the meaning of Jesus' remark in 7:27?**
- c. **How does the woman reply to Jesus' initial rejection?**
- d. **Why do think Jesus cast out the unclean spirit for this Gentile child?**

4. Read Mark 7:31-37 and footnotes.
 - a. How does Jesus heal the deaf and dumb man?
 - b. What is the response of the crowd to this healing miracle?

5. Read Mark 8:1-9 and footnotes. Share any interesting footnotes with your group.
 - a. Compare 8:1-9 to the feeding of the 5000 in Mark 6:35-44. How do these events differ?

Number of people fed in Mark 8 _____ and in Mark 6 _____

Baskets of bread left over in Mark 8 _____ and in Mark 6 _____
 - b. How are the two events similar? Be specific.

6. Read Mark 8:11-13 and CCC 548 below carefully. These Pharisees have been following Jesus for some time. Reflection: Why will Jesus *not* give them a sign?

CCC 548 The signs worked by Jesus attest that the Father has sent him. They invite belief in him. To **those who turn to him in faith**, he grants what they ask. So, miracles strengthen faith in the One who does his Father's works; they bear witness that he is the Son of God.

7. Read Mark 8:14-21 and footnotes. This happens right after the feeding of the 4000.
 - a. What were the disciples in the boat discussing in verses 16? (See also verse 14)
 - b. What is it that they still do not understand? (See 8:18-21)
 - c. What does Jesus mean by the "leaven of the Pharisees"? (See 8:15-16 and footnotes)

- 8: Read Mark 8:22-26 and footnotes.
 - a. What steps does Jesus take to heal the blind man?
 - b. Why do you think the first step gave only a partial return of the man's vision?

9. Read Mark 8:27-30 and footnotes and Mark 6:14-16 in your bible as well.
 - a. Who, besides the common people, was speculating about Jesus' identity? (See Mark 6:14-16)
 - b. Why would people think Jesus was *Elijah*? (Check footnotes for help.)

10. Read Mark 8:31-37 and footnotes. The disciples are having a difficult time understanding who Jesus is. Simon, in verse 8:29 seems to understand.
 - a. What, in Mk 8:31-37, reveals that he only understands *partially who Jesus is*? (8:31-32)
 - b. What was Simon trying to accomplish by taking Jesus aside here?
 - c. What is the meaning of Mark 8:34-36?
 - d. What event is Jesus referring to in verse 38?
 - e. How does Jesus warn his followers that their lives as disciples will be difficult?