

To whom are the ‘signs’ pointing? All ‘signs’ point to Jesus! Jesus is leading His disciples and us to understand who He is.

8:1-10 THE FEEDING OF THE 4000. MT. 15:32-39.

Jesus’ heart went out to **all people**. Jesus’ compassion was shown not only to the people of the **old covenant but also to those outside it**.

8:11-13 THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS ASK FOR A SIGN FROM HEAVEN. MT. 16:1-4.

“We think that if God just showed us a sign – a no-doubt-about-it miracle – we’d get on board with His mission. But is that true? Is that what we need, or just what we think we need? We don’t need that kind of ‘sign’. We need to be healed of demanding that kind of sign. Faith in Jesus calls for us to follow Him, wherever He leads, in whatever He says.” As we’ll see next week, even the disciples didn’t learn from the ‘sign’ of feeding the 4000.

All ‘signs’ point to Jesus. What have you done with Jesus, who loves you, who gave His life in your place and for your sins, who was raised from the dead so He could be living Lord in each of our lives?

FOR NEXT WEEK: Please read Mark 8:14-26. The paragraphs are :14-21 and :22-26. What are the main lessons in both? What do you learn about Jesus? About the disciples? About yourself? How will you apply your lessons learned?

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Lord's Supper after the message

To whom are the 'signs' pointing? All 'signs' point to Jesus! In 8:19-21, Jesus reminds His disciples of the two feedings. With differences in location and in audience, we usually refer to the two events as the feeding of the 5000 and the feeding of the 4000. Jesus is now in Gentile territory, east of the Sea of Galilee (MAP). Jesus has ministered to a Gentile mother, then dealt with large crowds, then a deaf Gentile man. Miracles were to authenticate Jesus' Person and words and to convince His disciples as to who He truly was, His identity.

There was much here for Jesus' apostles (and us) to learn, but they didn't get it even the second time around! How many times does it take to learn what Jesus wants us to understand, practice, and share? **Jesus is leading His disciples and us to understand who He is.**

READ 8:1-10. THE FEEDING OF THE 4000. MT. 15:32-39.

:1-2 **In those days, when there was again a large crowd and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples and said to them, 2 "I feel compassion for the people because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat.**

:1-2 **READ.** Again, a large, hungry crowd, and Jesus feels compassion for them. **READ Mt. 15:29-31.** A mostly Gentile audience—Jesus' message is for all! He addresses His disciples and shares the problem. "I have compassion (moved to the innards!) for these hungry people." Confront Jesus with a need and His first desire is to help. **JESUS' HEART WENT OUT TO ALL PEOPLE.**

: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."**

:3 **READ.** Far from any inhabited places, "Some of these have quite a distance to go home; if I send them away, weakness from hunger will overtake them." It's like, "Disciples, what do you intend to do about their need?"

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

:4 **READ.** Again, the disciples leave Jesus out of their calculations as they think about the issue. "How could anyone, including us, find bread in this uninhabited region to satisfy (fatten up!) the crowd?"

:5 **And He was asking them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven."**

:5 **READ.** Same question as 6:38 with the 5000. They answered, "Seven flat dinner rolls!" At least they know how many rolls are available this time! Begin with what you have. Give Him what you have and see what happens!

:6-7 **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. 7 They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He ordered these to be served as well.**

:6-7 **READ.** "People, sit down." He took the seven dinner rolls, gave thanks for them (this would have been a new action to many of these Gentiles), and He broke the rolls and kept giving them. He just gave out a little at a time, but it kept going and going—first the bread and then the fish. Again, some small pieces of fish. He gave thanks again. "Father, thank You for providing. You are generous and gracious." And the disciples kept giving them to the people.

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

:8 **READ.** This crowd of 4000 plus women and children ate as much as they wanted. Seven large baskets of left-overs. As Peter is recounting this to Mark, he's probably thinking, "Why didn't we get it? Of course Jesus is more than equal to the need or task. He just wanted us to trust Him and serve as waiters to the people." Jesus came to satisfy the hunger of any person, Jew or Gentile. Anyone can come. But the disciples didn't understand even this second time around (8:14-21). How many times does it take us to learn? Study and reflect until you do! Make God's Word and thinking become yours.

:9-10 **About four thousand were there; and He sent them away. :10 And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha.**

:9-10 READ. About 4000 were there [not including women and children Mt. 15:38]. Jesus sent the thousands of satisfied people home. JESUS' COMPASSION WAS SHOWN NOT ONLY TO THE PEOPLE OF THE **OLD COVENANT BUT ALSO TO THOSE OUTSIDE IT.**

What have you learned from these 10 verses? Jesus and the disciples then got in the boat and headed across the sea to the western side. Perhaps Dalmanutha was near the present city of Tiberias, the region of Magadan (Mt. 15:39).

READ :11-13. THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS ASK FOR A SIGN FROM HEAVEN. MT. 16:1-4. Also see Mt. 12:38-42, Lk 11:29-32, 12:54-56.

:11 The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him.

:11 READ. These negative, judgmental, separated-from-everything, 'unclean' religious leaders met Jesus and began to argue with Him. Yes, they had a responsibility to test any new leaders who emerged, but they had now been investigating Jesus for years! For them, the kingdom was only for law-keeping Jews, and Jesus had been breaking their traditions in many ways. Mt. 16:1 tells us the Sadducees (who rejected the resurrection) were a part of this interrogation.

The demand for a sign was not a request for a miracle, like something defying the laws of nature. They had witnessed His mighty works but concluded they were of the devil (3:22-30). Suggesting something like what Satan tempted Him to do during the wilderness temptations (1:13, 8:11), "Prove that God is with You." They began to argue with Jesus and kept it up.

It was a cross-examination. Jesus didn't simply perform miracles to convince anyone. These men were blind, not because Jesus didn't do some miracle, but because they were determined not to believe Him.

They were "requesting a sign from heaven when they refused to see the signs on earth!" "Let's put Jesus to the test to see what evil or good is in Him." The word came to mean also to tempt. The request was to tempt Jesus.

12 Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, "Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation."

:12 READ. Just think, He had healed the sick, cast demons out of people, cleansed lepers, stilled waves, fed the hungry, even raised the dead. This hardness of heart to Him on the part of the religious leaders wounded Him; He sighed (groaned) deeply. These men didn't need a 'sign from heaven'; they needed to be healed. They needed to believe! Hardness of heart always causes Him to sigh deeply. Unbelief lay at the root. This test came from the ones who should have been pointing to Him as Israel's deliverer.

Mt. 16:4 "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign." The only sign given to them would be the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. HE was the sign. They didn't want a sign to believe but only to discredit.

The blind cannot see signs. He didn't argue. "Never will He submit to the agendas of others when they are done in the vein of unbelief." If the life and ministry and acts and words of Jesus don't convince them of who He is, nothing else will. Faith doesn't find its grounds in spectacular signs. Remember, one of the primary purposes of miracles is to prove the messenger's message is from God (Mt. 11:2-5).

Truly—This has the force of an oath. **"I solemnly declare to you, there will be no sign. A sign such as you're demanding will not be given at all!"** In Mt. 16:4 He adds 'except the sign of Jonah'. "A sign points to something, and our attention should be directed toward the thing to which the sign points, not toward the sign itself."

Jesus said in Lk. 16:19-31, **"If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."** The supreme sign verifying His claim to be Son of God and Messiah was to be His physical resurrection from the dead (Mt. 16:39-40). Yet even empty tombs will not persuade anybody who is determined not to be persuaded. The difficulty lies in the will, not in the intellect.

:13 Leaving them, He again embarked and went away to the other side.

:13 READ. What sad words, “Leaving them...” The debate was cut off. Jesus refused to do the same things He had refused at the temptations (Mt. 4:6). To men willfully blind (Jn. 9:40), a further sign would have been useless.

and went away to the other side. They headed back to the north-eastern shore.

Mark 8:1-13 (10/2/16) Page 3 of 3

“WE THINK THAT IF GOD JUST SHOWED US A SIGN – A NO-DOUBT-ABOUT-IT MIRACLE – WE’D GET ON BOARD WITH HIS MISSION. BUT IS THAT TRUE? IS THAT WHAT WE NEED, OR JUST WHAT WE THINK WE NEED? WE DON’T NEED THAT KIND OF ‘SIGN’. WE NEED TO BE HEALED OF DEMANDING THAT KIND OF SIGN. FAITH IN JESUS CALLS FOR US TO FOLLOW HIM, WHEREVER HE LEADS, IN WHATEVER HE SAYS.” AS WE’LL SEE NEXT WEEK, EVEN THE DISCIPLES DIDN’T LEARN FROM THE ‘SIGN’ OF FEEDING THE 4000.

ALL ‘SIGNS’ POINT TO JESUS. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH JESUS, WHO LOVES YOU, WHO GAVE HIS LIFE IN YOUR PLACE AND FOR YOUR SINS, WHO WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD SO HE COULD BE LIVING LORD IN EACH OF OUR LIVES?

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LORD’S SUPPER

The Lord’s Supper is a ‘sign’, symbols of Jesus’ body given and blood shed, for all, Jews and Gentiles, whoever believes in Jesus and receives Him as Lord. As long as you understand what the elements of the Lord’s Supper point to, you are welcome to partake. We don’t think of the elements; we think of to Whom the elements point.

Time of silent prayer, acknowledging who Jesus is, what He did on the cross, and we are remembering Him.

Read **Luke 22:19-20**. **And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.”**

The symbol of Jesus’ body, given for us. Have someone pray.

As crackers passed out, **read Luke 23:33-46.**

“This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

The symbol of Jesus’ blood, shed for us. Have someone pray.

As juice passed out, Mark lead us in song.

“This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.”

Time of prayers of thankfulness.

EXTRA NOTES:

:1-10 In those days, when there was again a large crowd and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples and said to them, 2 "I feel compassion for the people because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat. 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." 4 And His disciples answered Him, "Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people?" 5 And He was asking them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven." 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. 7 They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He ordered these to be served as well. 8 And they ate and were satisfied; and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces. 9 About four thousand were there; and He sent them away. 10 And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha.

:11-13 The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him. 12 Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, "Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." 13 Leaving them, He again embarked and went away to the other side.

:8 This basket was a larger wicker-basket, large enough to hold a man (Acts 9:25).

:11 The sign of the truly religious man is not that he comes to Church to find God but that he finds God everywhere, not that he makes a great deal of sacred places but that he sanctifies common places.

:11 For we who do believe, we see signs everywhere, even in the common things.

:12 The demand for unmistakable proof that God is at work in Jesus' ministry is an expression of unbelief. It represents the attempt to understand the person of Jesus within categories which were wholly inadequate to contain his reality.