

**“How Easily We Forget” - Mark 8:13-21 (also Matthew 16: 5-12)**

Before we begin our lesson for today, I want you to understand where Jesus is in his earthly ministry, which I believe was some four years – marked by the passing of Passover feasts.

**YEAR 1 was the year of DISCIPLES – finding disciples with miracles and growing crowds**

It climaxed in the choosing of the 12 and Sermon on the Mount

**YEAR 2 was the year of MULTITUDES - ministering to masses on tours of Galilee**

It climaxed in the feeding of the 5000 followed by Jesus’ “bread of life” discourse where Jesus tells the multitude that HE is what they need more than His miraculous provision.

The result – the multitudes scatter and the disciples are left.

**YEAR 3 was the year of GENTILES – going outside Israel**

It climaxes with Peter’s confession in Caesarea Philippi that “You are the Son of God” followed by the Transfiguration or “unveiling” of Jesus in all His glory

**YEAR 4 was the year of TEACHINGS – Jesus focuses on teaching the disciples of His coming sacrifice as He travels toward Jerusalem**

It climaxes with His death and resurrection.

**YEAR 2 to YEAR 3 (where we now are in our study) - the Gentile Ministry beginning**

After the feeding of the 5000 at the end of year two, Jesus gives what is called “The Bread of Life” discourse, recorded in John 6 TURN TO READ

*John 6: 26-27 “Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves, and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the father, even God, has set His seal.”*

*John 6: 48-50 I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.*

*John 6: 66-69 “As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore.” Jesus said therefore to the twelve, “You do not want to go away also, do you?” Simon Peter answered Him “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.”*

After that, he leaves Galilee and His ministry to the Jews to go to the Gentiles (Year 3)

1. First, He goes NW to Syrophoenician and casts a demon out of the Syrophoenician woman’s daughter (Mark 7:24ff)

2. Then He travels E and S to the SE corner of the Sea of Galilee in Decapolis to heal many, specifically a deaf man (Mark 7:31ff)
3. While in the “wilderness” areas of Decapolis (Mk. 8:4) he feeds 4000 men, including additional women and children. (Mark 8:1-10) This miracle is similar to the feeding of the 5000 Jews the previous year in Galilee, yet is clearly distinct, as seen in today’s passage.
4. Jesus and his disciples cross the Sea of Galilee from SE Decapolis to SW Dalmanutha where the Pharisees again find Jesus and argue with Him, wanting a “sign from heaven” (Mark 8:11-12). Jesus responds that no sign shall be given to this generation – that is, no sign other than Jesus himself, including his coming death and resurrection. Like the multitudes, the Pharisees want PROVISION not the PERSON of Jesus.
5. Jesus leaves them, and He and his disciples cross the Sea of Galilee yet again, this time to the N side, just E of the Jordan river near Bethsaida in Decapolis. (Mk. 8:22) This would be a 10-12-mile journey – a full day of rowing. It is on this trip that we have today’s story and lesson.

### **MARK 8: 13-21 TURN TO READ**

- 13 Leaving them [The Pharisees in Dalmanutha], He again embarked and went away to the other side.
- 14 And they had forgotten to take bread, and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them.
- 15 And He was giving orders to them, saying, "Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."
- 16 They began to discuss with one another the fact that they had no bread.
- 17 And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart?"
- 18 "HAVING EYES, DO YOU NOT SEE? AND HAVING EARS, DO YOU NOT HEAR? [Jeremiah 5:21] And do you not remember,
- 19 when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?" They said to Him, "Twelve."
- 20 "When I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?" And they said to Him, "Seven." [even more]
- 21 And He was saying to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

TODAY we mark the words of Jesus in Mark 8:21 where he says: ***“Do you not yet understand?”***

**VERSE 14** The one “loaf” is a word indicating a small bread “cake” – certainly not enough for 13 men on an arduous day long rowing trip. It was the apparently the disciple’s responsibility to bring food, and they had forgotten to do so. It was all the more concerning because bread to buy would have been more plentiful on the western bank than on the northern bank where they were headed.

**VERSE 15** Having just left the Pharisees, who wanted a sign, Jesus warns His disciples of the “leaven” of the Pharisees as well as of Herod. Leaven, is of course, the yeast in bread – so the disciples assume Jesus is speaking about physical bread. The account in Matthew – 16:7 – says the disciples assumed Jesus spoke of the leaven of the Pharisees because they had not brought enough bread.

**VERSES 16** “Leaven” is used metaphorically throughout the Bible to speak of “sin” – and like the leaven/yeast of bread that causes it to grow larger, so sin in the life causes the life to grow out of spiritual control. Though Jesus was trying to teach them a principle about spiritual provision, the disciples could only think about their need for physical provision.

**VERSE 17** That it mentions Jesus was “aware of this” implies that He was aware supernaturally, or else he just would have heard them talking.

There are 2 reasons why Jesus indicates by His question #1 (why do you discuss about bread?) that this is not appropriate.

- (a) He is giving them a warning about spiritual sin and they should be focusing on His teaching
- (b) the miraculous provision of bread in the recent feeding of the 5000 and feeding of the 4000 should take away any concern about Jesus ability and willingness to provide for their hunger.

Question #2 (“do you not yet see or understand?” – i.e. “don’t you get it?”) is a gentle chide that they SHOULD “get it” by now – i.e. understand that He is the ultimate and complete provider.

Question #3 (“do you have a hardened heart?”) is a spiritual provocation to examine one’s self. He speaks here not of a non-believer’s hardened heart to salvation (though appropriate to consider) but rather of a believer’s hardened heart to spiritual things.

I must ask myself: “am I open to God’s talking to me right now - and am I so aware of God’s continual provision for me that I won’t question His present and future provision?”

**VERSE 18** He here quotes from Jeremiah 5:21 (and a number of other similar OT references) in describing the spiritual numbness of experiencing God’s working and yet not being informed by it for the future. God’s miracles for us NOW are to inform us about His faithfulness throughout our life. (Thus the repeated times God reminds the Israelites of the crossing of the Red Sea, etc.)

**REMEMBER – “How easily we forget”**

**VERSE 19, 20** That they remembered the answer to His questions about the left-over baskets shows that they DID remember – they just had never fully let the miracles inform them about the future. Note that at the feeding of the 5000 (to Jews on Galilee’s grassy fields) there had been 5 loaves and 12 (small/ordinary) baskets left over. Note that at the feeding of the 4000 (to Gentiles

in the Decapolis wilderness + women and children [Mt.15:38]) there had been 7 loaves and 7 (large, Mk. 8:8) baskets left.

Women and children are mentioned in the second feeding meaning that there might well have been more served at the feeding of the 4000. Also, the amount left over was greater (7 large baskets over 12 small baskets) – the point being that Jesus will provide even greater than before.

Clearly Jesus is making a point of the numbers. “Do you not yet understand” might well refer to these as well. “5 loaves” might well refer to the 5 books of the Jewish law with “12 baskets” left referring to the 12 tribes of Israel that were fed – the feeding of the Jewish nation. “7 loaves” might well refer to the perfect feeding of the nations with “7 baskets left referring to the perfection of God’s provision for all. Thus, “do you not yet understand?”

**VERSE 21** Today’s word of Jesus that we are “marking”: **“Do you not yet understand?”** is a poignant probe at our understanding today. There are at least 3 levels of meaning.

1. **Do I yet understand that I must beware the snare of sin in others.** there is sin all around me today that causes trouble, strife and snares. I must beware this “leaven” knowing that it can lead me astray if I focus on it and the problems, and not on Jesus.
2. **Do I yet understand that God will ALWAYS provide for my every need?** Just as God spiritually fed the 12 tribes of the Jews from the 5 books of the law, He will continue to spiritually feed the nations in their “wilderness” by His perfect (7) Son, Jesus – the living Word of God. I should never be concerned with just “one loaf.” – God is my Jehovah-Jirah!
3. **Do I yet understand that Jesus’ PERSON is what I need, not Jesus’ PROVISION?**  
The 5 loaves in the feeding of the 5000 Jews speaks of the 5 books of the Torah – the Pentateuch. It fed all of Israel with plenty left to feed all 12 tribes (12 baskets).  
The 7 loaves in the feeding of the 4000 Gentiles (plus women & children) speaks of the perfect provision of the living bread: Jesus. His person is sufficient to feed all the nations with plenty left to feed perfectly all the peoples forever (7 large baskets).

The multitudes wanted manna – bread from heaven – not the bread of life.

The Pharisees wanted a sign – provision from heaven – not the ultimate Provider.

The disciples were worried about bread – not yet feeding on The Bread.

What about you?

*Philippians 4:19 And my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

**✓ HOW EASILY WE FORGET**

**✓ HOW CRITICAL IT IS THAT WE REMEMBER!**

**✓ HAVE YOU YET TRUSTED IN JESUS AS YOUR PERFECT AND COMPLETE PROVISION?**