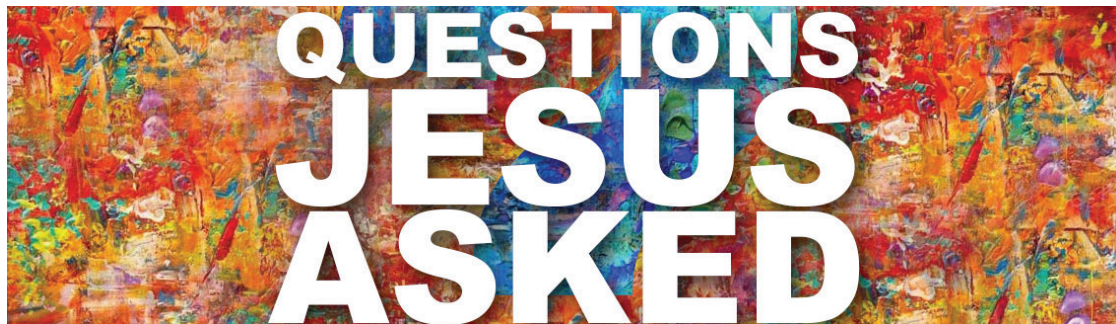


GROWTH GROUPS  
**WEEK 4**  
WEEK OF MARCH 22



## Growth Group Lent 2020

### Do You Still Not Understand?

Week 4 – March 22, 2020 - Mark 8:1-25

#### Getting to Know One Another

- 1) What's your favorite restaurant, and what are you missing about it during these strange days?

#### Setting the Context

A large crowd has been following Jesus for three days and they are running short of food. In this “feeding,” Jesus is the one who sees the problem, he shows the crowd compassion and then seemingly expects the disciples to take care of the problem. In the gospel of Mark, the miracles of Jesus often come to the people and the disciples in unexpected or unanticipated ways. The religious leaders are often asking for miracles, yet the crowd is rarely looking for a miracle.

The word translated “satisfied”, in verse 8, is the same word used in verse 4 when the disciples are asking about where they can find enough food to “feed/satisfy” the crowd. The crowd that Jesus is dealing with in this chapter are basically Gentiles. In Mark 6, Jesus brings “bread that satisfies” to the Jewish crowd, and in chapter 8, he brings “bread that satisfies” to the Gentiles.

We are not always sure why Jesus crosses the Sea of Galilee, but in this instance, it is the first step he takes in making the intentional journey to Jerusalem. In the upcoming verses you read about Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Messiah and then the Transfiguration. Both of these are key moments on the journey that Jesus must make, on his way to the cross.

The Pharisees continue asking for signs. The problem with this line of reasoning is that they are trying to get something by “empirical” means. They want something they can “see and touch.” Jesus wants them to walk by faith and trust.

Jesus is now in the boat with the disciples and the topic of bread comes up again. The disciples are lamenting their lack of bread and Jesus is talking about the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod. When yeast is spoken about in the Bible, it usually has a negative connotation. There is only one instance in the New Testament where it is used in a positive sense. All the other times it refers to corruption, unholiness or danger. Jesus warns that the disbelief of the religious leaders is also “fermenting” amongst the disciples.

The disciples lack of understanding runs the risk of becoming like the opposition of the Pharisees. Their proximity to Jesus should lead them to understanding and faith, but the danger is that they will focus on the wrong things – like their lack of bread – instead of Jesus. This section ends with Jesus asking seven questions, including “do you still not understand?” Jesus reiterates a point, he has often made, to the disciples – the issue is not around believing, but around seeing and understanding.



# Exploring the Text

Read Mark 8:1-25

<sup>1</sup> During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, <sup>2</sup> “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. <sup>3</sup> If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance.” <sup>4</sup> His disciples answered, “But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?” <sup>5</sup> “How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked. “Seven,” they replied. <sup>6</sup> He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people, and they did so. <sup>7</sup> They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. <sup>8</sup> The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. <sup>9</sup> About four thousand were present. After he had sent them away, <sup>10</sup> he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha. <sup>11</sup> The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. <sup>12</sup> He sighed deeply and said, “Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it.” <sup>13</sup> Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side. <sup>14</sup> The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. <sup>15</sup> “Be careful,” Jesus warned them. “Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.” <sup>16</sup> They discussed this with one another and said, “It is because we have no bread.” <sup>17</sup> Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: “Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? <sup>18</sup> Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don’t you remember? <sup>19</sup> When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?” “Twelve,” they replied. <sup>20</sup> “And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?” They answered, “Seven.” <sup>21</sup> He said to them, “Do you still not understand?” <sup>22</sup> They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. <sup>23</sup> He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man’s eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, “Do you see anything?” <sup>24</sup> He looked up and said, “I see people; they look like trees walking around.” <sup>25</sup> Once more Jesus put his hands on the man’s eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

- 2) V.2: How would you describe Jesus’ compassion for the crowd of 4000? How are our material needs also a part of our “spiritual care?”
- 3) How do you think the disciples perceived this event of the feeding of the 4000? Do you think they, or the crowd, perceived it as a “miracle”? How would you have perceived the miracle/event?
- 4) What lessons of servant leadership does Jesus teach us in the feeding of the 4000? Is there any significance to the number 7? How does this story connect with your understanding of the Lord’s Supper?
- 5) Vv. 11-13: How is it that the Pharisees, who just witnessed Jesus’ feeding 4000 people, are now “arguing” with Jesus for a sign? Do we typically test things that we believe in, or things we don’t believe in?
- 6) Vv. 14-21: What is the “yeast” that Jesus warns the disciples about? It’s evident that the disciples are not focusing on the right things. Is that something that we also struggle with today? Do you see any humor or irony in this passage?

## Bringing It Home

- 7) This is now the second time that Jesus has fed a large crowd (see Mark 6:30-44). What do you think Jesus is trying to get at, when he asks “Do you still not understand?”