

What is Our Role?

God wants us to see what is going on
The Greatest Opportunity Series – Part 18

Mk 8:1-21

July 20-21, 2024

Introduction

- Life is Short – life is short. We've heard that a lot, but the only ones of us who believe it are those of us over 50 and those who have agoraphobia. But I'm not talking about short in the sense of trying to get all that we can get done before we die, I'm talking about **in light of eternity**.
- Faith is a Matter of Earth – As difficult as this life is in many regards, there is **one aspect that allows us to bring God glory in a way that we will never be able to in heaven: Faith**. *Faith means believing until it's realized. In heaven, it will be realized.* Therefore, **faith is a matter of earth**.
 - Hebrews 11:1 – *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."*
- Faith Brings God Glory – The **Hall of Faith** in Hebrews 11 tells us story after story of historical-biblical people doing extraordinary things by believing God when their circumstances demanded they abandon their faith. **How do you think that makes God look? When we decide to believe Him at His word despite resistance, what does that say? What do the angels and demons observe** when they see us choosing viciously to trust the word of our Lord in the midst of trial? All of that **results in Glory and Praise to God**. It's one of our only ways to bless God, to honor Him.
- Our One Shot – **We will not be able to do that in heaven...** at least not the same way. When we get to heaven we will understand. When we get to heaven the trials cease. When we get to heaven we will see the big picture. When we get to heaven we will see our Lord face to face. As 1 Corinthians 13 says,...
 - 1 Co 13:8–12 – *"Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known."*
 - For a limited time only – Therefore it is on earth that **we get this shot to bless, praise, and honor our God with faith**. The struggle results in praise. When the struggle is over, the faith ends. **This earthly life is short**. For the rest of eternity we don't get to honor God in this manner. **May we make the most of it, that He may be praised**. This is a limited time only offer by God, because...
 - In this life...

God will **NEVER** remove the need for **FAITH**

- Recap – Last Week – Pastor Heather shared 2 incredible miracle stories:

- **Syrophoenician** woman's faith for her demon-possessed daughter. What a witty response and what incredible faith! – she took advantage of the opportunity to get next to Jesus.
- **Deaf man** with a speech impediment – finger in the ears, spitting on the tongue -
- She explained that Jesus took the disciples on **another field trip**, this time to the 'unclean' Gentile people. He did it to show that they too needed the gospel. The good news was even for people that were considered enemies. What Jesus did for the Jews, He did for the Gentiles.
- She challenged us that **our posture** many times **reveals our level of faith** – Pharisees came with crossed arms and demand for explanation while desperate people came and fell on their face.
- She explained that **curiosity is a pre-requisite for opportunity**. Are you curious this morning?
- This Week
 - A couple of weeks ago Jesus miraculously fed about 7500 people. This week we have some more hungry folks.
 - Turn with me to Mark, chapter 8

Lesson

- Lunch Crisis
 - Another desperately hungry crowd
 - Mk 8:1-4 – *"In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered [in the predominantly Gentile side of Galilee], and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, ² "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. ³ And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away." ⁴ And his disciples answered him, "How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?"*
 - ESV Combo Account – **Mt 15:32-38; Mk 8:1-10**
 - *"In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said to them, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry." And his disciples answered him, "Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?" And he asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven, and a few small fish." And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. Those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. And he sent them away. And after sending away the crowds, he immediately got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region/district of Magadan/Dalmanutha."*

- In those days, - Awkward transition by Mark to get to another subject (like, Ricky Bobby, 'I don't know what to do with my hands'). Although Mark tends to use the term 'immediately' when it doesn't really mean 'immediately' this seems to be a general opening where he's going to grab a story from the future and tie it with a past story he's already told to make a point. This one is harkening back to the feeding of the 5,000.
- when again a great crowd had gathered, - Great crowds gathered a lot. I know sometimes we think of Jesus being relatively unknown but for that short amount of time (3-4 years) Jesus was super famous (although famous in Israel wasn't really famous to the world), especially in the North.
 - Gentile side¹ - This is the gentile side of the lake but feeding the five thousand was the Jewish side of the lake. Technically it's a Gentile area but it was a mixed group of Jews and Gentiles.
- and they had nothing to eat, - We are again in a situation with a large group of people had been listening to Jesus teach for an extended period of time. We learn in a second that it's 3 days. The problem was that they likely had provision or planned for maybe the first day or so, but now they had been there awhile and the majority didn't have enough to eat.
- he called his disciples to him and said to them, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. – Again, like with the 5,000, Jesus highlights His compassion for the people. Jesus is not an uncaring ruler, nor a famous person out of touch with his people. This should again remind us that Jesus isn't ignoring us or our needs. He knows and pays attention. Couldn't have people left him and gone home prior? Isn't part of this their fault? Maybe but that's not the point. Jesus only deals with dependent people (because He's the only one who is God). They people are really hungry.
- And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away." – The people have pushed themselves too far and they don't have enough in the tank. How Jesus can talk about 4,000 men (6,000 people) with such broad terms is unknown. Perhaps the actual dialogue was more nuanced and Jesus was noting that not only did He know where a bunch of them had come from (the whole region drew people – maybe some of those who were ministered to by the saved Gerasene demoniac) but he knew that they were on the edge of fainting.

¹ "As for the composition of the multitude, it has been common since the time of Augustine to assign the first feeding to the nourishment of Israel and the second to the Gentiles. There can be no doubt of the Gentile associations of the Decapolis and of Mark's interest in the apostolic mission to the Gentiles. The units of tradition brought together in Ch. 7:1–30 (and perhaps Chs. 7:1–8:9) have important implications for the Gentile mission. Moreover, there are nuances in the language and phraseology of Ch. 8:1–9 which suggest a Gentile orientation. In view of the mixed population of the area, however, it is probable that both Jews and Gentiles sat down together in meal fellowship on this occasion, and this prefigured Jesus' intention for the Church. This seems to be a more realistic approach to the historical situation than the desire to find an exclusively Gentile audience in Ch. 8:1–9." NICNT

- Matthew's Addition – *"And I am unwilling to send them away hungry."* – Matthew explains Jesus' unwillingness to let them suffer. He had the intention of make sure they were cared for. He is a caring leader, a caring king, a caring God.
 - And his disciples answered him, "How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place? – here we go again...the disciples are looking at all things practically and they can't imagine a scenario where their team has the resources to take care of this problem. Someone in the team surely should remember this happening before and think through it, but perhaps they are bombarded by lessons learned and miracles so it didn't stick in their minds.
- A Slightly Bigger Happy Meal
 - Jesus Feeds the 4,000/6,000
 - *Mk 8:5-9 – "And he asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven." ⁶And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. ⁷And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. ⁸And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven [massive] baskets² full. ⁹And there were about four thousand [men] [Matt -..., besides women and children]. And he sent them away."*
 - And he asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" – Jesus knew He was going to do a miracle and many times in the Bible God's miracles are carried out with the basic simple items in front of them. This time it's a food challenge so He asks how many loaves of bread the guys have on His team.
 - They said, "Seven." – They count 7. Is 7 a significant number or just the actual number? Lots of people want to make it say something grand, and perhaps it does (why not just record 'a few' or 'a bunch'), but the main thrust of the story is that it's woefully short for the need.
 - And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. – Jesus was about to serve lunch/dinner and needed some organization to get the job done. He had the people sit down in the area. Getting 6,000 people to sit down sounds difficult.
 - And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them – Again, like with the 5 loaves and 2 fish before, Jesus does a simple prayer of thanks to the Father. He breaks them apart so that it can be distributed (practical), as opposed to handing out more full loaves.
 - and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd – this is a critical note: Jesus doesn't give the

² "English translation obscures the presence of σπυρίδες here (in contrast to κόφινος in Ch. 6:43). The σπυρίδες was a rope or mat basket sufficiently large to carry a man (Acts 9:25). The remains of the seven σπυρίδες were thus more extensive than the twelve κόφινοι mentioned in Ch. 6:43." NICNT

miracle straight to the people, He gives it THROUGH His disciples. That is true for us as well. Jesus CAN go direct to the world with blessings, but would RATHER go through US.

- And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. – Instead of mentioning them both at the same time, Mark (for some unknown reason) seems to want to make it more eloquent and says there was some fish too. Notice that the number was not named but simple the small amount (so the miracle is highlighted). The fish would have been dried and salted for preservation.
 - And they ate and were satisfied. – All the people were satisfied. Just like last time. This is an indicator of the abundant provision from the Lord and a tie-in to the Old Testament desert wandering of the Israelite nation with Moses.
 - And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. – they didn't waste anything but picked up the leftover and it came to 7 large baskets. Instead of the 12 original small individual baskets (like a lunch box), these baskets were rope/mat baskets large enough to carry a man in. So, the leftovers here were far more than the last story even though the basket number was smaller.
 - And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away (Matthew addition – 4,000 men plus women and children) – If we use the same calculation as our last story, 4,000 men would likely have half that many in women and children (additional 2,000) and it would be a crowd of roughly 6,000 people fed with five small loaves and a few small salted/dried fish.
- Missing Signs
 - Pharisees Ask for a Sign
 - Mk 8:10-21 – *“And immediately³ he got into the boat with his disciples and went [West] to the [predominantly Jewish] district of Dalmanutha. ¹¹ The Pharisees came and began to argue⁴ with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. ¹² And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.”*
 - ESV Combo Account – Mt 16:1-4; Mk 8:11-12
 - *“And the Pharisees and Sadducees came and began to argue with him, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. And He sighed deeply in his spirit and answered them, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation. When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you*

³ “This brief passage is abruptly introduced without reference to time, place, or the circumstances which led to the demand for a sign. The connection with the immediate context is not explicit.” NICNT

⁴ “Gr. συζητεῖν, which conveys more the nuance of disputing or arguing with someone (cf. Chs. 9:14, 16; 12:28); RSV “they began to argue with him.” The expression implies that there was a prior discussion, the content of which is not indicated, which was then terminated with the demand for a sign.”

cannot interpret the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." So he left them and departed."

- And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha⁵ – Matthew names the location, "Magadan."
Bottom line – back on the Jewish side of the lake.
- The Pharisees came⁶ and began to argue with him, – Now that they were on the Jewish side again, the Pharisees were dispatched from the Temple or maybe they were in the area waiting for an opportunity, but they showed up. They started arguing with Him. Remember, they don't like Him because they are not just threatened by Him (power, influence), but they think He's not the Messiah and therefore He is a false prophet with demonic power. They are trying to shut down His ministry.
- seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him⁷ - A sign from heaven means confirmation from God that He was legit. They were not looking for a demonstration of power again (there was a lot of that – they didn't debate that), but authorization from God. Power can be present from multiple sources, only one is trustworthy.
- And he sighed deeply in his spirit⁸ – By this time Jesus is wearied by the constant attacks and demands by the Pharisees (religious leaders). He is both angered and saddened by it.

⁵ "Gr. Δαλμανουθά poses a difficult puzzle complicated by textual variants and conjectures. Dalmanutha is completely unknown apart from this reference; in the parallel passage Mt. 15:39 stands Magadan, which was located near ancient Gerasa on the eastern side of the lake. This finds support in several of the variant readings for Mk. 8:10 (P⁴⁵ D^{corr} it sy^s Origen Eusebius Onomasticon^{134, 18}), but these may simply reflect assimilation to the text of Matthew. The chief difficulty with this variant is that it places Jesus on the wrong side of the lake. C. Kopp, *Die heiligen Stätten der Evangelien* (Regensburg, 1959), pp. 232, 246 ff., considers Dalmanutha to be almost certainly identical with Magdala, a town near Tiberias on the western side of the lake. This proposal finds support in the Caesarean text of Mk. 8:10 where Μαγδαλα is read by Θ λ φ 209 271 317 sy^{pal}. For a review of proposed conjectural emendations based on a presumed Aramaic text see E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*¹⁶ (Göttingen, 1963), pp. 154 f. and for the geographical questions involved J. Sickenberger, "Dalmanutha," ZDPV 57 (1934), pp. 281–285; P. Tielscher, "Dalmanutha," ZDPV 59 (1936), pp. 128–132; B. Hjal-Hansen, "Dalmanutha," RB 53 (1956), pp. 372–384." NICNT

⁶ "It appears to be Mark's intention that this fragment of conversation be regarded as an extension of the controversy reported in Ch. 3:22–30. This is suggested by the position of these verses, in parallel with Ch. 7:1–5 which specifically mentions the scribes from Jerusalem (cf. Ch. 3:22), and by the use of the solemn 'Amen' formula which points back to Ch. 3:28. Subsequent to the encounter with the Jerusalem authorities who accused Jesus of being in league with Satan, the Pharisees resumed the debate which led to the request for a sign. This reconstruction provides a definite context for Ch. 8:11–13 and indicates the direction which must be pursued for a proper understanding of the passage." NICNT

⁷ "The concept of a sign is intelligible from the OT and later Jewish literature. It signifies a token which guarantees the truthfulness of an utterance or the legitimacy of an action. Prophetic statements which could not be verified were frequently accompanied by a sign which authenticated the prophecy. In that context a sign is a further prophecy to be fulfilled within a short period of time.²⁴ The special characteristic of a sign is that there is a coincidence between a prior prophecy and a subsequent event. In other instances a sign is a token performed at once to verify a certain proposition.

The recognition that a sign is primarily an evidence of trustworthiness, not of power, sheds light on this verse. It indicates that the demand for a sign is not a request for a miracle. Jesus' miracles are never designated as signs in Mark's Gospel, nor were they considered to be signs by the Pharisees. They regard Jesus' miracles as ambiguous actions whose meaning must be confirmed by a sign. They had witnessed his mighty works but had concluded they were of demonic agency (Ch. 3:22–30). That is why the Pharisees demand a sign in spite of Jesus' deeds. The request for a sign is a demand that he demonstrate the legitimacy of his actions. In this context "a sign from heaven" signifies a public, definitive proof that God is with him. In this light, the qualifying phrase "testing him" is important; it refers to the biblical provision for testing if a prophet has been sent by God (Deut. 13:2–6; 18:18–22). The demand for a sign is the equivalent to the question of the Jerusalem authorities in Ch. 11:30: what is the source of your authority?" NICNT

⁸ "The emotion displayed in his deep sigh was an expression of indignation and grief (cf. Ch. 3:5)." NICNT

- and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign?⁹ – This sounds very general but context suggests that He’s talking about this generation of religious leadership in Israel. I think it’s more specific. Seeking a sign means unbelief, a lack of trust. If you want to run down Jesus’ energy, refuse to believe Him AFTER He’s done everything you need.
- Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation¹⁰ - Jesus made it clear that no FURTHER sign would be given. He was doing enough. If they were not going to believe Him at this point, nothing further would change that.
- Matthew’s Additions – Matthew adds a lot to this story. He fills out a bit of the conversation.
 - When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ – Jesus tosses back to them that they know about the weather, but they don’t know how to discern the things of God.
 - You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times – the signs of the times means what God is up to in the present day. It means that the religious leaders, whose job it was to figure out what God was up to, were failing. They didn’t realize the fulfillment time of the Messiah. They didn’t realize the prophecies that were being fulfilled. They didn’t realize that God was shifting into a new era with a new covenant, and they weren’t interested in learning.
 - An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” – when we demand from God we are putting ourselves in the role as His judge. That is unacceptable (evil and adulterous – leaving God to follow ourselves). But in this case Jesus will not give them anything more than the miracle of His rising from the dead. The sign of Jonah was the 3 days in the belly of the fish being duplicated by 3 parts of days in the tomb before rising.
 - So he left them and departed – this is a way of saying that Jesus left ABRUPTLY.

- It’s Not About the BREAD!

⁹ “There is a note of exasperation in the question, Why does this generation seek a sign? which reflects on the perverseness and unbelief of a people who oppose themselves to the revelation of God’s grace (cf. Chs. 8:38; 9:19). What Moses experienced from the wilderness generation (Deut. 32:5–20; Ps. 95:10), Jesus experienced in his day. His absolute rejection of the demand for a sign is expressed in a solemn formula of adjuration implying self-imprecation. The formula is abbreviated, as in Ps. 95:11, but may be filled out on the analogy of 2 Kings 6:31: “May God do so and more to me if ever a sign is given to this generation!” This form of speech is a direct reflection of Scripture rather than popular usage. It would be understood immediately to signify that no sign will be given to authenticate Jesus’ authority.” NICNT

¹⁰ “Jesus’ refusal of a sign has important historical and theological significance. Historically, the demand for a sign expressed the desire to judge Jesus according to norms defined by scribal interpretation. If Jesus had granted a sign, his adversaries would have invoked the sanctions of Deut. 13:2–5 against him. Jesus was conscious of acting under the direction and authority of the Spirit of God (Ch. 1:11f.; 3:28). He had already pronounced the scribal norms decayed and sterile (Ch. 7:1–23) and he now rejects their pretentiousness categorically. Theologically, 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. The call for a sign is a denial of the summons to radical faith which is integral to the gospel. Jesus rejects the way of signs as fundamentally wrong because it precludes personal decision in response to the word of revelation.” NICNT

- The Disciples Misunderstand Jesus...Again
 - Mk 8:10-21 – *“And he left them, got into the boat again [heading back East to the Gentile side], and went to the other side. ¹⁴ Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. ¹⁵ And he cautioned them,¹¹ saying, “Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.” ¹⁶ And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread. ¹⁷ And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? ¹⁸ Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? ¹⁹ When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” They said to him, “Twelve.” ²⁰ “And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” And they said to him, “Seven.” ²¹ And he said to them, “Do you not yet understand?”*
 - ESV Combo Account – Mt 16:5-12; Mk 8:13-21
 - *“And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side. When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. Jesus cautioned them, saying, “Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees and the leaven of Herod.” And they began discussing it among themselves with one another, saying, “We brought no bread.” But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” They said to him, “Twelve.” “And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” And they said to him, “Seven.” And he said to them, “Do you not yet understand? How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”*
 - And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side. – Now we are heading BACK to the Gentile side of things (although it doesn't have to be specifically the same place they left. Anytime you get in the boat you are going somewhere, just not staying there).
 - Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. – In the rush to get out of there and avoid the Pharisees they hadn't packed any provisions, which it seems they would normally do. They only had one loaf left which wasn't enough.

¹¹ “Jesus chose this opportunity to caution his disciples about “the leaven of the Pharisees” because he wanted them to hear his warning while the impact of the encounter reported in Ch. 8:11f. was fresh.” NICNT

- And he cautioned them, saying, “Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”¹² – Jesus happens to comment on a couple of things as they set out in the boat. He tells them to watch out for the leadership: Pharisees, (Matthew adds) Sadducees, and king Herod Antipas the Tetrarch (who had beheaded John the Baptist). He was cautioning His guys to watch out for their INFLUENCE. Leaven or yeast is used commonly in that part of the world in analogies to suggest sin or bad influences. The main reason is that a little bit goes a long way and infects/influences the whole batch.
- And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread¹³ – the guys seem oblivious to what Jesus was talking about and thought that he was talking about the lack of bread since leaven is used in the making of bread. They started arguing with one another and blaming each other for not bringing more provisions.
- And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? – Jesus, again so frustrated, stops them and makes them face the absurdity of what they are focused on. It’s not about BREAD! Who cares about bread? I’m trying to tell you something important spiritually.
- Do you not yet perceive or understand? – Why are you so slow to pick this stuff up? Why don’t you have a spiritual mindset? Why are you always thinking of the things of this world? How is it possible that you aren’t tracking with me after all the time we’ve spent together and all the things that you have seen?
- Are your hearts hardened? – This is a rebuke. It’s not just that Jesus is saying that they didn’t pick up on mysterious and secret things, but that they didn’t pick up on blatant lessons and teachings because they had HARD HEARTS. Hard hearts mean that you are stubborn and resistant. You make your heart hard and don’t pay attention. No one can be blamed for your hard, resistant heart other than you.
- Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? – After everything are you no more clued in than the people we minister to or the Pharisees that refuse to listen to me? You have the ability so clearly it’s your heart that’s messed up. How can you not remember the miracles I’ve done? Ones just like what I did yesterday feeding 6,000 people with BREAD!

¹² “The metaphor of leaven turns on the ability of a minute amount of yeast to impregnate the material with which it is mixed with its own fermentation. In both Jewish and Hellenistic circles leaven was a common metaphor for corruption. In this context the reference draws upon the Jewish understanding of leaven as the evil will and its expression. The disciples are warned against the evil disposition of the Pharisees who ask for a sign when their judgment has already been passed. The reference to Herod is intelligible if Dalmanutha (Magdala?) was in the neighborhood of Tiberias where Antipas had his capital. In Ch. 6:14–16 Herod had betrayed a hostile interest in Jesus, and a tradition not recorded by Mark indicates his own desire to see a sign (Lk. 23:8). The figure of leaven thus describes the disposition to believe only if signs which compel faith are produced. In contrast, Jesus’ warning constitutes a fresh call to faith and understanding apart from signs.” NICNT

¹³ “The disciples heard only a reference to bread. They discovered their lack of provisions and began quarreling about whose irresponsibility accounted for this situation. The overt reference to the Pharisees and to Herod was simply ignored. The dispute among the disciples, which indicated how completely they were absorbed in their temporal preoccupations, was the immediate occasion for Jesus’ sharp condemnation of the lack of understanding in men whose privileged position should have led them to perceive the truth of his person and the importance of hearing his word.” NICNT

- When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They said to him, "Twelve." – So, let's walk through this kids...When I feed the 7500, how many did I start with? 5 small loaves. And how much was left over? 12 personal baskets, right? So, what does that mean? Do the math, guys. We ENDED with MORE than we started with. So, that's a crazy miracle of provision right?
- "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven." – Okay, let's do this again with the miracle we did yesterday. When I was feeding the 6,000 people, what did we start with? Not a lot. Right. And how much did we pick up for leftover? 7 big baskets. Wow! Guys, I'm struggling right now to figure out how you are missing this stuff. I'm a miracle worker, I'm the Messiah, I'm God. Why are you thinking that getting literal bread is my problem when I make it out of thin air? Do you not know who I am?!?!?!?
- And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand? – After everything, sheesh, gentlemen. I don't know what to do with you. I'm spoon-feeding you here and you are still missing it. Do you not get who I am? Do you not see it all playing out in front of you? How can I leave a ministry to you when you can't see it either? It would be the blind leading the blind. I need you with me. I need you to get it!

Conclusion

- Do we still not understand? – Have you been around church a long time but there's no real difference in your life? Is there something blocking transformation?
- What are we not understanding about Jesus? What does He want us to believe, that we are struggling to believe? How can we honor Him with our faith today, right now, and this week?