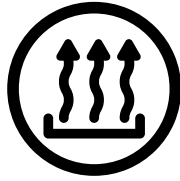




The Gospel of Mark



WARM-UP

Find a gif that describes your week, send it to the group chat or show it to the group, and explain why.

Read out loud as a group

MARK CHAPTER 7 RECAP

Mark chapter 7, Jesus begins a discussion of clean vs unclean and rituals with the pharisees. Jesus emphasizes heart over practice. He starts to apply that concept of clean and unclean to laws and eventually people by his interaction with a gentile woman. Jesus furthers his point that He is the one to bring cleanness by his miraculous healings of a demon-possessed girl and a blind man. It isn't a law or a ritual that does the cleaning, it's Jesus.

Read out loud as a group

MARK 8:1-21 (NIV)

1 During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, 2 "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. 3 If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance."

4 His disciples answered, "But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?"

5 "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked.

"Seven," they replied.

6 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. 7 They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. 8 The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 9 About four thousand were present. After he had sent them away, 10 he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

Read out loud as a group

MARK 8:1-21 (NIV) CONTINUED

11 The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. 12 He sighed deeply and said, "Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it." 13 Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.

14 The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. 15 "Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod."

16 They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread."

17 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? 18 Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? 19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"

"Twelve," they replied.

20 "And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"

They answered, "Seven."

21 He said to them, "Do you still not understand?"



What stands out to you?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary.



Compare and Contrast Mark 6:35-44 (feeding of the five thousand) with Mark 8:1-10 (feeding of the four thousand)

Possible Answers:

Compare: both in desolate places, both large crowds, unable to get food easily, disciples question Jesus both times and show concern for obtaining the food because of personal costs, Jesus asks the disciples what food they have, Jesus blesses the food, Jesus instructs the disciples to distribute the food, both crowds eat and are satisfied, both have more food leftover than they started with.

Contrast: different regions (one Jewish and one likely Gentile), disciples raise the concern about the people in the first and Jesus initiates with compassion in the second account, crowd had been with Jesus for a day in the first account and for three days in the second, five loaves and two fish then seven loaves and a small fish, less organization structure in the second account, numbers of crowd are different, and leftovers (12 baskets in the first and 7 in the second).



In Jewish tradition, the number 12 tends to represent the 12 tribes of Israel or God's chosen people while the number 7 tends to represent completeness. What does the number of leftovers communicate about God's provision and grace?

Possible Answers: There is enough for everyone to be satisfied and an overflow of more leftovers, we can't use up God's provision/grace/mercy, the first miracle took place in a primarily Jewish regions and had 12 baskets of leftovers- enough for all God's chosen people to be saved by God while the second miracle was in a primarily gentile region where there were 7 basketfuls leftover - pointing to the completeness of the kingdom of God with the inclusion of the gentiles. There is enough of God's provision/mercy/grace/salvation for everyone!



The disciples saw scarcity ("Where can anyone get enough bread?"), while Jesus saw opportunity. What keeps us from trusting God's abundance when we face scarcity?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary.



Jesus warns, "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod." What does "yeast" symbolize here?

Possible Answers: both Pharisees and Herod wield authority like a blunt object using it to control others, bolster their own ways before God's ways, and elevate themselves. Yeast symbolizes pride, self-sufficiency, a tendency to seek signs/power/control instead of trusting God. Yeast is used to "puff up" bread and cause it to rise. Like yeast, pride and self-sufficiency lead us to become puffed up.

Read out loud as a group

MARK 8:22-38 (NIV)

22 They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. 23 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?" 24 He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." 25 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. 26 Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't even go into the village." 27 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" 28 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." 29 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."

Read out loud as a group

MARK 8:22-38 (NIV) CONTINUED

30 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? 37 Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."



Why do you think Jesus healed the blind man in a gradual way?

Possible Answers: as physical represents the spiritual, it increases awareness of spiritual progression and maturation. Slowly seeing Jesus more clearly. Mainly done for the instruction of those watching! Jesus is the one to give us eyes to see and hearts that understand!



Throughout Chapter 8, we see the disciples' spirituality mirror the gradual healing of the blind man. Going from questioning and lacking faith to declaring Jesus as the Messiah. How does this gradual healing reflect your own journey of spiritual growth, coming to "see" Jesus more clearly over time?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary.



Immediately after confessing Jesus as Messiah, Peter, in error, rebukes Jesus. What does this tell us about Peter's heart/faith?

Possible Answers: Peter is still growing, Peter's heart/faith has both understanding and a lack of understanding, he trusts Jesus but only when he operates in the ways he wants or expects, he sees Jesus' identity but not Jesus' purpose, Peter is concerned more with human concerns over heavenly concerns.



What “human concerns”(vs33) tend to distort your view of Jesus and his mission?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary.



This is the first of three different predictions that Jesus makes about his death. Each prediction contains the announcement of death, a failure on the part of the disciples, and a moment of Jesus teaching on discipleship. What might this pattern reveal to us about our walk with Christ?

Possible Answers: if the disciples had Jesus present and still missed him, so will we. Because of the cross, our failures are not a death sentence but rather a learning opportunity. It's because of the cross that we can lay down our failures and pick up a lifetime of discipleship with Jesus. Picking up our cross is more of a remembering the original design and trusting that Jesus' way/design/model is better than anything we desire/want/think we need. Picking up our crosses and laying down our failures is how we are lifelong disciples.

DISCUSSION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY



- How might we, like the Pharisees, sometimes demand “signs” from God, proofs or performances, rather than trusting in what He’s already revealed?
- What does it mean to “deny yourself” in a world that constantly tells us to “be ourselves”?