

Mark 8:1-21 – Symbols: Rejected or

Remembered

Calvin, TSK, GreekLexicon, Gaebelein, Handfuls, Rienecker, Wallace, Geneva, JFB, Robertson, Poole, Clarke, Trapp, Henry, Brink, Barnes, Gill?

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The feeding of the 5000 men, while similar in some respects, taught a different lesson than the feeding of the 4000 men. In the 1st feeding, the lesson was primarily focused on Christ's **physical and spiritual provisions for his covenant(圣约) people**. In the 2nd feeding, the lesson was primarily **focused on teaching his people to remember what he did**. This is what you will hear about today.

Jesus Revealed to the multitude (群众) a Symbol of power

Jesus Rejected the Jews' demand for another Symbol of power

Jesus Reminded his disciples (门徒) of the symbols of his power

Our goals are: **That you will remember the great things the Lord has done in the past and at the present so you will persevere in the faith and bring honor and praise to him.**

Jesus Revealed a Symbol of his power

1 In those days, the multitude being very great and **having nothing to eat**, Jesus called His disciples to Him and said to them, 2 "**I have compassion on the multitude**, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. 3 "**And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint** (晕倒) on the way; for some of them have come from afar."

1. When Jesus saw the people were hungry for the Word he taught them the Gospel (福音), but he was concerned about their bodies as well, for they were hungry after 3 days.

Literally, Jesus said that if they sent the people away they would "fall apart," (faint) or "be dissolved." Jesus was a **compassionate Savior** 满有爱心的救主. He provided food for the animals and so surely he would provide food for his children.

Matthew 7:11 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!**

4 Then His disciples answered Him, "**How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?**"

2. But because the disciples had forgotten Christ's feeding of the 5 thousand men plus women and children earlier – that most remarkable act, they protested (抗辩) that it was impossible to get food for the people.

Maybe they thought that **that was just a one-off (仅仅一次的) miracle**, and Jesus wouldn't do that again.

3. And looking at themselves, they realized they had nothing to offer the people.

Surely this was a picture that **pointed to man's inability to do anything to help himself or help others** in their need.

5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven."

4. Ignoring the weak faith of his disciples – weak faith from forgetting Christ's great work- Jesus asked his disciples to find out what they had for food.

They said they had 7 loaves of bread – most likely, pita style bread, and a few fish.

6 So He commanded the multitude to **sit down on the ground**. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and they set them before the multitude. **7 They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them**, He said to set them also before them.

5. Jesus then organized the people (to make sure everyone was fed), blessed the bread and fish, and gave them to eat.

8 So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. 9 Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away,

6. About 4000 men all ate and were filled.

“Four Thousand” reminds you that **this was a large number**...especially when you add the women and children.

Being “filled” pointed to the **abundance (丰富, 充裕) of provisions (供应)**. They didn’t just get “half a sandwich.” They were **fully satisfied**. In fact, when they **were done, they had 7 LARGE baskets of leftover pieces of bread and fish, confirming the abundance of provisions.**

(In the 1st miracle there were 12 basketfuls, but they were regular baskets.)
What an incredible symbol of Christ’s power.

8. Lessons:

a. The Lord is able to do more than you can ask or think and he did so in the past! If you remember this, you will not panic when you lose your job, when someone dies, or when you struggle with your children. God does not run out of provisions. **God’s spiritual pie is limitless!** This is the main lesson. **But there are some other lessons as well.**

b. Don’t get so carried away with your own comforts (or even if you are doing important things) that you forget to show compassion (爱心, 怜悯) to the needy.

c. Since there is always extra food in Jesus – the Gospel – food for the whole world, take some and share it with others.

d. Be organized in working for the Lord. That is why we have membership. This is why we have ward elders. This is why we have a church directory (通讯录). This is why we keep records of baptisms (洗礼).

e. The Lord, when he works in the believer, satisfies his soul. Such is the greatness of his power.

Jesus rejected the Jews’ demand for another Symbol of power

10 immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha. 11 Then the Pharisees **came out** and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him.

1. It did not take long for the Pharisees (法利赛人) to receive multiple reports about these 2 great signs from those who witnessed them, but instead of coming in praise Jesus for the wonderful things he had done, they came arguing and demanding another sign (神迹). They made a **special trip for this**. And they badly wanted, not to be instructed in truth or to be strengthened in their faith, but **to trap the Lord**. If Jesus publicly declared himself to be Messiah (弥赛亚, 基督) they would have had him arrested and executed (处决).

12 But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation."

2. Because they did not come with the right attitude, wanting to have their faith (信心) strengthened, Jesus refused to give the Pharisees a sign.

In fact, you can see Jesus’ frustration (失望) with their wickedness. **He groaned (叹息)**. The Lord was stunned (惊讶于) by the level of unbelief among the leaders of his people. And something not apparently clear is that Jesus’ words were in the **form of an oath (誓言)**. **“You will get no sign from me. If I ever give you a sign, then I am a liar.”** St. Matthew added:

Matthew 16:2 He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; 3 "and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites (假冒伪善的人) ! **You know how to discern (分辨) the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.**

These leaders could read the sky, but they could not read their Bible. They ignored God's signs on Sodom, and on the Philistines, and on Nebuchadnezzar! **But when hearts were right (but weak)**, Jesus did give a sign. Remember **the fleece** (羊毛) and the dew (露水)? Gideon believed in Jesus but wanted his faith strengthened. So God was gracious to him and gave him a sign.

13 And He left them, and getting into the boat again, departed to the other side.

3. Jesus then left the Pharisees who were demanding a sign because they were not worthy of him.

He knew they have evil intentions when they ignored the clearest and most verifiable可信的 miracles, asking for more signs.

4. Lessons:

a. Don't ask God for more signs to confirm the truthfulness of the Scriptures. If you want a sign, go to the Bible. God recorded many, many signs there. God flooded the whole earth, opened up seas, raised the dead, opened the eyes of the blind, and brought great miraculous plagues (瘟疫) .

b. God is not at the mercy at anyone – to do what everyone demands. He sets the rules. Reject it at your own peril (危险, 危害) . **Eventually he leaves – as he did to the Pharisees!** One more lesson:

c. Avoid those (like the Pharisees) who corrupt God's Words, regardless of what high position they might hold.

d. Challenge those (like the Pharisees) who teach falsely. Learn to be a co-pilot (副驾驶) who is not afraid to challenge the captain!

Jesus reminded the disciples of the symbols of his power

14 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. 15 Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the **Pharisees** and the leaven of **Herod**." 16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have no bread."

1. The disciples had forgotten to bring enough food for the trip and they felt guilty for this mistake, so when Jesus started talking about "leaven"酵(yeast for making bread) they thought Jesus was rebuking them for their memory lapse.

But Jesus wasn't. He simply used the word "leaven" -a picture of sin- to teach a spiritual lesson. Jesus wanted his disciples to be aware of the dangerous Pharisees and Herod (who had likely joined the Sadducees) and how their toxins毒素 (their false teachings) could spread and influence those around.

17 But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "**Why do you reason because you have no bread?** Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still 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 fragments did you take up?" They said to Him, "Twelve." 20 "Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?" And they said, "Seven." 21 So He said to them, "**How is it you do not understand?**"

2. Jesus was not concerned about the disciples forgetting to bring food as he was able to make food by a miracle.

He had fed 5000 men, then 4000 men, likely a total of about 22,000 with a few fish and a few loaves of bread. Jesus then rebuked his disciples for their ignorance - missing the benefits of the signs, like Israel forgot before. (**The Pharisees rejected them; the disciples didn't remember them.**)

3. You get the sense how frustrated Jesus was with his disciples, especially in the way, he rattled off (快速说出) about 9 questions.

The disciples should have known better. They should have had the memory of truth just as God preserved the manna (吗哪) and put it into a pot as a reminder of his provisions!

4. Lessons:

a. The Lord is pleased to make use of “means” to accomplish his tasks. He could use miracles, but **you have to exercise** to become strong, you **have to take medicines** when sick, you have to **work hard** to get an income, and you have to **memorize Bible passages** to use them. **So don't forget to take bread!**

b. Study God's Word regularly so you will learn of God's great signs and gain the confidence to move forward in the future. This was what kept David's feet moving to toward Goliath. He remembered how God used him to kill a bear and a lion. Also:

Psalms 74:14 You broke the heads of Leviathan (利维坦 , 巨型凶猛动物) in pieces, And **gave him** as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness.

Psalms 116:8 For You have delivered my soul from death, My eyes from tears, And my feet from falling.

In fact, you will find dozens of Psalms with similar messages: **Remember the work of the Lord.**

Conclusion:

The Lord's disciples forgot the 1st sign and so doubted the Lord's ability to feed the hungry, so frustration set in. Yet, the Lord graciously strengthened his disciples' faith by the 2nd sign – the 2nd feeding. The Pharisees rejected both signs and wanted another one altogether. The Pharisees didn't have faith at all. Jesus gave them none and left.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Remember what the Lord has done for you in the past – how Jesus came, lived, and died for you. **Remember what the Lord is doing for you now** – how he preserves (保守) you through his Word and Spirit and how he helps you to earn great blessings for eternity now. **Remember how he confirmed all of these things through great miracles.**

2. With this knowledge in hand from God's Word and God's Spirit, learn to persevere (坚韧) even when things seem like they are out of control in your life.

3. With this knowledge of God's goodness in your hand, bless God. Deuteronomy 8:10 *"When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. 11 "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments...which I command you today..."*

Finally, if you are not a Christian, look at the Bible and see the signs of power that confirm every single Word of God. This same Word tells you that you must plead Christ's work in his life and at his death on the cross before the Father in heaven or you will die in your sins. Will you do that today? Reject it at your own peril.