

Gospel of Mark, Chapter 8

> Good Morning Webster Bible Church, would you please turn in your Bibles to the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 8.

- In a moment we will read several verses from chapter 8.

- Pew Bible page:

> Thank you for the privilege of being here...

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Xn: Grateful to open God's word with you today. Again, we will be in chapter 8 of the Gospel of mark

> Will not read the entire chapter today, but we will reference most of chapter.

- Let's read vv. 16-21 in chapter 8, which I *think* helps tie the whole chapter together.

- Then pray

- Then backup and get our bearings

Mark 8:16 And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread.

Mark 8:17 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?

Mark 8:18 Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember?

Mark 8:19 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."

Mark 8:20 "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven."

Mark 8:21 And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

Pray:

- Open our eyes...
- Cause us to see clearly...
- Move us to apprehend...
- Move us to respond...

Opening

Q: Have you ever noticed some things in life take a lot of focus? A good bit of concentration?

- I wonder if you have a sport or hobby that takes a little bit of intense concentration?
- Maybe something like tennis, or painting, or chess

> I like Skeet shooting:

- Using a shotgun the shooter attempts to shoot down a little orange disc flying through the air
- Ever see a shotgun shooter demolish an orange clay target flying at 50 MPH? Very satisfying!
- Little 5" disc flies through the air somewhere btw 40-70 miles per hour (skeet v. Trap v. Sporting)
- If you don't immediately focus on that little clay target/bird, no chance of hitting it
- It requires intense focus
- Takes effort ... a deliberate effort, concentration

> Some of you youngsters might relate a little better to a video game, where absolute concentration is the only way to overcome the hurdle, become the winner, somehow progress to the scoreboard leader

> That's how I feel when I read this chapter in the Gospel of Mark
— we need that same intensity and deliberate focus as we move through chapter 8, Gospel Mark

> You see, up to this point in the gospel, Jesus has

- arrived on the scene announcing His program: the KOG is at hand
- selected his disciples
- argued with the Pharisees and religious establishment
- healed Peter's mother in law; cast out demons; healed a leper;
- taught w/ authority that exceeds the scribes and pharisees
- forgiven the sins of the paralytic
- calmed a storm; fed 5,000; walked on water

> Just like the people around Jesus, we can draw all the wrong conclusions if God doesn't help us see Jesus clearly

- You probably think you see him clearly ... like the disciples, the pharisees, the crowds
- but Mark 8 forces us to look more closely — focus / intentionally concentrate

> As we move through this chapter today: I want you to see Jesus clearly for who he is and what he does — so that you can help other people see Jesus clearly

> If we focus on what Jesus does and what Jesus says in Ch 8, What will we see about Jesus the Son of God?

XN: One of the best ways you can engage as ambassadors in the KOG is by helping people to see Jesus clearly as they read the gospels.

Goal: Focus intently on see Jesus so you can help people to see & know him too

> So today, I want to show you Three ways you can help people see Jesus clearly for WHO he is

1. Through His actions
2. Through His Words
3. Through His Mission

Main Point 1 - His Actions

The first way you can help people see Jesus more clearly is through His actions

VV. 1-10

> Now we've already read vv.16-21, but let's back up and summarize what's going on earlier in this chapter....

> **vv. 1-10**

- Jesus has compassion on the crowd - feeds 4,000 ...
— generally agreed that's 4,000 men, plus women & children ... a bunch of people
- Miraculously uses seven loaves of bread and a few small fish
- And everyone is fed and sent away satisfied; and disciples pick up 7 baskets of leftovers

Q: What do Jesus' actions tell you about him?

- The world might say: Wow! What a great humanitarian.
- The skeptic might say: How'd he manage that trick?

- But they miss the point

> The Christian says: Wow - that's the Son of God who does the works of his Father in Heaven!

- Jesus actions mimic those of God the Father,

— who miraculously fed the nation of Israel when they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years

- Remember? God gave them manna to eat and quail for meat ... every day

- In Mark 8, Jesus provides for the crowd by the power of creation

— showing through his actions power that is equal to God His father

- His actions speak to WHO he is — He is God's son

- That's about all I'm going to say concerning this first part of Ch 8

Xn: As we press forward, We need to look closely at verses 11-12

- Let's read together;

Mark 8:11 ¶ The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him.

Mark 8:12 And he (Jesus) 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."

- Did he really leave them without any sign?

— Of course not - not in the grand sense of his overall ministry and mission.

- We know from places like Matt chapter 12 he's already promised a sign:

- In Matt. 12:39, But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

- the sign of Jonah alludes to his death, burial, resurrection — what greater sign is there?!

- What Pharisees want: sign on demand to reassure them that Jesus is the

political Messiah they expect

- the Messiah that will do their bidding and agree w/ their agenda
- they want a Messiah made in their likeness

> Jesus refuses to act IAW with their misguided / sinful demands

- The life & ministry of Jesus provide more than enough signs to clarify his ID
- The pharisees aren't interested in his ID
- they are more interested in his utility; using him for their agenda

> Again we see Jesus more clearly through his actions...

- Jesus shows us he is Lord: He doesn't bend to our misguided will, wishes, wants, does he?
- The Gospels are sufficient to demonstrate that Jesus is fully God and fully Man
- Yet people routinely demand something more
- as if another sign would somehow change their stubborn rebellion and resistance
- God's word provides more than enough data, information and miracles to show Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life
- You can see that as you read the gospel accounts

XN: So, The first way you can help people see Jesus more clearly is **Through His actions**

Main Point 2 - His Words

The SECOND way you can help people see Jesus more clearly is
Through His Words

VV. 13-15 Leaven

> Let's pick it up in vv 13-15

Mark 8:13 And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

Mark 8:14 ¶ Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat.

Mark 8:15 And he cautioned them, saying, "Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

Q: What do you suppose Jesus is referring to here when he says, "beware the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod?"

- Sin? hypocrisy? self-righteousness? YES ... maybe more definitively...

unbelief

- Maybe yeast = unbelief, as in, even if Jesus gave them a sign, or ten signs from heaven, they would not believe. Ergo, hardness of heart, unbelief, denial of Jesus ID.

- And there is a warning for the disciples in this, isn't there? And for us!

- They could see the signs of Jesus right in front of their eyes

— and still miss His ID or be confused about his mission

> Jesus words are a warning about the way sin blinds us to His identity, his mission, his purpose

- Indeed, persisting in sin long enough causes us to rationalize away truth,

— then we have to build a spider web of lies to justify our sin and unbelief

> Let's hear Jesus words that warn us against hardness of heart:

— Don't get wrapped in a web of lies that chain you to unbelief and denial of

Jesus

XN: Aside from this warning, remember what happens next in this account in

vv. 16-21 - Understanding

vv.16-21

- Disciples get hungry, they realize they didn't bring bread with them, they fixate on their need ...

- And Jesus is working hard to get them to focus on the greater reality

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Mark 8:17 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?

Mark 8:18 Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember?

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Mark 8:21 And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

- Observe how Jesus leads and teaches them by using two examples and two questions

— First, v.17 Jesus asks in "*Do you not yet understand?*"

— Then, Jesus reminds them of two times / occasions when he fed the crowds miraculously (19, 20)

— Then he repeats his question again in v /21: *Do you not yet understand?*

- Jesus points back to his actions of feeding first five thousand, then four

thousand, and he expects them to grasp something about Himself ... which apparently they haven't yet.

> His words & questions are intended to draw them into a thoughtful consideration of what he has done and what it says about WHO He is
- They are supposed to see and recognize the KOG invading their world, their space, their lives

> As we hear the question *Do you not yet understand? ...*
- Ask yourself: do you see Jesus as you read the gospels?
- Can you help others hear or see what is being communicated about Jesus?

XN: With that question ringing in our ears, the next section of Mark 8 is rather interesting

vv. 22-26 Healing Blind Man

> Admittedly, when I come to this next part of chapter 8, I end up asking myself - WHY is this here? Right here, in the middle of all this other narrative? Why??

So, let's take a brief look at it, VV. 22-26

Mark 8:22 ¶ And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him.

Mark 8:23 And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?"

Mark 8:24 And he looked up and said, "I see people, but they look like trees, walking."

- Think about trying to focus but not having your glasses on or your contacts

in...everything is blurry

- This man can see the people in front of him, but everything is still blurry
- He sees the outline of human forms, but they might as well be trees; he can't recognize them
- Now verse 25, the climax of this short account:

Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

Q: Why does Jesus use a two phase healing here? — we don't know the why

- But we can observe from text that the man did not see clearly after Jesus' first touch
- Was Jesus incapable of healing him in one try? Of course he could have!
— in gospel of Mark Jesus has healed people in one shot, or just with a word.
— in chapter 7 He delivered the Syrophoenician's daughter from a demon from a distance!

> So why have this two phase healing right here in chapter 8? Well, I will submit *my opinion* to you:

- I think it communicates a real, human need:
— Namely, nobody sees Jesus clearly without the help of God (Father, Son, or HS)
- After Jesus spits and lays hands on blind man, he doesn't see clearly
- He does it again, and the man sees clearly ... often we need repeated help to see and submit to Jesus

> OK ... Stick with me ... let's connect some dots from what we've seen so far:

- Now what just happened a moment ago?
- Jesus asked his disciples if they remembered how he had fed the crowds w/ bread
- He miraculously fed crowds with bread TWICE — makes a point of that

- He gets in a conversation about bread & leaven with them ...
- And he asked them TWICE ... “*Do you not yet understand?*”
- Then he deliberately brings clear eyesight to the blind man in TWO stages. Jesus touches him TWICE.

XN: It seems to me healing this blind man is a deliberate attention-getting story to help us realize we need to look to Jesus again and again...

> So let's pause & look twice at Jesus for ourselves:

Q: Do you see his compassion in caring for this man? Jesus, God incarnate, cares for real people in their real lives — including mine and yours

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45)

> And consider how patient Jesus is with his disciples — even when they don't get it, when they don't understand

- Now think about how patient God has been with you and with me as we have wondered, doubted and struggled to believe Him.

> Let's thank Jesus for his patience and compassion *with us*... we know him and understand him better as we look upon him again and again through the gospels — and let's show patience and compassion toward those around us who don't quite 'get' Jesus yet

XN: So, The SECOND way you can help people see Jesus more clearly is Through His Words

Main Point 3 - His Mission

The THIRD way you can help people see Jesus more clearly is Through His MISSION

vv.27-29 Identity

xn: Look at what happens next in Chapter 8 ... this is really important!

- Jesus asks a question that sets the stage for our understanding... and then leads to the conversation about His mission

Mark 8:27 ¶ And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?”

Mark 8:28 And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.”

- Again, this is the question before us today: can we see Jesus clearly enough to identify him?

— clearly enough to help others identify Him?

> The world buys into a lot of alternative explanations about Jesus and who he was/is

— All kinds of answers:

- A prophet like Mohamed

- A great moral teacher

- A love revolutionary

- A humanitarian

XN: But all of that is nonsense, as Peter reveals under inspiration of God

- Look at V.29 with me:

*Mark 8:29 And he (Jesus) asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, **“You are the Christ.”***

- For this split second Peter grabs hold of the identity of Jesus and calls him “*the Christ,*” although its likely he did not yet understand Jesus’ mission....

- > I suspect you know that the Word *Christ*, from the Greek, holds the same connotation / meaning as the Hebrew word *Messiah*
- What is it that the Messiah does?
 - He shows himself powerful to save, to deliver, to rescue
 - He gathers his people and delivers them from bondage
 - Like when God gathered his people Israel from Egypt and provided an Exodus, an exit, from bondage and slavery
 - That's what the Christ will do

XN: And this is what the disciples are looking for... they are looking for a savior — nonetheless, they don't yet fully understand, they don't yet fully perceive — Which brings us to perhaps the most important verse in this chapter, Verse 31:

v.31 Mission

> Let's read v.31

Mark 8:31 ¶ And he (Jesus) began to teach them that the **Son of Man** must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

- Here we see Jesus connect His identity as the glorious Son of Man with the mission of the Messiah:
 - this Messianic figure from Daniel 7 who comes in glory, with majesty & power
 - who is given everlasting dominion, a kingdom — rule over all nations, languages & peoples

> It seems absolutely inconceivable that the glorious Son of Man would die ...

- first, rejected by the chief priests and scribes
- then, suffer many things
- ultimately, be killed on a cross
- then raised up on the third day

> That's not how the Son of Man is understood ...

- So, to have Jesus connect himself with the triumphant, glorious Son of Man, and then say that he would die is a *non-starter* in their minds; it *doesn't compute*; it's *not logical*.

- But that's where Jesus the Christ is headed ... to the Cross

> This teaching is so critical that it is recorded three times in Gospel of Mark

— Jesus states clearly his destiny three times: 8:31, and again in Chapters 9:31 and 10:33...

- He is calibrating the spiritual eyesight of his disciples

- He's helping them to see what they won't or can't see

- He's focusing their attention, giving them the true picture, clarifying his ID and mission

- He makes sure that after the fact they will interpret events correctly

XN: and that is precisely what happens as we read the gospels with our focus on Jesus:

- Our spiritual eyesight is recalibrated ... our perception and understanding increases

- and the ID and mission of Jesus come into much sharper focus

Transition

So, The FIRST way you can help people see Jesus more clearly is Through His

actions

The SECOND way you can help people see Jesus more clearly is Through His Words

And the THIRD way you can help people see Jesus more clearly is by helping them recognize His mission.

Conclusion

Now, as you see Jesus more clearly in His Actions, Words and Mission, you might wonder, WHAT do I do with this?? Let me suggest several things:

> First and foremost, we should recognize our need for *The Messiah* in light of our sin

- We need salvation, and Jesus is the only Savior
- We need our debt paid, and Jesus pays that debt @ the cross ... He is our atonement
- We need our guilt removed, and Jesus does that too (expiation)
- We need reconciliation with God
- Every one of us needs a savior
- If you have been striving to earn God's good graces, hear the words of Jesus:
Matt. 11:28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
- He is inviting you to trust Him for grace and favor w/ God the Father
 - Jesus has done all the work ever needed to be made holy / righteous / accepted / adopted
 - you can rest in his finished work
- He does this through his perfect life, his obedient death, and his glorious resurrection

> Second, beyond our need... become better and better at presenting Jesus to the people around us

- Sometimes that will simply result in sharing the gospel with somebody quickly and informally

- Maybe sharing answers from the scriptures

- Other times, that may be a more intentional effort, asking someone to sit and read a section of scripture ... evangelizing them simply by showing them the claims and realities of Jesus

— & as that happens, you are showing them God the Father too

> Finally, as we see Jesus more clearly, our hearts should worship the Son of God

- He is Jesus, our Immanuel, God with us, God incarnate!

- He is the Light of the World, bringing light and life to the dark and dead

- He is Lord over creation, and Lord over His church!

> He is the Messiah, The Savior orchestrating a New Exodus

- He calls all people to repent and believe

- He is moving people out of spiritual death and into spiritual life

- He is taking a people with stone-cold, dead hearts and giving them new hearts
— hearts made in the image of Christ by God Himself

- He is making people who feared death to no longer live in fear of death

- He is moving the hopeless out of hopelessness ... and giving them eternal hope

- He is taking people alienated & estranged from God and reconciling them to
God the Father

- He has opened the door to move from a awful, dead eternity to a living, loving
eternity in His presence

> He is the glorious Son of Man who will return in glory, power, and majesty

- He is preparing a people for His return, a people who live in confidence and

faith

- He is changing people who were His enemies into His friends, brothers and sisters
- He is gathering a people who are holy, who are his treasured possession, the very apple of his eye
- He is creating a people who no longer worship themselves, but instead worship Him
- He is changing his people into His image & likeness, day-by-day and year-by-year

Q: How can we not worship such a great Lord and Savior?!?

Prayer

<PRAY>

- Open our eyes to see our great and wonderful Lord through your Word
- As we read, show us the Actions, Words and Mission of Jesus
- Help us catch the full impact and ID of Jesus
- Help us grasp and participate in his Mission
-

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