

Mark 8. 1-11

The Gospel of Mark

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Discussion Notes

What is Mark?

- After Jesus lived, stories about him spread quickly, a few people took the time to write his story down.
- These are called the gospels (good news) and are biographies of Jesus.
- Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
- Gospels are where we learn about who Jesus was how he lived.
- Mark was probably the first to write the Jesus story down.

Who is Mark? Who's our author?

- Given what we find in the rest of the New Testament we know that Mark's mother was a powerhouse Christian, and her house was a prominent gathering point for the early Church.
- His uncle was Barnabas – the same Barnabas as in Acts.
- Mark was bi-lingual, and well educated. He may not have ever met Jesus, but he lived, worked and traveled with people who did.
- We know Mark learned under Peter, and in fact much of his gospel is modeled after the Peter's teaching in Acts.
- We know he also traveled and worked with Paul, and so we find elements of Paul's perspective on Jesus in Mark's biography of Jesus, too.
- Mark spent a lot of time with people who knew Jesus personally.

What's Mark's take on Jesus? What does he say about him?

- Mark was Jewish, and Jesus was Jewish. And so Mark looks at Jesus through a very Jewish lens.
- Mark believes Jesus to be not just a prophet, not just a great teacher, not just an all around nice guy, but God living amongst us.

- To Mark, Jesus is the same God as the Abraham's God, as well as Moses and David, and the same God as the prophets.
- God, through Jesus, came to fulfill a long-term plan, according to Mark.
- He believed that Jesus came to serve humanity. This is why Jesus wanders around performing miracles and signs...but does so in service of humanity. He does so with humility.
- Mark writes in a way to teach Christians that following Jesus means a life of humble love and service to God and fellow humans.
- These are just a couple of themes in Mark we've explored so far.
- If there is one thing Mark wants us to know is that Jesus is for everybody.

Last time on *The Gospel of Mark...*

- Go ahead and read Mark 1-7 :)

Mark 8. 1

1 About this time another large crowd had gathered

- Jesus is in non-Jewish territory. He goes off the grid. Jesus goes to and mixes with outsiders. We can't miss this in Mark.
- This story parallels the feeding of the 5000 in Mark 6, as do the surrounding events.
- This story emphasizes Mark's greater point: Jesus goes everywhere, because Jesus is for everyone.
- Stories like this should remind us to never write anyone off. It's so easy to divide the world up with "us verses them" paradigm.
- We also shouldn't write our selves off.
 - Luke 15 (lost sheep, lost coin, lost son).

Mark 8. 1-3

, and the people ran out of food again, Jesus called his disciples and told them 2 "I feel sorry for these people. They have been here with me for three days, and they have nothing left to eat. 3 If I send them home hungry, they will faint along the way. For some of them have come a long distance."

- Introduction to the Roman Emperor Nero.
- Jesus is not like Nero. He isn't in it for himself.
- Jesus has *compassion* on the people. He cares about their wellbeing.
- Feeding of the 5000 in Jewish territory (one day, disciples interrupt with dinner concerns, Jesus has compassion).
- Feeding of the 4000 (three days, proactively Jesus is aware of a food shortage and has compassion).
- Have you thought about that much? When God looks at the screwed up people we're surrounded by, when he looks at us, he has compassion.
- He sees our needs, and is not frustrated by us, but wants to help.

Mark 8. 4-5

4 His disciples replied, "How are we supposed to find enough food to feed them out here in the wilderness?"

5 Jesus asked, "How much bread do you have?"

"Seven loaves," they replied.

- Jesus expresses his concern for the masses, but the disciples don't respond with similar sentiment.
- All they see is inconvenience. All they see is an insurmountable problem.
- The feeding of the previous 5000 doesn't seem to be in the front of their minds, and who knows why.
- Their response feels familiar. We can be forgetful people (Exodus).
- When God points out a need around us, or we sense he's calling us to help or serve someone beyond our comfort zone, it's challenging.

- Partnering with Jesus takes us out of our depth. But you know what, the shallow end is boring. The shallow end sucks.
- Trust is key.

Mark 8. 6-7

6 So Jesus told all the people to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves, thanked God for them, and broke them into pieces. He gave them to his disciples, who distributed the bread to the crowd. 7 A few small fish were found, too, so Jesus also blessed these and told the disciples to distribute them.

- Jesus gives credit to and thanks God for the food, perhaps because of the kind of crowd that was gathered.
- Both of the feeding stories have Exodus comparisons, but in the 4000 Jesus is opening the table wide up. He's not just providing for Israel, he's providing for everyone.
- It's easy to skip through stories like this with pace, especially if we're family with them.
- Notice how generous and others-focused Jesus is. The Emperor Nero uses his power and authority to puff himself up, and ask for praise. Jesus uses his power and authority to practically care for and love people. This is genuine humility.
- Also, notice how the disciples are involved. They're not making the miracle, but they're in the thick of it. They've become *miracle distributors*.

Mark 8. 8-10

8 They ate as much as they wanted. Afterward, the disciples picked up seven large baskets of leftover food. 9 There were about 4,000 people in the crowd that day, and Jesus sent them home after they had eaten. 10 Immediately after this, he got into a boat with his disciples and crossed over to the region of Dalmanutha.
(dal-mah-NOO-thuh)

- The miracle happens. The food is multiplied. Everyone was satisfied.

- The seven baskets are picked up at the end of the meal, and 4000 people are fed. These numbers may hold some symbolism. For example:
 - Seven is a biblical number for completion, so with this inclusion of non-Jewish people there is a compassion and *completion* in Jesus invitation to all humanity to come and be nourished.
- A plane rides with Scott the astronomer. The universe is big.
- The Creator of this universe visited us in the person of Jesus.
- Jesus is stronger than Nero, and bigger than any problem. But the real question is not if God is *big* enough to handle our problems or provide for our needs, but is he *willing* to?
- In Jesus we see compassion, and we see that he is willing to help.
- This question can also be turned on us. Not only are we *able* but are we *willing*.

Discussion Questions:

- Describe a time you saw compassion extended.
- Why is compassion compelling?
- What kind of need around you feels overwhelming?
- Describe a time God helped you meet a need you didn't think you could meet.
- Do you feel God is asking you to step into the deep end in any way in this season? How so?