

MARK — Jesus Is the King of Creation

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Mark 7:31 - 8:26

Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis. There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him.

After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "*Ephphatha!*" (which means "Be opened!"). At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

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

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

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

"Seven," they replied.

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. They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. About four

thousand were present. After he had sent them away, he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

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

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

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

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

"Twelve," they replied.

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

They answered, "Seven."

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

They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. 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?"

He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around."

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. Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't even go into the village."

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mk 7:31–8:26.

Painting the Picture

Jesus is returning to the Decapolis. If you recall from chapter 5, Jesus healed a demoniac and sent him back into the urban center to be a missionary.

When the two parties part ways, Jesus continues his mission in Israel and Tyre, and this demoniac presumably does what Jesus does.

Now we enter this Decapolis region again, and Jesus heals a deaf man, and he spreads the story of what Jesus has done for *him*.

Because of these testimonies, people are bringing loads of their friends and family to Jesus. The Kingdom movement has had major growth in Decapolis.

But this has created a logistical problem: how are the multitudes going to receive food? The disciples are once again questioning how food is going to be disseminated to the people.

Déjà Vu

We've been here before: We ran out of food a few chapters ago where Jesus distributes bread and fish to over 5000 people. This was done in Jewish territory.

But now we're in Gentile territory to a whole new group of people and he asks again for how many loaves they have. And once again, there is more than enough food left over. It's always more than enough for everyone: That's how Jesus' kingdom rolls.

The Point & The Problem

The growing hostility of the religious elite vs. Jesus is exacerbated because of all these signs and exorcisms that Jesus is performing.

And they want something more; to have Jesus prove his identity.

Jesus' sigh demonstrates his frustration with the people. He's been performing sign after sign to demonstrate his authority and what the Kingdom of God is like. And all the signs and their significance escape the religious elite.



Jesus refuses to kneel or bow to the demands of the religious elite to give them what they want. It is as if the religious elite have determined already that they will not listen to Jesus or pay attention to what he is doing. Their hardness of heart has prevented them from seeing who Jesus truly is.

So Jesus begins to warn his disciples about the teaching of the Pharisees is like a corrupt yeast that will destroy the whole loaf of bread. Jesus' warning is an appeal to be careful to who they're listening to: the religious elite, the rich, and the elite have a corrupt teaching.

The religious elite and Jesus have two different views of the kingdom. The elite see exclusive power and control and God's favor to the exclusion of the Gentiles. Herod thinks that power and control of the land and the people is his vision.

Jesus' vision has nothing to do with control but with loving God and loving people, and if people do not want to conform, then he will respect their wish.

Jesus' vision has been different from the human vision for the kingdom then, and it is the same today. But the problem is that the disciples don't get it yet. They're a little dull.

Lack of Understanding

"Why are you talking about having no bread?"

Loose paraphrase: "Why are we having this conversation? ... Didn't you see what I just did?"

Do you still not see? Do you have eyes but don't see? Do you have ears but don't hear?

- A little call back to Isaiah 6.

| You've seen the miracles but you still don't see me.

Jesus is after something so much more than a provision miracle. He wants them to see who he really is through the signs that he performs, but even his disciples miss that.

Do you see Jesus for who he really is despite all that he has done for you?



How quickly do we forget every blessing, miracle, answered prayer? It's a mountain of evidence of God's goodness, and yet how quickly we forget.

Jesus has been asking us to obey and follow him in big and small steps of obedience and trust him to provide and open doors and meet needs.

And we always have the same reactions of doubt:

- Will God come through?
- Will he provide this time?

And we quickly forget of who Jesus is. And the proper response is to worship him for who he is and humble ourselves and trust.

The Test

In each circumstance of testing, how are we going to respond to Jesus? Will we see him, hear him, and obey him?

What does Jesus want us to see in him through these miracles?

He is claiming that the very God that spun the world into existence is right with you, and that he is the king over the creation. The son is the image of the invisible God.



Jesus is the visible king of creation in your midst. Provision is never an issue.

Isn't he compassionate toward us who are tempted to worry every second of every day? And isn't he patient with us in our weakness?

The miracle provision in any situation in this story and in our lives is not based on what you have in your hands. God being the king of Creation in your life and miracle provisions and what he does is never based on your bank account or retirement fund. It's based on the size of the need that we have. The miracle will meet your need more than enough.

Many have a scarcity view of the Father and of Jesus. Our distorted views from our family of origin give us a scarcity mindset, and Jesus wants to redeem that scarcity view.



He's the God of more than enough and left over.

God, please forgive me for forgetting your miracles. He is not limited by our forgetfulness or our lack or our weakness.

We can respond by humbling ourselves, seeing Jesus for who he is, remembering his goodness in our lives, guarding our heart from the yeast of the Pharisees, and trust God for provision. Why are you talking about a lack of bread? Do you not see?

Practically walking this out, ask your community for help to walk in obedience of this. The disciples weren't alone in this but together. None of us can follow Jesus in obedience alone. We humble ourselves and trust together.