

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for March 19, 2017

Compassion For All
Mark 8:1-10

I. The compassion of Christ (8:1-3)

In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, 2 “I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. 3 And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away.”

- “In those days”

-Connects our passage to previous passages where Jesus was spending time in the Decapolis, a Gentile region

- “when again a great crowd had gathered”

-Matthew 15:29-31 “Jesus went on from there and walked beside the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain and sat down there. 30 And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, 31 so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.”

-Question: How should we imagine this scene in the Decapolis?

-This was a setting of jubilation as many were healed

-The people were filled with awe

-They ran to bring back their family and friends

-The Gentiles were experiencing that which they had never experienced in their lives

-The Jews in the region of Galilee had been exposed to the light of the Messiah but this glimpse into Christ’s ministry was completely foreign and surprising to the Gentiles

-The Gentiles who worship pagan gods were so impressed that “they glorified the God of Israel”

-The people had put their lives on hold to come and behold Jesus the Jewish Messiah

-Question: How would Jesus respond to this popularity from Gentiles?

- Last time we saw Jesus with a crowd of people in a desolate place, His disciples told Him to send the people away so they could get lunch on their own
- This time we see Jesus taking the initiative
- The disciples had watched Jesus minister to these Gentiles for three days
- This undoubtedly made the Jewish disciples uncomfortable
- NOW, Jesus states that He has compassion on this Gentile crowd!
- For the disciples, they were ready to leave and shake the dust off of their feet
- Jesus' compassion recognizes the circumstances at play in this scene
- People had been with Him for three days
- People had run low on any food/provisions they had available
- Jesus and the people were in a desolate and lonely area
- If the people left, they would faint on their journey home
- Many had come from far away
- All these factors led Jesus to react with compassion
- His compassionate desire was to feed these Gentiles
- This not only meant more prolonged interaction with the Gentiles
- This meant eating a meal with the Gentiles!
- How would the disciples respond to this idea?
- This can be found in verses 4-5

II. The dullness of the disciples (8:4-5)

4 And his disciples answered him, "How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?" 5 And he asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven."

- "How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?"
- What an amazing question from these disciples!
- How long had it really been since Mark 6 and the feeding of the 5,000?
 - Probably no more than 18 months based on the Galilean ministry of Christ
- The disciples in a very similar scenario to Mark 6 and YET they ask Jesus, "How?"!!!
- "And he asked them, 'How many loaves do you have?'"
- At this point, you would think this is where the disciples would catch on
- Unfortunately, rather than, "Oh, I see where this is going Jesus, I'll get the food ready..."
- The disciples' response is a factual "Seven"

-Disciple Application: It is here that we find the disciples to be dull of heart once again

- They failed to recall the power and provision of God in Jesus their Messiah
- The results were catastrophic because their dull hearts completely missed out on displaying the heart of God for the nations
- While God's compassion for the nations was perfectly demonstrated by Jesus, the disciples were still hung up on how one could even feed the large crowd
- The disciples' neglect of Christ's power cost them the chance to show compassion toward the people

III. The miraculous meal (8:6-10)

6 And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. 7 And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. 8 And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. 9 And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away. 10 And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

- These verses parallel and mirror the Mark 6 miracle
 - Jesus directed the crowd to sit down
 - Jesus started with small portion of bread and fish
 - Jesus Himself gave thanks, broke bread, and distributed to disciples
 - The disciples distributed food to the people
 - The people ate until satisfaction
 - There were plenty of leftovers (7 baskets compared to 12 previously)
- Question: Why this repeated miracle?
 - Some commentators state that Mark is simply mistaken in recording this twice
 - Others say Mark was intentional in recording the same event with a different perspective
- We know that God does not lie or make mistakes, especially when it comes to His Holy Spirit who is authoring the Scriptures through the various human authors
- We still must answer our question why this repeated miracle?
- The key in this paralleled miraculous meal is the audience
 - First feeding of the 5,000 → Jewish (Galilee)

- Second feeding of the 4,000 → Gentile (Decapolis)
- This becomes a loud affirmation of God's heart for the world
- Jesus uses these three subsequent accounts in Mark 7:24-8:10 to teach His disciples about God's compassion for the Gentiles
- God does not discriminate or show partiality in His compassion
 - Romans 2:11 For God shows no partiality.
- Through this account, we also learn the full definition of compassion
- Godlike compassion must follow through
 - It is not enough to say that you feel for someone
 - It is not genuine compassion that feels bad for another
 - True compassion is manifested in action