

PREFACE

These notes are to serve as a support to those studying the word with Pastor Neil Spencer. Pastor Neil does not claim to fully agree with all the thoughts, beliefs, writings, or teachings of every named source/person in these notes. The Bible is the ultimate authority & ALL believers are to be Bereans (Acts 17.10-11).

Mark 8.1-26

1 About this time another large crowd had gathered, 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.” 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. 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. 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 men 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.

1. 1st question... what's going on here?

1. Is this one of the “CONTRADICTIONS” I've heard about in the Bible?

1. Didn't we read about this in ch6, is MK repeating himself? And getting a little fuzzy the 2nd time around?

2. I mean there are a LOT of similarities in CH6... but there are a few differences... what's up?

2. Well... no...

1. The miracle, commonly known as the “Feeding of the 5,000” is the only miracle other than the resurrection of Jesus recorded for us in all 4 Gospels...

2. What we read here in MK 8 — commonly known as the “Feeding of the 4,000” is found only in MT & MK

2. Yes, there are some striking similarities between the 2 accounts — it's a deserted setting, Jesus' once again has compassion on the crowd, disciples have similar response — of... what!?! What can we do? — there's bread & fish, & leftovers of bread — & there is this UNEXPLAINABLE miracle of multiplication that can not be explained rationally.

3. Both settings clearly show Jesus as compassionate & capable — there's a whole sermon in that!

4. But, there are some notable differences between these 2 accounts of the 5k/4k

1. In Mark 6 (feeding 5,000), the crowd was w/ Him 1 day

2. In Mark 8 (feeding 4,000), the crowd was w/ Him 3 days & they were famished

1. In Mark 6, it's like Jesus tells His disciples to feed them, & to go out & to find as much food as they can

2. In Mark 8, it's like the disciples anticipates Jesus asking them, & they're know how many loaves they have

3. In Mark 6, they sit on the green grass—it's spring // do so in very orderly groups (50/100)

4. In Mark 8, they are told to sit on the ground—it's summertime

5. In Mark 6, there were 5 loaves & 2 fish

6. In Mark 8, there are 7 loaves & a few fish found after they'd begun passing out the bread

7. In Mark 6, they picked up 12 baskets of fragments — small wicker lunch baskets

8. In Mark 8, they picked up 7 hampers of fragments — large hampers, big enough to hold a man

3. Obviously, the most apparent difference... in MK 6 — 5k... MK 8 — 4k

1. This is interesting... especially for those of us in the 21st century (Cinema/Entertainment, SuperHero)
2. Storytelling follows a pattern where each section tops the previous section until you reach a climax.
3. This seems a little weird — 4k < 5k... what makes this even more intriguing is that later this morning we'll read that Jesus intentionally draws the disciples' attention to the numbers of each miracle...
5. So... here's a 2nd question — Why is this in here?
 1. Well, we'll see a fuller explanation of the “why” in just a moment
 2. When we see Jesus refer back to this miracle w/ His disciples while they're crossing the Sea of Galilee...
 3. But, there is a familiar point that this miracle drives home that we've already considered in MK
 4. You see this miracle & the previous 2 (CH 7) are strung together...
 1. Jesus freeing the woman's daughter from demonic possession & deaf/mute man
 2. **(PP)** *Why did Matthew & Mark include two miracles of the same kind? After all, if Jesus has already fed 5,000 people, what is really added to the Gospel story by including a second feeding of a smaller number? It seems odd. Wouldn't it have been better to use that precious ink and parchment to record some other miracle?*
 3. **(PP)** *The answer is location, location, location...*
 4. This is still GENTILE country...
 1. Just as w/ the woman's daughter — puppies w/ the crumbs
 2. **(PP)** Kent Vancil posted this album — we're grafted into His grace/whole world...
 3. Just as w/ the deaf/mute man, reaches out b/c of HIS LOVE — gets on his level/steps into his world
 1. Touching his ears
 2. Using salvia (medicinal value) to touch his tongue
 3. Speaking a word that maybe... maybe... though he couldn't hear // he could see...
 4. Jesus is after EVERYONE!
 5. Here's just something interesting... Numbers in the Bible are rarely accidental ...
 1. 5,000 — Jesus takes 5 loaves & feeds 5,000
 1. Which is reminiscent of the 5 books of the Jewish Law (Genesis, Exodus...)
 2. 12 baskets of left-overs alludes to the 12 tribes of Israel & certainly the 12 disciples
 2. 4,000 — 7 loaves are used & 7 baskets are collected.
 1. The number 7 is symbolic of completeness (i.e. not just Jews but Gentiles too)
 2. The number 7 is reminiscent of the 7 days of creation when God created all humanity.
6. What's the point? Here's the point:
 1. **(PP)** **John 3.16** *“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.*
 2. **(PP)** **Galatians 3.26** *For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. 28 There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.*
 3. **(PP)** **Ephesians 3.16** *I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength*

through his Spirit. **17** Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. **18** And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. **19** May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

4. The point is to KNOW that God's LOVE is NOT reserved for a select few... but for everyone!

5. And knowing His LOVE is the secret sauce that makes life sweet in a salty world.

6. **(PP)** Henry Blackaby — Experiencing God

1. **(PP)** God created us for a love relationship with Him. When you are not living your life in the overflow of God's love for you and your love for Him, then you cannot live the Christian life as it is intended. If you cannot describe your relationship with God by saying that you love Him with all your being, then before you do anything else, you need to entreat the Holy Spirit to bring you into that kind of relationship today.

2. **(PP)** Everything in your Christian life, everything about knowing God and experiencing Him, everything about knowing His will depends on the quality of your love relationship with God. If this relationship is not right, nothing in your life will be in order.

3. **(PP)** Do you realize that the Lord does not just give you life—He is your life? He does not grant you things and comforts so you have a “good” life. He brings you into a relationship with Him so out of that relationship you have everything you could possibly need.

4. **(PP)** What is the foremost thing God wants from you? He wants you to love Him with all Your being. Your experiencing God depends on your love for Him.

7. And so, may we not miss this simple, but transformational truth of the love of God on display to 4k+ Gentiles...

8. Now as soon as Jesus & His disciples hop off the boat... they're greeted w/ a warm/loving welcome... right:

11 When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had arrived, they came and started to argue with him. Testing him, they demanded that he show them a miraculous sign from heaven to prove his authority.

1. Don't miss the underlying tones of hostility from the Pharisees towards Jesus.

1. They came out militantly ready to engage in battle.

2. They are there to argue w/ Jesus, they're testing Him... trying to trip Him up/not discover the truth

3. They didn't politely ask for a sign, but were seeking to take one from him.

2. You see, His authority has been validated/proven over-and-again...

1. The Pharisees had already seen Jesus drive out demons & perform miraculous healings.

2. The really hard-hearted part of their request was what they demanded—“a sign from heaven”

3. This is a special term from apocalyptic literature, having to do with cosmic activity in the sky.

4. **(PP)** They were asking Jesus to prove who he was by doing something like blocking the sun, turning the moon plaid, or making starry constellations spell “LWJD!” (Look What Jesus Did!)

3. These religious leaders — Pharisees — aren't like others who placed their faith in Jesus or who had been seeking after Jesus & He showed compassion upon in some miraculous way (feeding/healing)...

1. They would either attribute what He did to Satan (as they'd done in the past)

2. Or according to Mosaic law they could accuse him of false preaching & have him put to death.
4. But Jesus knew that their minds were closed.

12 *When he heard this, he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, “Why do these people keep demanding a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, I will not give this generation any such sign.”*

1. Jesus deeply sighs (could be interpreted as a sign of pity)
2. It's like He says — homie don't play that — 90's — and he leaves.

13 *So he got back into the boat and left them, and he crossed to the other side of the lake. 14* *But the disciples had forgotten to bring any food. They had only one loaf of bread with them in the boat. 15* *As they were crossing the lake, Jesus warned them, “Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod.” 16* *At this they began to argue with each other because they hadn't brought any bread.*

1. The disciples forgot to bring enough bread for everyone aboard ... they only brought 1 loaf (enough?/think pita bread)
2. And Jesus says to them... beware of the leaven of the Pharisees & Herod...
3. They think... uh oh... the Messiah is mad... Pete — you forgot the pita — they start arguing...
4. But as we'll see in just a moment, He's not talking about a missed meal... but missing the point...
 1. Throughout the Bible, yeast/leaven illustrates evil that spreads quickly/easily...
 2. Yeast/Leaven is small & hidden, but when it spreads it infects the whole
 3. Jesus was speaking about the persistent unbelief that existed in the Pharisees & the Herodians
 1. In Matthew's account of this, this yeast/leaven is referred to as false teaching/doctrine (Matthew 16:5-12)
 2. In Luke's account, He called it hypocrisy (Luke 12:1-3)
 3. The Herodians sought to change the spiritual temperature of the nation by political means
 4. **(PP)** *While the Pharisees and Herod seem to have little in common, Jesus describes them both as having leaven—a toxic flaw that can infect others. Given the context, this flaw is probably a failure to believe, even after being confronted with the truth. Jesus is warning his disciples not to fall victim to the same lethal attitude.*
5. They don't get it... they're arguing... and so...

17 *Jesus knew what they were saying, so he said, “Why are you arguing about having no bread? Don't you know or understand even yet? Are your hearts too hard to take it in? 18* *‘You have eyes—can't you see? You have ears—can't you hear?’ Don't you remember anything at all?*

1. Jesus is saying — guys don't let your hearts, your eyes, your ears grow dull to the truth... Don't forget what I've done...
2. **(PP)** Skip Heitzig, *“Followers of Jesus Christ can have hardened hearts. When you fail to remember God's mercy to you, and your spiritual history, your heart is susceptible to hardening. You can become entitled and bitter.”*
3. And He brings them back to the 2 remarkable multiplying miracles of the fish/chips (Loaves & Fishes).

19 *When I fed the 5,000 with five loaves of bread, how many baskets of leftovers did you pick up afterward?” “Twelve,” they said. 20* *“And when I fed the 4,000 with seven loaves, how many large baskets of leftovers did you pick up?” “Seven,” they said. 21* *“Don't you understand yet?” he asked them.*

1. Now... this is interesting... Jesus is saying — boys there was a point to me doing this miracle 2x.
2. And you're not getting it... Jesus seems to be very intentional in helping the disciples understand
 1. That when they were in Galilee w/ the crowd of 5k+ that had been w/ them for a day... primarily Jewish ppl.
 2. He fed more people w/ fewer loaves & had more baskets left over
 3. In the 2nd case He had fed fewer people w/ more loaves & had fewer baskets left over.
3. Okay? What's the point?
 1. Was the Messiah-MoJo not as potent in Gentile country?
 2. No — so, what's the point?
4. **Here's the point — the outcome of His miracle wasn't dependent upon the material He had to wrk w/ — but upon the power of God.**
 1. Jesus wasn't following some magic formula that was expanding the food
 2. He wasn't depending on some undiscovered law of science to produce such a great feast from so little food
5. If He had been, then the food would have expanded in proportion to how much He had to start with.
 1. No, what He had done here was **dependent only upon the power of God.**
 2. You see, 1 loaf was as good as a 1k... & He could work a miracle with either one.
6. **(PP)** *So the disciples had no reason to be concerned with the fact that they only had 1 loaf when they had the Giver of bread Himself there with them. Rather they should be concerned with the Lord's enemies and the false doctrines they taught. These, not lack of bread, were the true threat they faced.*
7. **(PP)** *This miracle of the feeding of the multitude was performed twice. Moreover, there was a reason it was performed twice. Through its repetition, the Lord taught an important lesson about Himself and His power to the disciples that He couldn't have taught them if He had worked this miracle only once. Working this miracle twice served a Divine purpose, and that is the reason it was repeated.*
8. Here's the POINT — **TRUST GOD!**
 1. The feeding of the 5k & 4k had not come home for these disciples. Jesus' work had not saturated their minds. The past performance of Jesus should have stimulated their future faith.
 2. **(PP)** *We would all benefit from setting our minds on God's past care for us. Sorrows came -- and you are still standing. Financial pressures pressed, and you got through. Sickness arrived, and you endured. Temptations assailed, and you still received God's grace. Jesus' faithfulness in the past should help us endure our current season.*
9. And here's what to be leery of... to watch out for... unbelief. Not trusting God... it's like leaven — small & hidden — but when it spreads it infects the whole life...
 1. At the risk of being accused of reading too much Bible in church... I'd like to read to you the words of Jesus
 2. Hold these words in light of the warning of Jesus to not fall into unbelief... being dependent upon the material instead of depending upon the miracle maker to whom 1 loaf of bread is the same as 1k...
10. **Matthew 6.19-34**
 1. **19** *“Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. **20** Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. **21** Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.*
 2. **22** *“Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with*

light. 23 But when your eye is unhealthy, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!

3. **24** *“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.*

4. **25** *“That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? **26** Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? **27** Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?*

5. **28** *“And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, **29** yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. **30** And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?*

6. **31** *“So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ **32** These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. **33** Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.*

7. **34** *“So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.*

11. Church — what’s the take-a-way — **TRUST GOD**... He’s worthy of your trust...

12. Well... as we close we see Mark give another — unique to his gospel — account of healing... & it’s interesting how in context... this miracle pairs w/ this important lesson & how the disciples are slow-to-get-it.

22 *When they arrived at Bethsaida, some people brought a blind man to Jesus, and they begged him to touch the man and heal him. **23** Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. Then, spitting on the man’s eyes, he laid his hands on him and asked, “Can you see anything now?”*

1. Isn’t this thought-provoking ... how similar this is to the miracle we read about in ch7 — deaf/mute man...

2. Crowd is there — ppl bring the man to Jesus — begging Him to heal Jesus gets the guy one-on-one... so to speak...

3. And once again... life-giving loogies — Jesus spits on his eyes — (salvia/medicinal value)

4. But Jesus asks — Is it working? — Can you see?

24 *The man looked around. “Yes,” he said, “I see people, but I can’t see them very clearly. They look like trees walking around.” **25** Then Jesus placed his hands on the man’s eyes again, and his eyes were opened. His sight was completely restored, and he could see everything clearly. **26** Jesus sent him away, saying, “Don’t go back into the village on your way home.”*

1. I mean 1st & foremost this is miraculous — Pharisees, you want a sign — look at what Jesus can do w/ His spit...

1. This man is healed

2. Couldn’t see... now He can... is that the point of the placement of this miracle here?

2. Something extremely significant about this miracle is that it is the only one in which the healing is progressive/stages:

1. First, the man's vision was blurred, & people looked like walking trees

2. Second, after Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again, he saw everything clearly

3. Here's what I'd say about that... Mark placing this miracle right here in this narrative is very intentional for 2 reasons
 1. The disciples were guilty of spiritual blindness.
 2. Remember Jesus asked them... "Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?"
 3. They weren't seeing what Jesus wanted them to see — He said ... listen, be leery of... watch out for... unbelief.
 4. Not trusting God... it's like leaven (small & hidden) but when it spreads it infects your whole life...
 5. The point — TRUST GOD — and they're slow to get it...
4. But also... due to our time this morning we won't be studying the rest of ch8... as you read the next few verses...
 1. We step into a section of this gospel that some scholars would call the continental divide of the Gospel of Mark
 2. The disciples will confess Jesus as the Christ — it's one of the most powerful sections of this entire gospel!
 3. But they'll also make mistakes about how they understand Jesus' mission.
 4. It's like they see Jesus partly, but Jesus is working hard to give them full vision, to see Him correctly.
5. Isn't that the case w/ many of us?
 1. It reminds me of the importance of these lyrics from this old hymn
 2. Turn your eyes upon Jesus... Look full in His wonderful face
 3. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory & grace.

CONCLUSION & APPLICATION

1. As we close this morning, I pray that we can allow these truths from God's Word to form the foundation of our lives:
 1. God **LOVES** us — JEW & GENTILE... feeding 4k... it's about all of us — *knowing His LOVE is the secret sauce that makes life sweet in a salty world.*
 2. God's LOVE should lead to **TRUST** in **GOD** — *remember the outcome of His miracles weren't dependent upon the material He had to wrk w/... but upon the power of God.*
 3. May we keep our eyes on Him... that's how we see everything else clearly in life ...
2. Let's reach out to Him in FAITH for ANY/EVERYTHING we need!
3. I want to encourage you this morning to make the most of this SUNDAY
 1. Sundays — Gather together to LOVE & WORSHIP God
 2. To **sing**, To **give**, To **serve**, To **learn**, To **pray**, To **fellowship**
 3. Don't let church start/stop — singing/sitting
 4. We're going to close in chorus — even a benediction (prayer/song of blessing) over one another...
4. But here's how I want to encourage you:
 1. I believe it's important in a church gathering to squeeze every ounce of purpose out of it...
 2. I hope you're benefiting from the value of — **Singing, Giving, Serving, Learning** together this morning...
 3. But, also — **FELLOWSHIPPING** together + **PRAYING** w/ & for one another.
 1. Some of us need a reminder to **LOVE** + **TRUST** God / sermon helpful / fellowship so helpful!
 2. Prayer Teams — If you do not know Jesus as your Lord/Savior — I want you to experience this God of LOVE & only one worthy of your TRUST — surrender your life to Him.
 3. Receive encouragement from one another by being prayed for & hanging together in fellowship!
5. We could all do w/ fellowship/prayer that encourages us to trust God, know His love, & to keep our eyes on Him!