

“How many loaves do you have?”

A. Sermon in a Sentence: *God may repeat his lessons in our lives until faith is our first thought.*

B. Context of Mark 8:1-10 & Comparison of the Feeding of the 5000 and the 4000

Jesus has crossed back to the southeast area around the Sea of Galilee, the Gentile region of the Decapolis, where his popularity has greatly risen following several notable healings. The Jewish crowds who ate at the previous multiplication of the loaves and fishes (Mark 6) are left behind on the northwest shore of Galilee, disgruntled because Jesus has called them to true discipleship around his body and blood, versus being their new pet Moses miracle-maker.

After three days of intense teaching among the spiritually hungry crowds, Jesus expresses compassion for these now physically hungry people. He turns to his disciples and gives them the chance to respond in faith, especially now that they have already experienced the miraculous lesson of his feeding of the 5000. Like many of us who need repeat lessons from God, the disciples are again short-sighted and considering only natural resources and human abilities in their evaluation.

FEEDING 5000 +

- Found in Mt 14:13-21, Mk 6:30-44, Lk 9:10-17, Jn 6:1-24
- Feeds a Jewish crowd
- **5** and **12** highlighted
- 5 books of the Pentateuch
- 12 tribes of Israel (sit in groups, as with Moses)

FEEDING 4000 +

- Found in Mt 15:29-39, Mk 8:1-9, 19-20
- Feeds a Gentile crowd
- **7** highlighted
- 7 symbolizes completeness & the fullness of humanity – not just the Jews

C. TODAY'S BIBLE PASSAGE: Mark 8:1-10 (ESV)

¹ 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.”

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.”

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.

D. Lessons from Jesus' Question & the Miracle of Feeding the 4000

1. Jesus carefully chooses His words to us for maximum spiritual impact.

Q: What Scripture insights, godly counsel, or nudges from the Spirit has God been choosing especially for you?

2. Jesus knows our internal biases and systematically clears them for His glory to be seen.

Q: What are your biases about to whom the Gospel is available? What other biases negatively affect your faith?

3. Whenever we face challenges, our first thought and reaction are an indicator of how we need to grow in our relationship with Christ.

Q: What hurts, trials, disappointments, or distractions are you facing and how well do you let Jesus and your faith in Him lead you? Ask the Lord for insight about the roots of your reactions, and for His strength and conviction to enable you to grow in these.

LIFE APPLICATION STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What lessons have you had to learn multiple times before you grasped them fully?
2. How has God showed his compassion to you recently?
3. How is God giving you your "daily bread" (basic human needs) in his perfect timing?
4. How is your calling in life bigger than your human resources can manage? How has God provided miraculously to make up this gap?
5. What steps of faith are God nudging you to make in the next few weeks? How can others pray for you in this process?