

STONE HARBOR

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How Jesus Lived Amongst Us

Mark 8:1-26

Series: Who Jesus Is and Why He Matters
Topic: Discipleship (Training)

INTRODUCTION

Summer Job at Kualoa Ranch

- Chasing bull.
- Stubborn.
- Abraham Akau had to hit him again to get him where he wanted him.
- We are not too different from that stubborn bull.
- We are thick headed especially when it comes to understanding spiritual truth.
- We need to be “hit” again.
- But instead of hitting us between the eyes with a 4 inch steel pipe, God came to mankind time and time again each time adding stokes to a picture that was ultimately complete in Jesus Christ – love personified, God the Teacher walking living amongst us.

The passage before us today is Mark 8:1-26.

If there is one thought that comes through this passage it is that the disciples of Jesus did not get/understand who Jesus was or what He wanted them to know. So Jesus “hits” them again. He demonstrates again who He is and He teaches them again what He wants them to know.

Let’s read the passage that gives us four events in the life of Jesus as He lived amongst us. After we have read them all we will come back and for each we will look at the event itself, what it reveals about who Jesus is, and how Jesus used the event to train His disciples.

Mark 8:1-26

Prayer for the reading of the wordl. Jesus with the Multitudes

A. What He Did

1. Repeated Similar Miraculous Feeding a 2nd Time w/ Similar Elements
 - 8:1 “again”; He felt compassion; He engaged His disciples to meet the need of the hungry; He had His disciples inventory their resources and bring them to Him; He seated the multitude (as people dependent on another to bring them food); He gave thanks, broke the bread and gave the broken-bread to the disciples to give to the people; His provision satisfied the hungry; He sent them away.
2. New/Different
 - He called His disciples (instead of His disciples initiating and telling Him to send the multitudes away so they could get something to eat). They may have thought, “I’m not telling Him to send them away again. I made that mistake once and He had us feed 5,000. Let’s just lay low.” Maybe they were learning something.
 - 7 loaves/baskets of left-overs (instead of 12) – Some have postulated that the 12 loaves of the first feeding were symbolic of the 12 tribes of Israel to whom Jesus came first as Savior and King; and that the 7 loaves of this feeding are symbolic of the Gentiles to whom the gospel is now being extended. This certainly fits coming on the heels of Jesus delivering the Gentile woman’s daughter and healing the deaf-mute in Gentile territory. Seven is also seen as the number of completion and could be taken in general to signify that which was done in part in the past is now fulfilled in Christ.

B. Who He Is (John 6:28-29, 40 ...behold the Son and believe in Him...)

- He is the One with compassion who meets the needs of the multitudes in miraculous ways through His disciples.
- Looking Back at OT:
 - He is the good shepherd of Ezek 34 who cares for His sheep.
 - He is God’s provision a better type of mana in the wilderness (Ex 16:4).
- Looking Forward in NT:
 - He taught: He is the Bread of Life all who believe in Him (= eat Him) “will live forever” – (John 6, esp. vv. 47-51)
 - He demonstrated: in His own “breaking” on the cross – the whole “bread” being broken so that it might give eternal nourishment for all who would eat = believe. (cf. 1 Cor 11:23-34)

C. How He Trained Us

- By again placing His plan/wisdom and our plan/wisdom in contrast He trains us to lay our plan aside and follow His better plan
- By Repetition Jesus Trained us to: bring what we have to Him, knowing that He will bring it to God for His blessing and then give it back to us multiplied so that we can serve the people He has called us to minister to.
- By modeling Jesus showed us what James later taught on the type of faith God wants us to exercise: James 2:15-17 esp. v.16

- By type/antitype he pictured and “re-pictured” Himself as the bread and even this morning is training us: Johnny/Stone Harbor: Give the hungry in your reach Jesus Himself; He is the ultimate broken-bread who alone can satisfy completely. Give them Jesus.

II. ***Jesus with the Pharisees***

A. **What He Did – Better: What He did NOT do!**

- He did **NOT** shy away from conflict with the religious leaders of the day
- He did **NOT** give them a sign like they wanted – He had already given them signs! Taken together, his miraculous actions painted a clear picture that He was the Christ. Even when John the Baptist understandably and with the best of motives asked Jesus for clarification:
Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you hear and see: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.” Mat 11:4-5 NASB

B. **Who He Is – Better: Who He is NOT** (John 6:28-29, 40 ...behold the Son and believe in Him...)

- He is **NOT** one to be argued with – He does not give in to the argumentative demands of the unreasonable who come to Him with their own agenda.
- He is **NOT** another good religious teacher; He is THE Teacher, THE Shepherd, THE Son of God, THE Christ, THE promised seed of the woman (Gen 3:15), THE 2nd Adam and completed picture of whom Noah was only a sketch (Gen 6-10), THE promised Son of Abraham who would bless “all the families of the earth” (Gen 12:1-3).

C. **How He Trained Us**

- Don't shy away from conflict with the religious leaders who stand opposed to the work of God in Jesus Christ.
 - This is a point of personal growth.
 - I don't like conflict. I'm a Golden Retriever. “It is so good to see you. Hello. Hello. What can I bring you to make you happy? Do you want to play fetch? Would you like that”
 - But if there is a religious practice that actually hinders people from coming to true saving faith in the true God, I'm coming to see it must be resisted and countered, not tolerated as just another valid expression of faith.
- Don't be a Pharisee!
 - Don't keep looking for Jesus to show you a sign according to how you want to see Him; rather look more thoughtfully at how He has already shown Himself to you!
 - ILLUS. Silliness of Demanding God Show Himself to You Your Way – If You don't show me yourself the way I want to see you, I'm not looking!
 - Don't hold to your religious practices and traditions and how you've got God figured out so tightly that you in effect turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to what God is revealing in His word and most fully in Christ Jesus.
I can ignore what God is trying to tell me even while I prepare my sermon

- As I'm struggling to figure out what to say on Sunday morning wracking my brain, I could get a few ideas... and then there comes the voice of God...
- God: Johnny, I'm here.
- Johnny: Not right now, I'm preparing a message.
- God: Johnny, I AM the message.
- Johnny: Could you be quiet, I had a really good thought for my message. It was funny and then it made people cry.
- God: Johnny, give them Jesus, just give them Jesus. He is what they need.

III. *Jesus with the Disciples*

A. What He Did

Jesus gave His disciples a caution – “**Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.**” (v.15b). It was a caution using a figure of speech which the disciples misunderstood. Disciples amongst themselves: “Oh no, we didn't bring any bread.”

He directed their attention away from earthly concerns to spiritual matters. “**Why do you discuss that you have no bread?**” Jesus makes it clear that His warning is not about the bread! Using questions He draws them to the truly important.

- **Do you not yet see or understand?** Listen to Jesus' disappointed urgings. They are questions that prod me to do every thing I can do to understand Him. Let His questions so motivate you; for if we don't take offense, these hard questions will refine us: “**Do you have a hardened heart? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?**”ⁱ Oh Lord, I don't want to have a hardened heart, nor do I want blind eyes nor deaf ears. You've got my attention, what do I need to understand, to see, to hear?
- Jesus then focuses their thinking with His next questions:
- **And do you not remember when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of broken pieces you picked up?** Disciples sheepish reply: 12.
- **And when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?** Disciples reply: 7.
- v. 21 concludes with Jesus' haunting question: “**Do you not yet understand?**”

What is it that Jesus wanted them to understand? -- Jesus caused them to apply themselves to look beyond the natural to the supernatural truth. What was the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod? It was heart that was far from God even though they participated greatly in religious activities. It was a heart that did not perceive rightly those sent by God. The Pharisees did not receive Jesus, God's savior; nor did Herod receive John the Baptist, His herald. Position, security, power, the Pharisees and Herod had these yet it blinded instead of opened their eyes to truth. It all reminds me of Cain who wanted God and reached for Him with an offering, but for the advantage God could bring to him. The leaven is thinking they could get God on their terms for their good. “**Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.**”

B. Who He Is

(John 6:28-29, 40 ...behold the Son and believe in Him...)

He is the one we must not misunderstand. He is THE Redeemer!

[Acts 17:28](#) -- for **in Him we** live and move and exist,...

[Ephesians 1:7](#) -- **In Him we** have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

[John 14:6](#) -- Jesus said to him, "I am the **way**, and the **truth**, and the **life**; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

C. How He Trains Us

- First if we are teachable here, we learn our own weaknesses. We can misunderstand Jesus. His disciples did, so can we.
- What do we do about this? We humbly and diligently listen to all He has to say by our careful attention to His word – our personal and corporate Bible study, not thinking more highly of ourselves than we should. (Ro 12:2) We stay in the seat of the learner.

IV. Jesus with the Blind

A. What He Did

- He gave sight to the blind
- Took him out of the village
- He spit on his eyes
- He laid His hands on him
- He asked him, "Do you see anything?"
- He let the man describe his partial sight
- He laid His hands on him **again**
- He gave the blind sight: v. 25b says he... "was restored, and began to see everything clearly."
- He sent him to his home. (To tell his family he had been healed by Jesus?)
- I can not help but agree with most commentators who see this as a strategic illustration paralleling the blindness of the man to the spiritual blindness of the disciples who need yet another touch from the sight-giving hands of Jesus.

B. Who He Is

(John 6:28-29, 40 ...behold the Son and believe in Him...)

- He is the One who can heal blind eyes
 - i. Physical.
 - ii. Spiritual – Placement of this healing story illustrates that Jesus is the One who gives sight = correct perception of who He is, even if it takes **a second touch**.
- He is the God who would come to save, as promised in Isaiah the prophet 35:4-6
 - ⁴Say to those with anxious heart,
"Take courage, fear not
Behold, your God will come with vengeance;
The recompense of God will come,
But He will save you."
 - ⁵Then the eyes of the blind will be opened
And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.
 - ⁶Then the lame will leap like a deer,
And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy

For waters will break forth in the wilderness
And streams in the Arabah.

C. How He Trained Us

- We need not just a one time touch from the Lord – “I got it now, Jesus is my savior. OK I’ll take it from here, I’m saved! Hooray!” – Rather, our eyes of spiritual perception need to be touched a second time. We need to see Jesus not just as healer, but as savior; not just as savior, but as Lord; and not just as Lord, but as King; and not just as King, but as the Son of God; and not just as the Son of God, but as God the Son. There is more to Jesus than meets the once touched eye. We need a second touch and then a third.
- If we are to be trained, we must stay in the learner’s seat, dependent on the indwelling Spirit to teach us, lead us, and guide us into all truth.ⁱⁱ

Conclusion

By seeing how Jesus acted amongst mankind we can come to know who He is and we can see how He has trained His disciples.

Receive the Training Jesus Intended from these Events

Is there some discipleship training you can pick up from His dealing with:

1. The Multitudes – Perhaps you need to see there is no person He does not want to reach with the Gospel...
2. The Pharisees – Perhaps you need some boldness and you can follow Jesus’ lead in dealing with the Pharisees and stop trying to squeeze the gospel into an attractive package...
3. The Disciples – Perhaps you just need to know you have it in you to misunderstand Jesus...
4. The Blind – Perhaps you need to admit that you only see men walking like trees and that you need a second touch from Jesus.

Don’t leave that lower right-hand corner of your transformation card blank. Write down what training lesson the Holy Spirit is teaching you.

Receive the Knowledge of Who Jesus which is He Intended to Communicate by these Events

I so pray that we would know Jesus not only as we first saw Him, but as fully as He wants to be known. We need to remember what we already know about Him. We need to learn what we missed in previous “conversations” with Him. We need to unlearn what we have learned that is not true and re-learn what is. We need to get over any complacency that may have snuck into our relationship with Him and replace it with the lifestyle of an active learner and a good friend. And we must not content ourselves with learning as passive recipients of another man’s thinking, but we must actively engage in learning directly from Jesus with the wonderful available help of the Holy Spirit.

Brothers and sisters, we live in a spiritually lazy culture. **Go against the flow!** Persevere in your careful studies of God in His word not as detached academics, but as honoring children of a Heavenly Father who wants intimate communion with you.

Are you in one of our Sacred Space studies? Read the studies, read the Bible passages referenced, come to community group ready to share what you are learning, how you see now more “clearly” as a result of another fresh touch from the restoring hands of Jesus.

That can be said for whatever community group you are in. Read the materials, read the Bible passages referenced, come ready to share what you are learning.

If you are not in a community group, get in one! They are opportunities for the body to build itself up into the fullness of Christ. (Eph 4)

Go against the flow of our lazy culture that contents itself with the knowledge of Jesus it has. God does not want to be your acquaintance, He wants to be your Father. He does not want you to know some things about Him, He wants you to know Him, intimately.

This week let Him come to you “again.”

Let's pray!

ⁱ His Jewish disciples would recognize this language (Is 6:9ff; 43:8; Jer 5:21; Ezekiel 12:2; Mark 4:12) as speaking of those who did not perceive the Lord in His coming.

ⁱⁱ On the role of the Holy Spirit see John 14-16 esp 14:26, 15:26, 16:13.