

5. What does hardness of heart mean to you? Have you experienced this and if so, talk about the circumstances.

6. How has Jesus softened your heart?

7. How do you think the disciples reacted to Jesus' statements about His suffering and death? Try to put yourself in their shoes with their limited knowledge and time with Jesus.

8. What does it mean to deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Jesus? Talk about specific ways in which you have had to deny yourself.

Chapter Eight WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?



WHERE IS JESUS?

1. Eastern Shore of Sea of Galilee.
2. Dalmanutha on the western shore.
3. Bethsaida on the northeast shore.
4. Caesarea Philippi.

OVERVIEW: Jesus and the disciples are still in the region of Galilee, but they are moving around quite a bit now. Chapter 8 begins with Jesus again feeding a great crowd of people. Mark identifies

the crowd as 4000 people. In Matthew, the same crowd is identified as 4000 men, so there may have been much more than 4000 people actually fed by this miracle. Amazingly, the disciples still don't seem to understand Jesus' ability to do more than they can expect or explain. They can't even remember that He already did this once!

The disciples' lack of faith (or memory) is not nearly as serious to Mark as the skepticism of the Pharisees. Their demand for a sign from heaven is merely another thinly veiled attempt to catch Jesus in a crime for which He could be put to death. Jesus warns His disciples to beware of the "yeast" of the Pharisees (false teachings), but they, again, don't seem to understand what He is saying.

Jesus performs another miraculous healing, but this one is different from all the rest because it comes in stages. Nevertheless, the message is clear: when Jesus heals, the healing is complete! The disciples demonstrate an emerging faith when Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ! While this should be the beginning of great things for the twelve, it is just a few moments later when they begin to question Jesus' declaration that He must soon suffer and die.

Jesus describes the amazing worth of a human soul by saying it is worth more than anything this world has to offer. He also states that there is a substantial cost to following Him: surrendering one's own will and willingly submitting to God's will. This is the only way someone who believes will truly find the new life that Jesus offers.

FOR YOUR GROUP STUDY:

1. What observations have you made in your study of Mark this week?
2. In the Feeding of the 4000, the disciples only seem able to see the obstacles. What obstacles are preventing you from serving others the way Jesus wants you to?
3. What is Jesus' main point in 8:17-21?
4. How can we make sure we avoid the dullness and mistakes of both the Pharisees and the disciples?

11. How does Jesus respond to Peter's confession? What do you think of His response?

12. Why do you think Peter rebuked Jesus (v. 32)?

13. How do you feel about Jesus' response?

14. What paradox does Jesus introduce in verse 35?

15. Read vv. 36-37. How much does Jesus say one soul is worth?

Read Mark 8:8.

? "*Basketfuls.*" The Greek word here is ***spyris***, which is a storage basket large enough to hold a man. This is the same word that describes the basket used to lower Paul down the wall in Acts 9:25.

Read Mark 8:11.

? "*sign from heaven.*" Most of Jesus miracles are called ***dynameis***, or "works of power." Here the Pharisees ask for a special sign ***semeion*** that would come down from heaven. Ultimately, they get their sign in the resurrection—yet they still don't believe!

Read Mark 8:33.

? "*mind.*" The Greek word here is ***phroneo*** which means "to have a mental disposition for."

FOR YOUR PERSONAL STUDY:

1. How does the feeding of the 4000 differ from the feeding of the 5000 in Mark 6:30-44?

2. Why do you think the disciples had such a hard time believing Jesus could feed the crowd in 8:1-8, even after they had seen Him feed the 5000?

3. What impresses you about the crowd that gathered around Jesus?

4. What sacrifices are you willing to make in order to be with Jesus?

5. In v. 11, the Pharisees show up again. What are they demanding this time?

6. What does Jesus mean by his warning in v. 15 about the Pharisees? What is the warning for us today?

7. Why does Jesus take the blind man outside the village?

8. Why does the blind man get healed in stages?

9. Why does Jesus ask the disciples who they think He is?

10. What does it mean that Jesus is the Christ?