

“Why Jesus Offers a Double Double”

Mark 8¹⁻³⁰

Review

Do you ever find yourself starting in on a mystery novel and peeking ahead to the ending to find out how things turn out? Mark tells us right up front that the episodes he will be sharing from Jesus life which led him and so many others to conclude that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (1:1). Mark begins by setting the life of Jesus in the context of the Old Testament promises of God’s new exodus (1²⁻³; Isaiah 40³). He introduces us to God’s messenger, John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way for God’s promised deliverer. He takes us along with Jesus from his calling of his first disciples to the various ministry assignments he carried out in and around Galilee. People respond with amazement. “We have never seen anything like this...He has done everything well” they say (2¹²; 7³⁷).

Along the way Jesus himself also expresses his amazement; his amazement at the lack of faith (6⁶) among the religious leaders and even his followers who fail to believe and embrace him fully for who he is, the promised King/Messiah through whom God’s Kingdom comes. How many times do they need to see Jesus do what only God can do? “Do you still not understand?” (8²¹; cf. 6⁵²)

Introductory Question

Q – How did your parents complete this sentence when you were young: “How many times do I have to tell you...”?

Discussion Questions

- 1) **Read Mark 8:1-30.** Why do you suppose the disciples, having witnessed the feeding of the 5,000, have such a hard time believing Jesus can supply the needs of 4,000 here (8¹⁻¹⁰)?

When have you acted like the disciples, not expecting God to work after he has already met a need in your life (or in the lives of others)?
- 2) Jesus had previously fed 5,000 people in a similar situation (Mk. 6³⁰⁻⁴⁴). Is it important for Mark to include both of these accounts? What is similar about them? What is different about them?
- 3) What kind of “sign from heaven” do you think the Pharisees wanted (8:11)? Why do you think Jesus refuses to give them another¹ sign? What “sign” would help your faith at this time?
- 4) What could the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod be (v.15; cf. 6¹⁴⁻²⁹; 7¹⁻²³) that Jesus is warning them against?
- 5) What is Jesus trying to get them to see and understand (vv.17-21)? What should they have understood from the two feedings? What should we?
- 6) What unusual thing happens while Jesus is curing the blind man (vv.22-26)? This is one of the few stories in Mark not recorded in the other gospels; why do you think Mark includes this miracle when and where he does (cf. 8²⁷⁻²⁹)?
- 7) How are the disciples (8¹⁸; 8²⁹) like the deaf man (7³¹⁻³⁷) and the blind man (8²²⁻²⁶)? Who helped you receive your spiritual sight? How?

¹ Take a few minutes to review the “signs” (e.g. 1⁴⁴; 2⁶⁻¹²; 3⁴⁻⁶; 6³⁰⁻⁴⁴) and explanations (e.g. 2¹⁶⁻¹⁷; 2²⁴⁻²⁸) Jesus has already given noting the other people’s response to these signs (e.g. 1⁴⁵; 2¹²; 5²⁰; 7³⁷).