

23S02 Mark 8:11-26 (Part 17)

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today we are continuing our study of the gospel according to Mark with Mark 8:11-26(Part 17) Jesus talks of the leaven of the pharisees, heals a blind man in Bethsaida.

Before we start, we need to understand a little about this amazing book in the bible. Most historians believe Mark was the first written account of Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection. The identity of Mark is not known for sure, but most believe this is John Mark. John Mark is spoken of by Luke in Acts as the cousin of Barnabas, John Mark is mentioned in many other books on the New Testament. Many believe he spent time traveling with Peter, so it is thought that much of Mark's gospel is actually from the perspective of Peter. We also believe that John Mark knew Jesus. There are accounts that Jesus stayed at Mark's mother's home, there are also some unique story details in Mark that are not in either Matthew's or Luke's accounts. We will try to highlight some of these as we go through the stories in Mark.

I'm reading from the New American Standard version (NAS) today. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Let's read Mark 8:11-26 (NAS) *¹¹And the Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, demanding from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him. ¹²Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, "Why does this generation demand a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation!" ¹³And leaving them, He again embarked and went away to the other side. ¹⁴And the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them. ¹⁵And He was giving orders to them, saying, "Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and the leaven of Herod." ¹⁶And they began to discuss with one another the fact that they had no bread. ¹⁷And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet comprehend or understand? Do you still have your heart hardened? ¹⁸HAVING EYES, DO YOU NOT SEE? AND HAVING EARS, DO YOU NOT HEAR? And do you not remember, ¹⁹when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?" They said to Him, "Twelve." ²⁰"When I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?" And they said to Him, "Seven." ²¹And He was saying to them, "Do you not yet understand?" ²²And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought a man who was blind to Jesus and begged Him to touch him. ²³Taking the man who was blind by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting in his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?" ²⁴And he looked up and said, "I see people, for I see them like trees, walking around." ²⁵Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly. ²⁶And He sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."*

Let's pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your words from Mark, help us see what Mark wants his readers to understand and why. I pray that you help me stay

out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

Okay before we get started, Jesus is going back and forth across the sea Galilee. He was in Decapolis on the southeast of the sea, then we think he was on the eastside of the sea in Dalmanutha and then back to the northeast side of the sea to Bethsaida.



Now, let's take a closer look at these verses, Mark 8:11-12 (NAS) ***11**And the Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, demanding from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him. **12**Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, "Why does this generation demand a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation!"*

Jesus has just come to this region called Dalmanutha and the Pharisees are making demands. They want a sign. I guess all the miracles are not enough. They want to make Jesus perform on their demand. Jesus sighs in His spirit. I don't know what this means but I'm sure Jesus sadden by their unbelief. No performances on demand for these faithless people.

Mark 8:13 (NAS) ***13**And leaving them, He again embarked and went away to the other side. I think we often perceive Jesus going back and forth rapidly. But I don't think this is the likely case. We don't know how long Jesus was in this region, the bible does not tell us. But sometime after He arrives and has this conversation with some Pharisee, Jesus departs for the other side of the Sea of Galilee.*

Mark 8:14-16 (NAS) ***14**And the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them. **15**And He was giving orders to them, saying, "Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and the leaven of Herod." **16**And they began to discuss with one another the fact that they had no bread.*

Jesus is trying to use the situation to teach His disciples, but the disciples are worried about food. They totally miss the point.

Next Mark 8:17-21 (NAS) ***17**And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet comprehend or understand? Do you still have your heart hardened? **18**HAVING EYES, DO YOU NOT SEE? AND HAVING EARS, DO YOU NOT HEAR? And do you not remember, **19**when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?" They said to Him, "Twelve." **20**"When I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?" And they said to Him, "Seven." **21**And He was saying to them, "Do you not yet understand?"*

I wonder if Jesus was frustrated with them. Jesus is not talking about food. He reminds them he fed five thousand five loaves and four thousand with 7 loaves. Why are they worried about physical food.

Next Mark 8:22 (NAS) *²²And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought a man who was blind to Jesus and begged Him to touch him.*

Here we go again, Jesus shows up, people recognize him and bring people to be healed. This time it is a blind man but this time it is different.

Next Mark 8:23-24 (NAS) *²³Taking the man who was blind by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting in his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?" ²⁴And he looked up and said, "I see people, for I see them like trees, walking around."*

Wait a second. It didn't work. The blind man is not fully healed. What's going on here. Jesus spits on him, lays his hands on him and he still can't see or at least not very well.

Next Mark 8:25-26 (NAS) *²⁵Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly. ²⁶And He sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."*

Well that's better, the blind man sees but what a strange sequence of events. Why two tries to heal this man. I have to admit it puzzles me, but as with all of Jesus miracles it probably has something to do with the faith of the blind man or maybe the lack of faith. I don't know but it is a very remarkable story.

Let's review.

- 1) Sign demanded? How arrogant are these guys, demanded a sign from Jesus on their terms. Jesus has done many many miracles. Everyone in the region knows this. Jesus is not going to perform on demand
- 2) Leaven of the Pharisees? The disciples miss the point completely. They are worried about food and Jesus is telling them Pharisees disbelief and hard hearts can affect and infect many just like leaven in dough.
- 3) Take two? Do you really think Jesus needed two tries to heal this blind man. I don't think so. I'm sure there was a reason. Maybe for his disciple. Maybe for the blind man. I don't know but what a very remarkable miracle story.

Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for Bible. Help us to read and meditate on your words so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you, Lord. Help us to ask you for wisdom when we don't understand. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

Let me leave you with this today. Jesus is the king. I don't think we should be demanding anything of God. People who want to use Jesus for their own purposes

should be warned. God does not perform on demand of anyone. He's God. And for us and followers, keep our focus on what is important. And that is whatever Jesus is trying to tell us to do.

What does this mean for you? We often get preoccupied by our wants and wishes. We need to stop this. It's not about you. It's about Jesus. Our lives are much better when we keep our focus on Jesus and what He wants us to do. Jesus will guide us if we will just surrender control to him and stop worrying about things like food or money. God knows we need these things. Trust God.

Thank you for joining me for our study of the gospel of Mark. Please email me comments or feedback. And if you liked the message, please share the link with your friends. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.