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We Want Proof

Mark 8:1-12

In our day and age when all people who want to, have a platform, it is called social media, to say anything they want to. They can spread any lie or truth they want to. It is all motivated by money. How do we know who and what to listen to and believe? How do we know what is true? Do we look at the evidence ourselves and make our own decision or do we listen to the opinions of those we have put our trust in to tell us the truth? Lots of people simply believe the things they hear first or what they want to believe. Jesus had a similar problem. The Jewish people had put their trust in their religious leaders and **those leaders were the ones** who had gotten things wrong. If they really believed God's revelation to them, they would have loved Jesus (John 8:42). Unfortunately, those religious leaders of the Jews were so wrapped up in their own traditions and thirst for power and control that they could not listen to the truth Jesus was speaking (8:43). Jesus had some harsh words for them that they hated. Jesus told them, *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it"* (8:44). Jesus had spoken the truth to them but they refused to believe (8:46). Eventually those religious leaders took up stones to throw at Jesus but Jesus *"hid Himself"* and got out of the temple (8:59).

Most people were following Jesus just to get every benefit they could from Him. Some people were actually looking for a sign as proof to them that Jesus was the Messiah. Their problem was the signs they expected the Messiah to do, Jesus was not doing. They thought the Messiah should oppose the Romans and start an insurrection to gain Jewish control of Israel. He should reduce their tax burden, reduce inflation and fix the economy so things were affordable. Jesus was providing signs every day for all people. The Jews just missed the signs Jesus did. People came to Him to be healed. He healed everyone. People came to Him who were demon possessed, or their family members came to Jesus for help, and He cast out the demons. These were the signs to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, but they were not the ones the Jews were expecting to see. In Mark 8 we have another sign, another proof to show us that Jesus is the Messiah.

Verses 1-3 *"In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples to Him and said to them, 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way;*

for some of them have come from afar.” Jesus and His disciples had gone away from the cities so that Jesus could teach them without interruption. But a very great group of people followed them. What would you expect Jesus to do when He sees a large group of people? What Jesus did with the group of 5,000 was, He taught them. I think it would be natural for Jesus to teach these people also. We are not told what happened during these three days. Nothing caught Jesus by surprise though. If He taught them, it is likely He encouraged them to return home at some point. My guess is that they brought some food with them because Jesus did not feed them on day one or day two. He fed them on day three when they had no more food. Jesus had compassion on the crowd. **His compassion**, along with how He demonstrated His compassion by meeting their needs is also a sign that Jesus is the Messiah. It was on the third day that the crowd did not have anything to eat and they still would not leave. When Jesus fed the 5,000, they were close enough to the towns and villages in order to buy bread for everyone (John 6:5). The disciples just did not want to spend their money to buy a meal for the people. Here, Jesus and the crowd are too far away from any town. There is no place to get any food and the vast majority seemed to have eaten all they had. He could not send them home on an empty stomach. They might faint. Some of them have traveled a long way to be with Jesus. They listened to Him and benefited from His compassion towards them.

Verses 4-5 *“Then His disciples answered Him, ‘How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?’ He asked them, ‘How many loaves do you have?’ and they said, ‘Seven.’”* The disciples agreed with Jesus. There was no place to get enough bread to feed all these people. Jesus asked the disciples to share their own bread with them. In the earlier feeding of the 5,000, it was only John who shared the detail that the disciple Andrew brought a little boy’s food to be given away (John 6:8-9). Matthew, Mark and Luke, leave this detail unrecorded. Is it possible that the disciples **were not willing to use their money or their food to help** feed the previous crowd? At least here, since they knew what Jesus could do with food, they were willing to share their own food with the crowd. Matthew also records this event (15:32-39). **Who else** in all of history has ever fed thousands of people with a few loaves of bread and fish and ended up with **a huge amount more** than they started with? This is called a sign in the gospel of John (6:14). Some people who were part of the 5,000 who were fed recognized this sign and saw Jesus as the coming Prophet. The Prophet referred to a man like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18). The Jews believed Moses gave them the manna to eat every day for 40 years as they wandered in the Wilderness (John 6:32). Moses also led the people out of slavery in Egypt.

Verses 6-7 *“So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples to set*

before them; and they set them before the multitude. They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before them.” Jesus was concerned about a person’s **spiritual well-being**. That is why He began His ministry by calling people to repent of their sins (Mark 1:15). He was also concerned for their **physical health**. That is why He healed people and fed people when it was necessary to do so. My guess is that Jesus showed a good balance of both. I would think that Jesus was hoping that from His teaching combined with **His signs of providing physical health to people, they would recognize Him as the Messiah and choose to be His disciple**. Most people just enjoyed the benefits Jesus provided. Maybe some saw Him as the Messiah. In the feeding of the 5,000 they wanted to make Him king so that He could lead the revolt against the Romans (John 6:15). Instead, Jesus would allow Himself to suffer death by crucifixion at the hands of the Romans in order to fulfill prophecy. He died for our sins and proved He is the Messiah by rising from the dead. At this second mass feeding, Jesus had some organized plan to make sure everyone was well fed. Jesus gave thanks to God the Father for His provision. He also got others involved to help with the distribution of the food.

Verse 8-10 *“So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away, immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha.”* Everyone ate and had their fill. They had 7 large baskets full of leftovers. There were more leftovers from this feeding. The bread was not wasted although it does not seem that the disciples kept all the bread. Hopefully people were allowed to take what they needed for their journey home, especially if they had a long way to go. Once Jesus told them to leave, He and His disciples got into a boat and crossed the Sea of Galilee again. Jesus leaving an area is a sure way to get the people to return home.

Verses 11-12 *“Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, ‘Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.’”* In Dalmanutha, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, Pharisees argued with Jesus. **They wanted proof that He was the Messiah**. His deep sigh showed His great disappointment in these Jewish leaders. Jesus was constantly demonstrating to everyone that He was the Messiah. Every healing was a sign that He is the Messiah. Twice he fed thousands of people with a few loaves of bread and a few fish and had more leftovers than what He started with. He raised people from the dead, He calmed storms. He walked on water. He cast out demons. He taught with authority. No one could find any fault in His life. He was without sin. He showed compassion for everyone. He was honest, speaking the truth with every

word. He was obedient to God the Father. All signs that Jesus is the Messiah. But the Jews wanted more. At this point, to this group no more signs would be given. Jesus had given all they needed if they would just open up their hearts and minds to the truth He was revealing to them. Later on, Jesus would say, “*no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah*” (Matthew 12:39 / 16:4). That sign would begin with Jesus presence on earth calling people to repent. Jonah went through the city of Nineveh announcing their coming destruction (3:4). It would continue with Jesus being three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a great fish (Matthew 12:40).

Even when Jesus was suffering the greatest on the cross the Jews were telling Him, “*Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe*” (Mark 15:32). Would they really believe that Jesus is their Messiah if He came down from the cross? The real God remained on the cross taking our punishment for us. Even when Jesus rose from the dead many Jews would not believe though some did. Some people today keep demanding more and more proof that Jesus is God. And no matter what proof is given them, they will not believe unless they are willing to be changed. Some groups change the teachings of scripture so they can say they believe in Jesus when they actually do not believe fully.

Jesus said to the Pharisees, “*Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins*” (John 8:24).

Jesus also said to them, “*He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day*” (John 12:48).

Questions to ask yourself: Do you really believe in Jesus as God, Lord and Savior? Do you need more proof? Or are you not wanting to let God change you? He wants to save you from being punished for your sins. He wants to change you to be the person He desires you to be. Will you trust Him with your life?

Actions to take: Let Jesus change you. Trust Him to transform you into His image. Present yourself as a living sacrifice to God. Let Him renew your mind.

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