

Scripture: Mark 8:1-9

Text: Mark 8:8a

### Jesus Feeds Us Too!

Beloved in Christ, last week we heard that Christ can open your ears to hear Him, just as He opened the ears of the deaf-mute man. This sign points to that. But Jesus feeds us too – to the full. The sign of the bread points to Jesus who truly satisfies!

We heard of the feeding of the five thousand in **Mark 6:33 -44**. We see many similarities with this feeding in **Mark 8:1-9**. Both feedings occur in the desert. Both emphasize Jesus' compassion on the crowds. Both repeat the question, "How many loaves do you have?" The command to sit down is similar in both. In both, Jesus prays and the disciples distribute the bread. In both, the people ate and were satisfied. The leftovers were gathered after both meals. And in both, after Jesus dismisses the crowd, He goes into the boat.

There are differences: instead of 5 loaves and two fish, there are seven loaves and several fish, literally, sardines. Instead of 5000 men, there are 4000 men. There are seven baskets of left-overs instead of twelve baskets.

So why are there two feedings? What is the reason? It's this: last time, it was a multitude of Jews, God's covenant people. This time it is a multitude of Gentiles in the Decapolis. This is significant.

The significance hinges on one Greek word, *cortazo*, which means 'to fill, to feed, to satisfy.' This word is used three times in Mark. In the feeding of the Jewish multitude we read, "*So they all ate and were filled*" {6:42}. Later, Jesus departs from Israel into the territory of the Gentiles, beginning in Tyre and Sidon. You remember He met a Syro-Phoenician woman whose daughter had an unclean spirit. She kept asking Jesus to cast the demon out of her. What did Jesus say, "*Let the children be filled first. . .*" [7:27]. The children refer to the God's covenant people, the Jews back then. They have priority. Even then, God grants this Gentile woman faith. Her daughter is healed. This is a turning of a new page in Jesus' ministry: the gospel is now going to the Gentiles.

He is now teaching them who He is. He is the Bread of Life for the world; indeed, the whole world! He shows this by feeding the crowd in the region of the Decapolis, Gentile territory. This expresses itself to its fullest extent, after His death and resurrection, when He pours out His Spirit on the church at Pentecost and sends His disciples into the world with the Bread of Life.

We belong to that multitude in a sense. We too may eat and be filled! In light of our text, Mark 8:8a, we see

1. In His compassion, Jesus freely gives [vv.1-7]
2. In His power, He fully satisfies [vv.8-9]

1. In His compassion, Jesus freely gives [vv.1-7]

Our passage begins by saying **-verse 1**, "*In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples to Him...*" "*In those days....*" Those days refer to Jesus' days in Gentile lands, from Tyre and Sidon, travelling north above Galilee and now south into the Decapolis just east of the Sea of Galilee [verse 21]. In 8:13 Jesus departs to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

*"The multitude being very great..."* This is the same large crowd from which Jesus took aside the deaf-mute man [7:33]. They continued with Jesus now for three days, and are more receptive to Jesus' teaching than the Jews. This is striking! Jesus calls His disciples to Him, saying – **verses 2-3**, *"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."*

'I have compassion for these people', says Jesus. The sense here is that He is moved deeply within. This word 'compassion' expresses His gut-wrenching emotion for them.' Why so? They were hungry. They came from long distances away. Jesus did not want to send them away empty, but full! The bread they need is also a sign pointing to Him, who truly satisfies the spiritually empty!

In the gospel of Mark, this word 'compassion' is not used for those whom you would naturally feel compassion, like family or friends. It's used for those who you might not like, and are offensive to you. In Mark 1:41, Jesus, moved with compassion, stretches out His hand and touches a leper. In Mark 6:34 Jesus shows compassion to Jewish revolutionaries who misunderstood Him and wanted to use force to make Jesus king [John 6:15]. And now here to Gentiles, non-covenant people: 'I have compassion for these people'. They need bread!

Jesus shares this with His disciples, not because Jesus is at a loss what to do? No, He also wants His disciples to share in His compassion! He is also teaching them to trust. Without compassion, can a person be a true follower of Christ?

Jesus' disciples are perplexed. They feel helpless. See **verses 3-4** *"how can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?"* But had they not witnessed the miracle of God's grace in the feeding of the 5000? This reminds us of Psalm 78:11 where God says of His people, *"They forgot His works, and His wonders that He had shown them."* Unbelief inhibits the free flow of Christ's compassion in us.

You see the divine patience of Jesus. What strikes us is that Jesus does not even rebuke them. **Verse 4**, *"How many loaves do you have? And they said, 'Seven.'"* It is possible that the number 'seven' may symbolize the total number of Gentile nations. Look back to Deuteronomy 7:1. Seven nations are listed. the Lord instructed Israel, His people, *"when the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations.... You shall utterly conquer them and destroy them."*

Whereas the Israelites back then were commanded to destroy the nations, Jesus now feeds them. He will give His life for them on the cross! Note two things in **verses 6-7**. In the feeding of the 5000 Jesus has His disciples seat the crowds; here Jesus personally seats the crowds. He reaches out to them, not ostracizing them. Don't forget, Mark's gospel was written to Gentile believers. What an encouragement! And, second, Jesus takes the seven loaves, gives thanks, breaks the loaves and gave them to His disciples to set before them....". The sense is that Jesus *'kept on giving'*. The disciples kept hand it out and there was enough for everyone. The bread simply multiplied in Jesus' hands!

See God's plan unfolding in Christ! God promised Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, that through his seed [children], Christ would come, and in Christ all nations of the earth shall be blessed. He has come. He has been crucified. He is risen from the dead. He has poured out His Spirit on the church as He promised. Through the preaching of the gospel, Jesus gives Himself freely to the world as the Bread of Life, calling all to repent and believe on

Him. The sign points to this! Galatians 3:13-14 says that *“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us... that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith...”*

Jesus feeds us Sunday by Sunday freely offering Himself to us in His Word. He feeds us in the bread and the wine, His sign, assuring us of His promise of forgiveness and new life in the Spirit. Sunday by Sunday He offers His gracious hospitality to us, calling to us to receive Him through repentance and faith! Jesus says, *“I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger...”* [John 6:35]

But there is more. You are the bread pantry to the world, offering Christ. Many have come ‘from afar’ – people we might not like, people whom we think may be offensive. They need the Bread of life! Do we believe Christ is able to multiply the bread? Let not unbelief hinder us from opening the pantry, offering Jesus, the Bread of life! He want us to share in His compassions as He has compassion on us, undeserving Gentiles! *“For the love of Christ compels us”* [2 Corinthians 5:14]. The church is God’s home and table in the midst of strangers.

We might act sometimes as if His bread is limited, just for us. So we hold on to it, just for us and our children. Brothers and sisters, there is enough. There is more than enough of Christ to go around -even for the whole world! This brings us to our second point,

2. By His power, He fully satisfies [vv.8-9].

That’s what we see in **verses 8-9**. *“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.”* Notice, first all, His abundance. We’ll see this first before we hear how He fully satisfies.

Notice from seven loaves and a few fish, Jesus fed 4000 men, besides women and children [Matthew 15:38]. And still they gathered seven large baskets of leftover fragments. There is such an abundance in Christ, there is enough bread to feed all the nations of the world. Seven extra baskets – there is enough bread and more to feed all the nations of the world. Likewise, in the feeding of the 5000, the disciples gathered twelve baskets full of fragments, enough bread and more for the 12 tribes of Israel.

This is not magic. Nor is this the power of a superhero. This is the power of the Son of God, truly man and truly God, who comes to reverse the curse through His death and resurrection and the power of His Spirit. He comes to restore the table of fellowship, a fellowship man broke by his disobedient act of eating, when he ate from the forbidden tree. Though man rejected God’s table, His food, God in His grace and compassion opens His home again to us, strangers and foreigners, by sacrificing His only begotten Son on a tree, *“who so loved us and gave Himself for us.”*

Jesus is the Bread of Life for the world. There is enough grace, and enough shed blood on the cross to cover [atone] for the sins of the whole world. It is sufficient. But it is powerfully effective only in those whom God has given to Christ. In them whom God’s grace works powerfully and effectively to believe in Christ and will bring them without fail to salvation – people from every tribe, tongue, language and nation.

So also, by His power, He fully satisfies. See verse 8a, *“So they ate and were filled...”* Another translation is, *“and were satisfied.”* Through this sign of the bread, Jesus shows that He fully satisfies. Recently I met one gentleman, a friend, who invited me to join his religion, to try it out. I said to him, *“I have no reason to. I have*

Christ. My search is over. I have everything I need. I have Him.” I then wanted to share the Bread with him, but he rudely declined. I did say to him, without Christ, your search will be endless. You will never be fully satisfied.

In Christ, beloved, there is forgiveness of sins, a table, and a new home, fellowship, an endless pantry that never gets stale but always is fresh and new. Augustine, a fourth century church father, has this famous line in his Confessions, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” Being united to Christ by faith is like a fish, no longer trying to live out of the water, but in water. You have everything.

In the campaign of the last federal election, you see the endless quest of empty hearts looking to money to satisfy – the problem of gun violence, domestic violence, teen suicide, poverty, and the list goes on and on. It’s like a drinking cup with holes on the bottom. Only Christ truly and fully satisfies. He brings change. Money can’t and won’t. If you have Christ, you have everything you need, life now and life forever. As JC Ryle says, Jesus has “bread enough and to spare for every soul that trusts in Him. Weak, infirm, corrupt, empty as believers feel in themselves, let them never despair . . . in Him, there is boundless store of mercy and grace . . . and ready to be [given] to all who ask in prayer.”

In His compassion, He freely gives, and by His power, He fully satisfies. Hear this invitation to eat what is good!

Ho! Everyone who thirsts,  
Come to the waters;  
And you who have no money,  
Come, buy and eat.  
Yes, come, buy wine and milk  
Without money and without price.  
Why do you spend money for what is not bread,  
And your wages for what does not satisfy?  
Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good,  
And let your soul delight itself in abundance. [Isaiah 55:1-2]. Amen.