

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Mark 8:14-21.**
- B. Jesus continues His ministry. It takes a slightly different twist in this section because He deals with the Gentiles. Something the apostles are going to have to get used to!
- C. Even working great miracles is not enough to teach the apostles the lessons they need to know. Jesus works miracles and then teaches them more perfectly.

I. THREE MIRACLES.

- A. Jesus casts out a demon (7:24-30).
 - 1. There were several things working against this woman:
 - a. Her nationality was against her.
 - b. Her gender was against her.
 - c. Satan was against her.
 - d. The disciples were against her (Mt. 15:23).
 - e. For a while, it looked like Jesus was against her!
 - 2. It was not an easy situation, and yet she triumphed because of her great faith.
 - 3. The woman did not deny the special place of the "children" (Jews) in God's plan, nor did she want to usurp it. All she wanted were a few crumbs of blessing from the table; for, after all, "Salvation is of the Jews" (Jn. 4:22).
 - 4. She had accepted her place, she believed His Word, and she persisted in her plea; and Jesus not only met her need, but commended her for her faith.
 - 5. The people of Tyre and Sidon, were not known for their faith (Mt. 11:21-22), yet this woman dared to believe that Jesus could deliver her daughter.
- B. Jesus heals a deaf man (7:31-37).
 - 1. The region of Decapolis ("ten cities") was also Gentile territory.
 - 2. This miracle is recorded only by Mark and would be especially appreciated by his Roman readers, since the "ten cities" region was like a "Rome away from Rome."
 - 3. The "sigh" was an inward groan, our Lord's compassionate response to the pain and sorrow sin has brought into the world. The same word is used in connection with prayer in Rom. 8:23, and the noun in Rom. 8:26.
 - 4. *Ephphatha* is an Aramaic word that means "be opened, be released." In spite of our Lord's strict command for the people to keep quiet about the miracles, they told the news everywhere.
- C. Jesus feeds the 4,000 (8:1-9).
 - 1. Only Matthew and Mark record this event, and it is not difficult to distinguish it from the other miracle of the multiplying of bread and fish. This miracle is near Decapolis not Bethsaida; it was done before Gentiles, not Jews; there were 7 loaves and a few fish, not 5 and 2; there were only 7 baskets taken up, not 12.
 - 2. Once again we are encouraged by our Lord's compassion and His complete control over the situation. However, we are discouraged by the blindness and unbelief of the disciples. Had they completely forgotten the previous miracle? Let's not be too hard on them. How many times have we forgotten the mercies of the Lord?

II. THREE LESSONS.

- A. See **Mk. 8:10-26.**
- B. It would seem that in this section of the gospel that Jesus will teach three lessons that should have been learned in the miracles that He just performed.

- C. Lesson One: Don't seek after signs, live by faith (8:11-13).
1. The Pharisees want more than a healing miracle, they want a huge sign from heaven that would supposedly prove that Jesus is the Messiah. But how tragic that the religious leaders should be so hardhearted and spiritually blind! Their desire for a sign from heaven was but another evidence of their unbelief, for faith does not ask for signs. *True faith takes God at His word and is satisfied with the inwardness of the Spirit.*
 2. This takes us back to the story of the Syrophenician woman. She didn't demand a big sign, rather she had so much faith, that all she wanted was a crumb of a blessing!
 3. "Lord, increase our faith!"
- D. Lesson Two: Trust in Jesus to meet needs (8:14-21).
1. Jesus left the disciples and crossed to the east side of the Sea of Galilee, and en route taught His disciples an important spiritual lesson.
 2. It appears that they were almost as blind as the Pharisees! These men were having a private discussion about their food supply, because somebody had forgotten to pack bread. *They had missed the point* about Jesus being able to satisfy needs.
 3. It must have grieved Jesus that His hand-picked helpers were so spiritually obtuse. The fact that He had multiplied bread on two occasions and fed over 10,000 people had apparently made little impression on them! See 8:18!
 4. God's people often have a tendency to forget His blessings (Psa. 103:1-2). He meets our needs, but then when the next problem arises, we complain or become frightened. As long as we are with Him, we can be sure He will care for us. It would do us all good to pause occasionally and remind ourselves of His goodness and faithfulness.
- E. Lesson Three: Let Jesus work as He wills (8:22-26).
1. Jesus healed a deaf man instantly, and then healed the blind man gradually.
 2. In each case, Jesus took into consideration the circumstances of the situation, the person's level of belief, their background, and acute need. He did what was best for each person even though He did not do the exact same thing for each person.
 3. This is a great lesson for us in allowing "God to be God." Jesus knows our needs better than we, and we need to allow Him to do as He wills, not as we think He should will.
 4. Things will not always work out the way we think best, but if we trust in X, He work all things out as He sees best (Rom. 8:28).

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Living by faith is the only way to truly please God.
- B. Trust is so powerful when it has been earned. Has Jesus earned your trust?
- C. Jesus is the head of the church--let Him be that by being a good follower.
- D. Don't miss these important lessons by being obedient.
- E. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.