**HOW MANY LOAVES DO YOU HAVE?**

Mark 8:1-13

Key Verse 5a

“How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked.

**Introduction**

Today’s passage shows that Jesus fed 4000 people. In 6:30-44 we have already studied that Jesus fed the five thousand. On the surface, there seems to be no difference between these two events except the difference of number. However in today’s passage Jesus shows us His compassionate heart toward the Gentiles. Also there is one important truth about Jesus. He is very patient with his disciples, although they were very slow to grow in faith. May the Lord help us to grow to be shepherds after Jesus’ compassionate heart and to say the words of faith and pray before Him.

1. Read verses 1-3. What time does “During those days” refer to? (1a) What did Jesus say to his disciples regarding the crowd? (1b-3) What does this show about Jesus’ shepherd heart?

1-1, Read verses 1-3.

During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, **2** “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. **3** If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance.”

1-2, What time does “During those days” refer to? (1a)

***During those days another large crowd gathered.***

* “During those days” refers to Jesus’ healing ministry in Gentile territory. Jesus visited many towns, villages and countryside and healed all kinds of sick people.
* Our Lord Jesus was so compassionate that he could not pass by sick people without healing them, even in the Gentile territories.
* During those days another crowd of people gathered around Jesus. This event happened in the region of the Decapolis. Therefore, the large crowds gathered around Jesus were mostly Gentiles.
* Jesus proved himself to be not only the Savior of so called the chosen Jews but also of the Gentiles.
* Jesus blessed the Gentiles to experience the miracle of Jesus. Jesus cared for the need of the Gentiles.
* As usual, Jesus loved them. Jesus shared the secret of the kingdom of God with them. Jesus wanted to show them the kingdom of God and Jesus wanted them to have the same privilege of entering the kingdom of God that the Jews had.

1-3, What did Jesus say to his disciples regarding the crowd? (1b-3)

***Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, 2 “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. 3 If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance.”***

* Jesus wanted to talk to them for a few minutes. But three days passed by. When he spoke to them with great compassion and with his life-giving spirit, these four thousand ordinary people remained for three days.
* Out of his compassion Jesus gave them not only physical food but also spiritual food. Many people help poor people with physical food and finally make them become like beggars.
* However, Jesus did not give them only physical food. Jesus gave them the word of God as the fundamental solution to their life problems.
* These crowds of people were poor and lowly people. They did not seem to need the word of God. But Jesus believed that if they studied the Bible, they would be spiritual people.
* Jesus believed that if the word of God is planted in them, they can be changed into a faithful, responsible people.
* Maybe they did not feel hungry during the conference because the word of Jesus fed their hungry souls. But at the end of the conference they felt hungry.

***Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, 2 “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. 3 If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance.”***

* The first step to have compassion for someone is to know the person well. Jesus understood the need of the people one by one.
* Jesus knew that they did not have anything to eat although there were so many people. It was time for the crowds to go home. It was a big problem because many people came from a long distance.
* They had to walk all the way home hungry and might collapse on the way. The problem was urgent and real.
* In chapter 6 Jesus had compassion for the crowds because they were sheep without a shepherd. This time he had compassion because they had nothing to eat and had to go home hungry.
* Jesus not only cared about our spiritual need but also our physical need. We can learn about Jesus’ sense of responsibility to take care of their physical need too.

1-4, What does this show about Jesus’ shepherd heart?

* Jesus took the crowd’s hunger problem as his own. He might be hungry too. But he was concerned about the crowd’s hunger more than his own hunger problem.
* Jesus came into this world to feed us spiritually and physically. He regards each of us as his children. He is concerned about our physical needs.
* That’s the reason why we pray in the Lord’s prayer, “Give us our daily bread.” Jesus’ compassion is eternally beautiful.
* There will be no hunger problem if everyone has the compassion of Jesus. Where there is the compassion of Christ, where there is the living word of Jesus Christ, the world will be a better place to live and people will be happy.
* Once we were like the Gentiles and lived as the enemies of God. We were collapsing spiritually because we did not have any spiritual food to eat. Apostle
* Peter described our condition in 1 Peter 2:10, *"Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”*
* Once we were the objects of God’s wrath due to our sins. But Jesus had compassion for us and gave us his word of life and saved us from sin and death when we believed that he died for our sins and rose again for our eternal life.
* Now we became the objects of his mercy. We became God’s chosen people to declare his wonderful grace to all who are starving spiritually. God blessed us to do a new thing by his grace.

2. Read verses 4-8. How did the disciples reply? (4) How did Jesis help them? (5) Describe how Jesus fed the people. (6-8) What can we learn here about the way to participate in God’s work?

2-1, Read verses 4-8.

**4** His disciples answered, “But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?”

**5** “How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked.

“Seven,” they replied.

**6** He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people, and they did so. **7** They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. **8** The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

2-2, How did the disciples reply? (4)

***4 His disciples answered, “But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?”***

* It is easy to discredit the disciples automatically when we find their lack of faith. But when we examine their answer carefully, they had a desire to feed them but they did not know how.
* They were saying to Jesus, “Well, we are ready to feed them as you taught us before. But it is a remote place and the reality is we have no money to feed them.”
* If we compare this to the story in chapter 6, we see that in the first event Jesus’ disciples did not share Jesus’ concern. They made many excuses to send the crowd away.
* But here, we learn that this time they were concerned with the people who stayed there for three days and nights. The disciples also stayed with the crowd, and they never complained.
* They also listened attentively to the word of God for a full three days. In chapter 6, when Jesus fed the five thousand, the disciples had no motivation.
* They wanted to escape from their responsibility. Then they wanted to rationalize their impossible situation. Jesus rebuked their irresponsible attitude.
* But this time, they were different. This time they were not rebuked. They were very patient. They did not interrupt Jesus’ message.
* The first time their patience lasted only a few hours. At the end of the day, they came to Jesus as a group saying, “Send them away.”
* This time the first day passed and they patiently waited. The second day passed. On the third day, they waited for Jesus to finish his teaching and then Jesus asked them. They were more patient with the sheep.
* They made a big progress in their shepherd life. Their only problem was that whenever they faced hard situation, they were frozen to their own human thinking.
* They despaired about their remote place mentality. They did not apply their current situation to the previous miracles Jesus performed.
* They did not comprehend the true person of Jesus. They did not know Jesus deeply. They worried first instead of bringing the problem to Jesus.
* They were slow in understanding Jesus’ power. Jesus demonstrated himself many times that he is the living God who can raise up the dead and walk on the water and head the sick.
* They had to look upon Jesus and rely on him whenever they had impossible situation. Instead, they looked at the remote place and their empty pocket.
* As a result, they felt helpless. We know it is not easy for us to raise up one disciple of Jesus.
* When we feed sheep, we expect them to grow quickly. Sometimes we see that our sheep are never growing. They are similar to Jesus in a way: because they are the same last year and this year and seem to be the same forever.
* And we are greatly disappointed inwardly. But we have to be like Jesus. We have to have hope in our slow growing sheep and wait on God and pray for them.
* We feel like reading the Bible to the ears of the cows. But in reality they are growing very slowly.
* The kingdom of God is growing in their hearts, although we may not see it outwardly. Jesus promises everyone that if they seek his kingdom, they will find it.
* We can trust Jesus’ promise and seek God to the end until God gives them faith. Let’s keep on teaching them until their ears open to the word of God and they become excellent Bible teachers and powerful disciple-makers.

2-3, How did Jesis help them? (5)

***5 “How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked.***

***“Seven,” they replied.***

* Jesus knew that his disciples had not many resources to feed the four thousand, but Jesus treated his disciples like coworkers and asked them their opinion.
* Jesus could have done everything by himself. But he worked with his disciples. “‘How many loaves do you have?’ Jesus asked. ‘Seven,’ they replied.”
* It seems to be nothing to ask his disciples, who did not have any resources, but Jesus helped them to have faith and look for something without giving up.
* In this way, it was the beginning point of coworking with them. To ask something of others seems to be easy. But asking a few things to another remarkably creates a relationship between man and man and between man and God.
* Jesus knew how to communicate with his disciples. Even though it seems to be an unimportant matter, it is good to **ask** others’ opinions. Then the communication starts and we can work together as a team.
* They are growing in Jesus through coworking. In coworking, we must first pray together with our coworker and talk together about many prayer topics.
* We must talk about how to strengthen our relationship and the spirit of coworkership. We may learn how to cowork with others like Jesus.

2-4, Describe how Jesus fed the people. (6-8)

***6 He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people, and they did so. 7 They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. 8 The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.***

2-5, What can we learn here about the way to participate in God’s work?

* **First,** Jesus told the crowd to sit down on the ground. It indicates that Jesus meant business to feed them like a father who had his children sit on table.
* **Second,** he had taken the loaves and gave thanks. Whenever Jesus performed his miracles, he always prayed before God.
* He depended on God and wanted to feed them. Above all he prayed to God to feed these four thousand hungry people who were in a remote place.
* Here we learn Jesus’ prayer. When it was impossible, he did not despair. He held seven loaves tightly in his hand and lifted them up to heaven and prayed to God that God would feed the crowd.
* Mark expressed his prayer, saying, “after he had given thanks.” It means Jesus prayed in absolute faith.
* **Third,** Jesus broke the bread and gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people, and they did so. Again Jesus wanted to cowork with his disciples.
* **Fourth,** “They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them.”
* The disciples were also hungry. They wanted to eat first, and next, distribute food to the people. But the disciples did not eat first.
* They followed Jesus’ command exactly. They participated in Jesus’ miracle as distributors of the bread.
* “The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.”
* Praise Jesus who is the Creator God fed the people faithfully. The disciples must have learned once again that nothing is impossible in Him as long as they participate in His work by faith.
* Also we may learn a sense of history from what Jesus had done twice in feeding the crowd so far. Although we experienced God’s power and provision sometimes we carelessly say unbelieving words and act in total unbelief.
* May the Lord help us to increase our faith and not forget about who Jesus is and continue to live by faith.

3. Read verses 9-13. Where did Jesus go after feeding the crowd? (9-10) What did the Pharisees ask him to do? (11) What was His response? (12-13)

3-1, Read verses 9-13.

**9** About four thousand were present. After he had sent them away, **10** he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

**11** The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. **12** He sighed deeply and said, “Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it.” **13** Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.

3-2, Where did Jesus go after feeding the crowd? (9-10)

***9 About four thousand were present. After he had sent them away, 10 he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.***

3-3, What did the Pharisees ask him to do? (11)

***11 The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven.***

3-4, What was His response? (12-13)

***12 He sighed deeply and said, “Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it.” 13 Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.***

* This demand for a "special" sign was an extreme example of the arrogance of the Pharisees towards Jesus.
* Essentially, they said, "You have done several small miracles. Come on now and really show us something big and spectacular!"
* No sign shall be given to this generation: Jesus refuses, because His miracles are not done with the intention of convincing hardened unbelievers.
* Instead, Jesus did miracles to show the power of God. He condemned the generation seeking a sign.

**Conclusion**

Jesus is the Lord for all mankind. He shows His compassionate heart and mercy for those who come to Him out of spiritual hunger. Above all help us to learn Jesus’ compassionate heart. May the Lord help us to increase our faith and willingly participate in His salvation work diligently and patiently. May the Lord help us to pick up a sense of responsibility for all nations and pray by faith.

**One Word: How many loaves do you have?**