

Mark 8:1–21

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 July 2026

Preacher: Paul Kim

[0:00] Mark 8, 1-21. And some of them have come from far away.

And his disciples answered him, How can we feed these people with bread here in this desolate place? And he asked them, How many loaves do you have? They said, Seven.

And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people. And they set them before the crowd.

And they had a few fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. And they had eight and were satisfied.

And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. And there were about 4,000 people. And he sent them away. And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutra.

[1:21] The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, Why does this generation seek a sign?

Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation. And he left them, got in the boat again, and went to the other side. Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf in the boat.

And he cautioned them, saying, Watch out. Be aware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread.

And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?

Having eyes, do you not see? Having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember when I broke the five loaves for the 5,000? How many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?

[2:28] They said to him, Twelve. And the seven for the 4,000. How many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up? And he said to them, And they said to him, Seven.

And he said to them, Do you not yet understand? This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Y'all can sit down. Good morning.

I grew up in a Korean American household. And right by the kitchen sink, there is this metal contraption. Some call it a dishwasher.

But I had the belief, a common belief, that it's just a drying rack. You know, you open it, it's a secret, and it pulls out. It's a drying rack. And this dishwasher, that some would say, would clean dishes and dry them.

But I didn't believe it. Yeah, I saw the buttons on the side. But growing up for 29 years, yeah, it's a dishwasher. But four years ago, my wife and I got married, and she uses this dishwasher, puts in dirty dishes, puts in some detergent, presses the button, and out comes clean and dry dishes.

[3:55] No way. For 29 years, I had this belief that this dishwasher was a drying rack.

And that I was actually supposed to wash them with my two hands. But I saw the evidence. My wife showed it to me. Pressed the buttons. And with a click, out comes clean dishes.

Now, I know this may be a small and maybe a silly example of how I examined something and changed my belief. But what if there was something more important than a dishwasher?

Something more important and greater that you need to consider to believe in? And this morning in our passage in Mark chapter 8, we're actually going to see something.

And it should consider something that we should believe in. I wonder if you heard in the reading in Mark chapter 8, three scenes, a miracle and two responses.

[5:02] And we're just going to look at each scene this morning to see what do we believe about Jesus? So in verses 1 through 10, we see a miracle.

A miracle of abundant provision. And Mark, the author of this gospel, is like a TV show director. He's showing us a scene of this great crowd.

And the camera zooms in right at Jesus. And what is Jesus going to do? And right there in verse 1, when again a great crowd had gathered.

This is like a flashback in a TV series. Previously seen in the series of the gospel of Mark, in chapter 6, there was a great crowd that gathered. A feeding of 5,000.

Here we are again. Another crowd, this time 4,000, gathered once more. But the question is, can Jesus provide for these 4,000 again?

[6:14] You know, Jesus has a great compassion. Verse 2, Jesus says, I have great compassion on the crowd because, why? They've been with him three days, have nothing to eat.

Jesus, with great compassion, has great care for this great crowd. But there's a huge problem. They're in a desolate place.

Did you see that there? They're in a desolate place. In other words, they're in the wilderness. And the disciples, you can imagine, they're scratching their heads, they're looking around.

There's no food out here. Who's going to provide? And notice, they're not asking, well, what store do we go there? There's no Costco, there's no Sam's Club for them to buy up food for this 4,000.

And so it raises the question that they have right there in verse 4. How can one feed these people in this desolate place? The question is not, where can they go to get this food to feed them?

[7:23] The question is, who can provide? Who can provide food for this people? And classic in Jesus fashion, he's just going to do something and show them.

And that's going to be the answer. And he tells his disciples, well, how many loaves of bread you got? Seven. He tells the people to sit down in groups, praise to God.

Jesus then breaks bread. Does the same thing with the fish. Just a few fish right there. Nothing crazy. Praise breaks it. And notice the result.

The crowd was satisfied. They had their needs met. And there were seven baskets left over.

They had seven baskets full of filet-o-fish just laying around afterwards. What a miracle. Jesus providing for this great crowd and then some left over.

[8:25] I mean, this is a wonderful provision that Jesus provides. And doesn't that sound familiar? Not just in the feeding of the 5,000, but in Exodus 16 in the Old Testament, that while the people were in the wilderness, a desolate place, that God provided manna, bread from heaven, to his people?

And so it is here in the Gospel of Mark. Now Mark is zooming in. It's Jesus providing bread and fish for this great crowd.

Now Jesus is providing abundantly, satisfying them. I mean, who can provide? Mark is showing us Jesus can provide because he's truly God.

See, the miracle of Jesus here serves as good news. Why? Why is the miracle of Jesus good news? Well, it's because it's evidence and proof that Jesus is who he says he is.

See, only God can do miracles like breaking bread to feed the 4,000. And Jesus is showing and demonstrating that he can do it.

[9:43] He says he can do it. And look, he demonstrates it by his miracle. And so brothers and sisters in Christ, this should be of great comfort. This miracle of the feeding of 4,000, of abundant provision, it ought to be a great comfort.

Why? Because it serves as like a deposit in your bank of faith. You know, as you look to Jesus and trust him, these miracles serve as another proof, another evidence why Jesus is trustworthy, why Jesus is worthy of your belief and trust.

It's a great comfort of the feeding of the 4,000 here. And now I know that you're wondering, well, that's great for the crowd here in this passage, feeding of 4,000, but what about us today?

You know, it doesn't feel like it. You know, I wonder if your lived experience is not one of Jesus' provision.

Maybe it's actually marked more by trials and tribulations. Maybe you're in a particular circumstance that it feels like the wilderness or a desolate place. But I wonder, how has Jesus provided for you in a difficult circumstance?

[11:07] I wonder if you could recall maybe in your own life where Jesus has provided in a desolate time, in a desolate place. Yeah, see, I recognize that some of our personal experience may not match.

But yet Jesus, even today, provides abundantly. You know, it's compelling here that Jesus has this great compassion. And he doesn't dismiss the crowd.

Jesus doesn't say, well, good luck feeding yourself three days. You're hungry. You're thirsty. And he leaves. No, but Jesus, with his great compassion, is generous.

Generous towards this great crowd. A great care. A great compassion. And I think this is to remind us of how today, for us now, that Jesus provides abundantly.

Think about maybe in your own life how Jesus has provided for you. Consider just even our church family, how Jesus has provided for us as we think about even the provision of a place.

[12 : 23] Since the birth of this church, there was gatherings, not in this building, but in schools, in other church buildings, in parking lots.

And yet God has provided abundantly with this place. Yes, I recognize that there's water damage right there in the back. I recognize that there's debt retirement. But consider just how Jesus has provided abundantly for us as a church family.

Even a people. Not only has Jesus provided a place, but he's provided people. As we are thinking about nominating elders and deacons to serve in leadership.

I mean, what wonderful blessing it is that Jesus would give good gifts of people to serve as a blessing for us as a family. Not only those who are prospective elders and deacons, but for members and volunteers, you all, the fact that you're here at Christ Church Chicago.

I mean, you are a gift to this church family given by Jesus himself. What an abundant provision so that the ministry would go and so that people would be blessed.

[13 : 41] See, this first scene right here in the feeding of the 4,000, this wonderful miracle just demonstrates Jesus' abundant provision.

But it raises a major question. How will you respond to this Jesus? How will you respond to this Jesus?

And in our second scene, Mark, the TV show director, he's now cutting the scene with the miracle and now shows us a short scene, a scene with the Pharisees and Jesus.

It's very short. It's just three verses right there from verses 11 to 13. Now Jesus is at the district of Dalmanutha. That is, it's on the west side of the Sea of Galilee.

And the Sea of Galilee is not that big. Just several miles large. It's not like the great lakes that we have here. But Jesus is going to the west side and the Pharisees, they're seeking him out.

[14 : 46] Well, why? Well, they're arguing with him, really seeking a sign from heaven to test him. Right there in verse 11, seeking from him a sign.

Now on the surface, this actually kind of makes sense, right? You want to check Jesus' credentials. You want to fact check him. So on the surface, this actually looks good.

But you can imagine Jesus, he's seen this before. He's interacted with the Pharisees in the gospel of Mark before. And there he goes again, just sighing a deep breath.

Here we go again with these religious leaders. And Jesus, he questions their unbelief. Notice he says, why does this generation seek a sign?

We just saw in scene one a feeding of 4,000. What a wonderful miracle. Was it not enough that he fed the 4,000 and the 5,000 to the Pharisees?

[15 : 45] Was it not enough that Jesus would heal the blind? Give hearing to those who are deaf? Was it not enough in Mark chapter 5 that Jesus would have authority over death, demon, and disease?

Was it not enough that Jesus would teach with such great authority? Well, Jesus then says, there's no sign given to this generation because no sign is ever going to persuade these Pharisees with their heart of unbelief.

No sign will be given that will convince a heart of unbelief. unbelief. But why does unbelief matter so much? What's the consequences of unbelief?

Well, right there in verse 13, I think we get a picture of what happens to those who reject Jesus, those who do not believe in Jesus. Right there in verse 13, and he left them.

Jesus leaves them. Jesus doesn't engage with them. Jesus doesn't interact with them. No, he leaves them. And that's how the scene ends. Gets back on the boat.

[16 : 54] I think this is a picture of the consequences of unbelief. No, what happens to those who ultimately don't believe in Jesus?

See, earlier in Mark chapter 4, Jesus condemns these religious leaders, these Pharisees, by quoting Isaiah chapter 6, verses 9 to 10.

That is, this passage in Isaiah 6, it's calling out for those who see but don't perceive. Those who hear but don't understand.

What's going to happen to those people that have hardened hearts that refuse to believe? The consequences in Isaiah 6 is that those who reject God will be rejected by God.

those who don't believe in God will be rejected by God. And here in this passage, we see those who reject Jesus, those who don't believe in Jesus will ultimately be rejected by Him.

[17:59] There is a great consequence for unbelief. Now, I wonder if you're here this morning, maybe you're exploring Christianity. I'm so thankful that you're here but what are maybe your obstacles?

What's preventing you from believing? Maybe you're bargaining with Jesus. Maybe it looks something like this that, oh, I'll believe Jesus if you just fill in the blank.

Yeah, I'll believe Jesus yeah, if I get the job that I want. Or I'll believe Jesus oh, if I get the relationship that I want.

Or if I'll believe Jesus and you fill in the blank. What's that obstacle for you? What's preventing you from seeing Jesus and believing Him?

You know, those obstacles and what's preventing you I just want to acknowledge those are real things. And if a friend brought you here I just want to encourage you maybe talk with that friend.

[19:08] If you came by yourself I'd love to talk to you or anybody here at the church would love to talk to you further of any of those obstacles that are preventing you from believing and we would love to see you get one step closer to seeing Jesus and believing in Him.

You know, but at the end of the day what do you make of Jesus feeding of the 4,000 the miracle of abundant provision we saw in scene 2 here just one response a response of unbelief from the Pharisees.

But it raises the question well, if that's the wrong response what's the right one? What are we supposed to do? How do we respond rightly to Jesus?

Well, we'll find out in our third scene here Mark the author he's just zooming in and focusing on the boys in the boat. right here in verses 14 to 21 the interaction between Jesus and His disciples.

And in this scene we begin to see a confused disciples. How do we know they're confused? Well, right there in verse 14 now they the disciples have forgotten to bring bread.

[20:30] They only had one loaf with them in the boat. Now you can imagine the feeding of the 4,000 they had seven baskets left over and they forgot the takeout box to bring extras for their journey.

And here they're like oh we just had one loaf of bread. And Jesus therefore He warns them of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.

This is just a callback of what we just saw in scene two. Leaven is just a figure of speech. It's kind of like one bad apple spoils the bunch.

It's just a figure of speech to just show the unbelief of the Pharisees and the unbelief of Herod. And Herod was showing up in Mark chapter 3 and Mark chapter 6 just showing Mark was showing us that Herod too was rejecting Jesus.

And so Jesus here in the boat with the boys in the boat here just warning them to avoid unbelief at all costs. Beware of the unbelief of the religious leaders and of Herod from the political sphere.

[21:43] And the disciples still confused. Right? They kept digging themselves in a bigger hole. They're thinking word association. Jesus said leaven. Oh, it's about bread.

Physical bread. And notice right there in verse 16 they began discussing with themselves the fact that they had no bread. Oh, they're still confused this disciples.

And you can imagine Peter and James just talking whispering to each other like, hey James we forgot the bread. I know man we only have one loaf.

And Jesus is looking at them they're just like, oh boy you know SMA shaking my head. And Jesus is like okay I need to help these guys because they are on the struggle boat.

These disciples they're on the struggle boat and I need to help them out. And so Jesus like a compassionate teacher recognizing that his students are struggling.

[22:44] Notice how Jesus how he interacts with his disciples. They're not like the Pharisees. With the Pharisees he just dips he leaves. But with the disciples Jesus walks alongside them.

Rather than sighing deeply he asks them a series of eight questions. Do you see that? Eight questions just in these small short verses here.

And he wants to actually see help them see rightly who Jesus is. He wants to bring them from confusion to clarity.

And like a good teacher in Socratic fashion he asks them these eight questions really drawing out their heart and wants them to believe him.

He wants them to believe him. Notice three elements of faith that are underscored in these eight questions. First Jesus wants them to know something.

[23 : 51] Notice here. Why are you not discussing the fact that you have no bread? Jesus is clarifying it's not about the physical bread. Jesus wants them to know a particular content about himself.

He asks do you not yet understand? Not just once but twice do you not yet understand verse 17 and verse 21? Jesus wants them to know something about Jesus.

it's not just something about Jesus but he wants them to agree the truth about Jesus when he raises the question do you not remember?

And he takes them through a math lesson. Alright let's go back to the feeding of the 5,000. Yeah how much provision did Jesus provide?

Well 12 baskets. Yeah with how much bread? Five loaves. Alright great. These disciples nailed it. Now let's do a second remembrance here.

[24 : 54] Yeah the feeding of the 4,000 do you remember how many baskets? Seven baskets. Seven loaves. See Jesus wants these disciples to agree that those miracles actually did happen.

That great provision actually did happen. But it's not just intellectual assent. It's not the facts of the knowledge that Jesus wants.

But he wants to get after their hearts. He wants to get after the third element here. Trust. Do you see that? Jesus asks his disciples are your hearts hardened?

Having eyes do you not see? Having ears do you not hear? At the core of Jesus of these disciples Jesus wants them do you trust Jesus?

Do you trust him? Do you believe him? Jesus takes his disciples through a tutoring lesson on the boat.

[25 : 57] Wants them to get them to believe in him. But why? So what? Why does believing Jesus matter so much?

I mean just as we saw in Isaiah 6 9-10 there's a lot of downside to unbelief but there's a lot of upside to believe. In Isaiah 6 9-10 for those who actually turn see hear and actually believe they will be healed.

There's tremendous upside for believing. See if you believe this Jesus you can receive the abundant provision and healing that this Jesus brings.

See for the disciples in the boat Jesus points out two signs. But for us today do we not have greater assurance and proofs? Do we not have greater assurance in God's word to show Jesus died.

He broke his own body as the bread of life so that anybody who would see and believe Jesus that they would have eternal healing and be satisfied eternally forever.

[27 : 09] In the resurrection that Jesus is raised from the dead and anybody that would believe that they can be now alive dead to unbelief and alive in Christ.

We have more reason to believe. We have more proofs in not just two miracles but in all of the miracles and ministry of Jesus. These are evidences and proof just like that dishwasher.

I had to see it. I had to see the buttons. I had to see the clean dishes to believe and so it is with us. We can see the miracles, the proof, the signs to show that Jesus is worthy of your belief.

Will you believe Jesus? Will you believe Jesus today? You know, maybe you're here today and maybe you're maybe one step thinking about trusting Jesus, believing Jesus.

and I want to encourage you to keep exploring, to keep examining the claims of Jesus, the proofs, and to believe in him. Brothers and sisters in Christ, I want to just call you to continue to keep believing in Jesus.

[28 : 28] I mean, just like the disciples, there are days, there are seasons where maybe it's going to be difficult to believe Jesus. Maybe there'll be some confusion. But rather than hardening your heart, will you soften it?

Will you remember Jesus, what he's done for you? Will you remember Jesus and how he's already provided for you? Will you remember Jesus and all the miracles that he's already done, written proof in his word?

I mean, it's just a bank. Another deposit in your bank of faith, your bank of belief, in your trust. Would you remember? I think this is a call for us as a church family to help each other see Jesus rightly and to keep believing.

I mean, this is what we do in our singing as we gather together, just reminding with our voices to one another how great our God is, how great his provision is for us, his great provision for us as a church family and we are reminding one another to keep on believing, to encourage one another to do it.

It's part of the reason why we have VBS this year, is to help our kids, those who are attending, to see Jesus magnified so that they would believe, so that they would trust in Jesus.

[29 : 59] I mean, this is all the hard work that the volunteers have done with these set designs and the skits and the teachings, so that they would see Jesus to believe in him.

I mean, what would it look like for you this week to encourage one another, just to help someone believe, to keep on believing?

What would it look like for us as a church, what kind of culture would we cultivate here that we are one of encouragement for, towards belief in Jesus?

That when we are confused or we're hurting, that we would help each other believe Jesus who provides abundantly. We would help each other see Jesus rightly and believe in him in all circumstances, whether it's in good times or bad times, whether we're confused or we're actually having clear thoughts, in all circumstances would we help each other believe Jesus.

See, every year I go to the eye doctor to get my eyes checked annually. Thankfully, it's stabilized over the years but I do that, why? Because I need to readjust in case my eyesight goes poorly.

[31 : 13] And that's how we function as members of this church, that we're actually going to help each other stabilize and see Jesus rightly. We're going to encourage one another to keep believing, to keep bolstering our belief in Jesus.

See, Jesus abundantly provides and he wanted his disciples to believe. These eight questions in this last scene just aims at believing Jesus for his abundant provision.

And that's what I want to just persuade you of this morning, is to believe Jesus who abundantly provides. provides. The evidence is shown.

The miracle of his great provision was examined. But will you believe him? Would you believe Jesus? Let's pray.

Almighty God, we praise you for you are our great provider. God, we confess the areas of our hearts that maybe we don't trust or believe in you.

[32 : 27] We're having maybe a hard time believing you. We pray that you would strengthen us.

We pray that you would help us to believe, to trust, and to treasure Jesus more and more.

We pray that you would help us see you rightly and to behold Jesus. And we pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen.