

## Commentary on Mark Chapter 8, by Chuck Smith 1.30.22

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### January memory verse, Jeremiah 32:26-27 (NKJV)

<sup>26</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying,

<sup>27</sup> "Behold, I *am* the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?"

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Now, Mark has already told us how that Jesus fed five thousand men beside the women and children with five loaves and two fish. Now we find a second miracle of the multiplying of the food in order to supply the needs of the people. It is interesting at the beginning of Christ's ministry, when Satan was tempting Him, he said to Him because He was hungry after the forty day fast, "Why don't You take these stones and make them into bread?" But Jesus would not use His miraculous power in order to take care of His own physical need. But when it came to the physical needs of others, He was then willing to use that miraculous power; never to satisfy His own flesh or His own need, but was willing to use it in order to satisfy the needs of others.

In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude ([Mar 8:1-2](#)),

There again, we have that word related to Jesus Christ: compassion on the multitudes. Always, it seemed, when He saw the multitude of people, His heart was moved with compassion. Now, here He is compassionate because of their physical needs. It is interesting how considerate Jesus always is. Sometimes we become very insensitive to the needs of others, but never Jesus. He was always sensitive to the needs of the people. And He said,

I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and [they] have nothing to eat: and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers [many] of them came from far [long distances] ([Mar 8:2-3](#)).

So He's concerned for those people that have been with Him now for three days. And it's interesting if you do attempt to fast, the third day seems to be one of the most difficult days of the fast as far as physical strength. Somehow, after the third, fourth, fifth day, your body changes. You begin to get a little stronger and you begin to lose that tremendous hunger. But the third day is sort of a difficult day if a person is determined to fast. And He realized that they've been there now for three days. Some of them had come from long distances. To send them home in this condition, they would become weakened; some of them would faint.

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And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness? [Where can we get enough bread to take care of their needs out here in this wilderness area?] And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people. And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them. So they did eat, [and again, that word] and were filled [glutted, or stuffed, we might say today]: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away ([Mar 8:4-9](#)).

So again, taking just a few loaves, a few fish, blessing them and feeding a large multitude of people; and then again, gathering more fragments at the end than what they started with.

In the feeding of the five thousand, when they gathered there the twelve baskets, the word for basket is a word that signified a typical basket that was used by the Jews. It is interesting; this particular word *basket* here is a typical word that is used for a basket that the Gentiles did use. Whatever significance that might have is a matter of speculation. Some have speculated that much of this crowd were Gentiles, and so these Gentile type of baskets were available to collect the fragments that remained. Where the feeding of the five thousand men beside women and children, was near Bethsaida, a Jewish city. He is actually now over the other side of the lake, more into Gentile territory. But they see in that the significance that Jesus is the bread of life, not to the Jews only, but now He is that bread of life also to the Gentiles. Because He is now feeding many Gentiles also miraculously with that bread of life.

And straightway [immediately] he entered into a ship with his disciples, and [they] came into the parts of Dalmanutha. And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him ([Mar 8:10-11](#)).

Now, in those days the people were looking for the Messiah, and there were many men who came on the scene who declared themselves to be the Messiah. And quite often these men who came on the scene declaring to be the Messiah promised that they were going to do some spectacular feat. Some of them promised that they were going to divide the Jordan River and to stop its flow like happened in the days of Joshua. And others promised many types of supernatural feat that they were going to perform, like speak to the whole world simultaneously...on satellite TV and everybody would understand it in their own language. But these pretending Messiahs never did come through with their feat. But the Jews were looking for some supernatural, spectacular phenomena to happen at the hands of the Messiah in order that He might prove that He was the Messiah. So they asked Him for a sign from heaven. But it says they were tempting Him.

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And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation ([Mar 8:12](#)).

Another place and another gospel, it records that Jesus said unto them, "A wicked and an adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign will be given, except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Jesus did not perform miracles just to satisfy the curiosity of the crowd. The purpose of His miracles were always the helping of the helpless. He always used His power to minister to the needs of people. He did not use them to minister to His own needs. He did not use them just to make some spectacular display to draw attention, or the attention of people to Himself.

Herod had heard of Jesus and the miracles that He did and Herod wanted Jesus to perform a miracle for Him, like having some magician show you some fancy trick. But Jesus would not perform any miracles for Herod. He refused to perform miracles just to satisfy people's curiosity for supernatural phenomena. And so here, as they were seeking a sign, He just said, "No sign is going to be given to this generation."

Thomas, when the disciples told him that Jesus was risen from the dead, "We have seen Him," he said, "I will not believe until I can take my finger and put it in His hand, or take my hand and put it in His side." And so the disciples were gathered together and Thomas was with them. And Jesus suddenly appeared in the midst. And He said, "Okay, Thomas, go ahead. Put your finger in My hand. Put your hand in My side." Now, when Jesus said that to Thomas, the first thing it indicated is that Jesus was there listening when Thomas said, "I'm going to believe until." Though, they didn't believe Him at that point, Jesus was right there with them. As He said, "Where two or three of you are gathered in My name, I'm going to be there in the midst." And so, He was showing them, first of all, that He was in the midst of them when Thomas was expressing His doubts. And so, when He appeared, He said, "Thomas, okay, you wanted to do that? Go ahead, take your finger and put it in My hand. Take your hand and put it in My side." "Oh, Lord," he said, "my Lord and my God, I believe." Jesus said, "Blessed are they who seeing, believe. But more blessed are they who believe without seeing."

There are some people that are always looking for signs. I don't know that that is always healthy. We read in the scriptures that there is a man who will be coming on the scene very soon, and he's going to be showing all kinds of spectacular signs. And if a person's faith is geared towards seeing some spectacular sign or miracle or whatever, they're going to be in big trouble. Because when the anti-Christ comes, he's going to come with all types of signs and wonders and lying miracles, and deceiving the people by the signs that he is able to perform. So, it is not a healthy thing to put your faith or trust in the signs that a person might be able to produce. It is important that you put your faith and your trust in the word of God, what God has said. And to believe God's word, not requiring some supernatural sign before you believe.

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And he left them, and entering into the ship again [he] departed to the other side. Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and neither had they [any bread] in the ship with them more than one loaf [except for just maybe one loaf]. And he charged them saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, It is because we have no bread [Uh-oh, He knows we forgot to get bread]. And when Jesus knew it [realized what they were thinking], he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? [Why do you think that I said that, because you didn't bring bread?] perceive ye not yet, neither understand? [Didn't you understand?] Have ye your heart yet hardened? [Is your heart still hardened?] Having eyes [to see], see ye not? and having ears [to hear], hear ye not? And do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up [did you take up]? And they said, Seven. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand? ([Mar 8:13-21](#))

You know, if you've got one loaf, that's all we need. You know I was talking about us getting hungry or needing to eat while we were on our way across. Leaven was always a symbol of evil. It was the starter that they would always save from the previous batch of dough that they had made. And it was like the sourdough that the old forty-niners used to use. They always had their starter. They always keep a part of the dough from the previous batch that had already been leavened. And when they would make a new batch of dough, they would stick in this little part from the old batch, their starter that would start their fermenting process in the new batch of dough. And it would permeate the whole batch of dough by this process of fermentation, or actually, it's a method of petrification, or fermentation by which it permeates the whole loaf. And because just a little bit could permeate the whole loaf by this process of fermentation, it was, to the Jews, a very good symbol of evil, how just a little bit of evil tolerated can permeate throughout a whole system. And when Jesus said, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, or the leaven of Herod," He was talking about that evil of the Pharisees. That type of spirit that is able to permeate and infect others. Not talking about the fact that they had forgotten to take bread.

And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and [they] besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town ([Mar 8:22-23](#));

Now, rather than performing this miracle in front of all of the people, Jesus, rather, took this blind man out of town.

And when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught [anything]. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking ([Mar 8:23-24](#)).

In other words, he began to have some vision, but it was very blurry.

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After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up; and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town ([Mar 8:25-26](#)).

You just go home and don't tell anybody. This is an interesting miracle, inasmuch as it is the only miracle recorded where there was a gradual healing. The first time Jesus laid His hands upon him, he was not completely healed, but he had a partial restoration of his sight. And it was only after Jesus laid His hands on him the second time that he had clear vision, and so it was a case of a gradual healing and the only one we have recorded in the ministry of Jesus.

There is much about healing that I do not understand. I basically don't understand why it is that some people are healed and other people are not healed. If I were God granting healing, I feel that I would be more generous. And I would be more prone to heal those good worthy people, and there's some of the people healed that I would never heal them. So it's good that I'm not God, because I could really mess things up in a hurry. And soon, men would be coming on the basis of their goodness and their merit and their worth. And there would be no more grace; I could wipe grace out in a hurry. Because I definitely would give more by deservings than I would just grace.

I do believe in healing; I believe very strongly in healing. I believe there are all kinds of healing. I believe that there are gradual healings. Any healing process is divine, as far as I'm concerned. Even if the doctor has operated and removed the appendix or whatever and ties things off and sews things up, the doctor doesn't cause that skin to come together and to knit and all. He stitches it, and he knows that there is a process by which those cells will join together and heal and scar over and will seal itself up. He doesn't do that, he just knows the processes of healing that God has established. There's an established process of divine healing within our bodies. And it's nonetheless divine just because it is nature. Who created nature and the processes of nature?

So, here we have Jesus healing this man. And again, using spit, using unlikely methods. A guy comes and he's blind, and he says, "Can You heal me?" And Jesus spits in his eyes. Now, another time, Jesus spit on the ground and made mud, and He put the mud in the guy's eyes, and He said, "Now go down to the pool and wash the mud out," and when he did, he was able to see. Again, I love it, because the Lord is not going to be confined to a pattern. How we would love to get God in a box. How men love to tell you exactly how God is going to work, and they put the limitations and the confines around God. "And God only works in this way, and only works in this dispensation, and only..." and they're only trying to limit God. And unfortunately, many times they do limit God's work in their own lives, as did the children of Israel because of their unbelief. As we are told in the Psalms, "And they limited the Holy One of Israel because of their unbelief." But Jesus is using a variety of ways: healing instantly, here a gradual healing, sometimes touching, sometimes not touching, just saying a word, sometimes going to visit, sometimes just saying it and saying, "Go home, and you'll find it's done." But not being confined to a pattern.

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And Jesus went out ([Mar 8:27](#)),

Now He's at Bethsaida.

and his disciples [with him], into the towns of Caesarea Philippi ([Mar 8:27](#)):

So, He's leaving Bethsaida which is at the north end, the extreme north end of the Sea of Galilee, and now He is heading on up into upper Galilee, on into the area of Caesarea Philippi, which is clear on up at the end of the upper Galilee, right at the base of Mount Hermon. The name of it today is Banious, because when the Greeks came through, they built a shrine next to the cave from which the Jordan River used to gush forth. Now, after earthquakes and all, there was a change underground and the Jordan River comes forth a hundred feet below these caves almost. But it used to come out of these caves; so, they built this little shrine to the Greek god Pan, and the Greeks called it Panious. But the Arabs had difficulty pronouncing "p's" and they said "Banious" for "Panious," and so the name has come to be Banious now, of this area that was once Caesarea Philippi.

and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? ([Mar 8:27](#))

Now the time has come when Jesus is going to reveal to the disciples His true identity. Up to now, He has not declared Himself to His disciples His true mission. They suspicion it, I'm sure, but He's never really declared it to them. And He said, "Whom do men say that I am?"

And they answered, John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others [say], One of the prophets. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ ([Mar 8:28-29](#)).

Now, Christ is not a name; it is a title. It is the Greek for the Hebrew *Messiah*. And the word *Messiah* in Hebrew means *the anointed one*, and the word *Christ* in Greek means *the anointed one*. Now, it was customary in those days when a king was crowned to anoint that king with oil, to pour oil over his head in an anointing ceremony by which he was recognized and acknowledged now as the king. So, Jesus, using the title Christ or Messiah, was that signifying that He was anointed by God to be the King. And they were looking for that King to come anointed by God. "Thou art the Messiah, the Christ."

And he charged them that they should tell no man of him ([Mar 8:30](#)).

The time has not yet come to reveal Himself to the world. He's revealing Himself now to His disciples, but He does not yet reveal Himself to the world.

And he began to teach them, that the Son of man ([Mar 8:31](#))

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And notice, He did not tell them about His crucifixion until after He told them who He was. It is because they had a totally different concept of the Messiah. They were following the commonly accepted concept of the Messiah, that the Messiah was going to establish God's Kingdom, that the Jews were again going to reign over the earth, that He was going to overthrow the yoke of the Roman government and of their oppressors, and once again God's kingdom was going to come to the earth through Israel, and they would rule over the earth again. And because that was the common concept of the Messiah, Jesus, as soon as Peter acknowledged, "Thou art the Messiah," began to teach them that the Son of Man, which is a title of the Messiah given to Him in the prophets, especially in Daniel and in Ezekiel,

that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again ([Mar 8:31](#)).

So, now He began to prepare them for the fact that He was not going to perform as they expected the Messiah to perform in immediately setting up the kingdom of God. "But I'm going to crucified; I have to be rejected." The prophecy of Isaiah said, "He is despised and rejected of men." That has to be fulfilled. Isaiah said, "He would be numbered with the transgressors in His death." That had to be fulfilled. David, in the twenty-second Psalm, described His death by crucifixion that had to be fulfilled. And so, Jesus is telling them, "Look, it's not what you think it's going to be. I'm going to have to be rejected." Daniel said, "But the Messiah will be cut off." That had to be fulfilled. "And not receive the kingdom." That had to come to pass. And so, He's seeking to prepare them. "I'm going to be rejected; I'm going to be turned over into the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and they're going to kill me. But after three days I will rise again." Now, somehow when Jesus said, "They're going to kill me," this was so shocking to them, so far from their concept of the Messiah, that their brains just shut off and they didn't hear the rest of what He said. They didn't hear Him say, "I'm going to rise again the third day." It was just so shocking when He said, "They're going to kill me." "Wooo! I-yi-yi-yiiii!" And they didn't hear, "In three days I'm going to rise again."

And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men ([Mar 8:32-33](#)).

As Peter was rebuking the Lord for declaring that He was going to be crucified, that He was going to die. Peter was only expressing really his own personal feelings as a man who loved the Lord and didn't want Him to talk about His death. But Jesus rebuked Peter really for lack of discernment; he doesn't really understand the things of God, he only understands the things of man. If he understood the things of God, he would know that the Messiah would have to be cut off, that the Messiah would have to be slain, that the Messiah would have to rise again from the dead.

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And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me ([Mar 8:34](#)).

The three requirements for discipleship: first of all, is to deny himself. How far this is from the world's position today. The world today is saying, "You must assert yourself." And they even have created now assertive classes, where you can learn how to assert yourself. You don't have to take anything from anybody if you'll just learn to assert yourself. And I understand the women are crowding to these classes, as if they needed it. Jesus said, "No, if you come after Me, you have to deny yourself." Paul tells us, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, humbled Himself and took on the form of man" ([Philippians 2:5-7](#)). Denied Himself, in order that He might be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He denied Himself that place with the Father in order that He might come down as a servant and die on the cross. "So if you're going to come after Me," Jesus said, "you too will have to deny yourself and take up your cross, and follow Me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it ([Mar 8:35](#));

That person who is looking for life, doing everything he can to find life, its meaning, its purpose, and following his ambitions, his goals, seeking to save your life, you'll lose it.

but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? ([Mar 8:35-36](#))

Now tonight, think for a moment of the greatest ambition that you have. If you could be...play that game for a moment. If you could be anything you wanted to be, if you could have anything you wanted to have, what would be the greatest ambition of your life? What would you choose? Now, if in achieving that goal you lost your own soul, would it be worth it? "What would it profit a man if he would gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul?" If you gained the whole world, how long do you think you could hold it? Now, someone said something to me the other day that absolutely astounded me; I'd never thought of it that way. And it just really blew my mind. This fellow said, "I just celebrated my sixtieth birthday, which means I have lived 1% of the time since Adam." Man! That just shocked me to realize I've almost lived 1% of history, of the time of history since Adam. Man! What a shocking thought. So, if you gain the world, how long do you think you could hold it? How long could you enjoy it? A hundred years? Do you think you're going to live to be a hundred years old? Do you think by the time you were ninety-eight you'd still enjoy it? You see, the Lord is talking about eternity now. "What would it profit a man if he would gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul?" That's eternal. The gaining of the world is only for a short time. Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the children of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, because he knew that sin is always limited. That pleasure in sin has its definite time



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limitations. But that walk with God is forever, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? What will you take to trade for your soul? I am amazed at the things that people give in exchange for their souls. I'm disheartened. You know, they say the Indians over here were taken advantage of by the people coming from the Old World, by these early traders trading them these little baubles, glass beads, for expensive gold and silver artifacts. You think, "Oh, those poor Indians. They were taken advantage of by those white men coming in." And they were, unfortunately. They traded those expensive golden artifacts for just beads. How foolish. Wait a minute. What are you trading your soul for? What kind of a deal is Satan offering you for your soul? What will a man give in exchange for his soul? Some men, just for foolish pride; some men, for a few moments of pleasure. Satan is holding out these little baubles, and says, "Your soul, man, your soul."

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels ([Mar 8:38](#)).

Now, Jesus is saying, "Look, I'm going to die. I'm going to rise again." And now He's saying, "I'm going to come in the glory of the Father with the holy angels." So, the Messiah is going to come in glory and power and establish the kingdom of God, but not this trip. This trip the Messiah is going to be rejected, turned over to the scribes and Pharisees, killed, but on the third day, rise again. "But I'm coming again one day in the glory and in the power of the Father with the holy angels."