

OFF-BRAND JESUS

October 20, 2024 Sermon Study Guide Jon Ackerman, Director of Spiritual Development *Off Brand Jesus-Materialism - - Mark 8 (NLT)*

Jesus Feeds Four Thousand

8 About this time another large crowd had gathered, and the people ran out of food again. Jesus called his disciples and told them, ² “I feel sorry for these people. They have been here with me for three days, and they have nothing left to eat. ³ If I send them home hungry, they will faint along the way. For some of them have come a long distance.”⁴ His disciples replied, “How are we supposed to find enough food to feed them out here in the wilderness?”⁵ Jesus asked, “How much bread do you have?” “Seven loaves,” they replied.⁶ So Jesus told all the people to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves, thanked God for them, and broke them into pieces. He gave them to his disciples, who distributed the bread to the crowd.⁷ A few small fish were found, too, so Jesus also blessed these and told the disciples to distribute them.⁸ They ate as much as they wanted. Afterward, the disciples picked up seven large baskets of leftover food. ⁹ There were about 4,000 men in the crowd that day, and Jesus sent them home after they had eaten.¹⁰ Immediately after this, he got into a boat with his disciples and crossed over to the region of Dalmanutha.

Pharisees Demand a Miraculous Sign

¹¹ When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had arrived, they came and started to argue with him. Testing him, they demanded that he show them a miraculous sign from heaven to prove his authority.¹² When he heard this, he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, “Why do these people keep demanding a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, I will not give this generation any such sign.” ¹³ So he got back into the boat and left them, and he crossed to the other side of the lake.

Yeast of the Pharisees and Herod

¹⁴ But the disciples had forgotten to bring any food. They had only one loaf of bread with them in the boat. ¹⁵ As they were crossing the lake, Jesus warned them, “Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod.”¹⁶ At this they began to argue with each other because they hadn’t brought any bread. ¹⁷ Jesus knew what they were saying, so he said, “Why are you arguing about having no bread? Don’t you know or understand even yet? Are your hearts too hard to take it in? ¹⁸ ‘You have eyes—can’t you see? You have ears—can’t you hear?’¹⁹ Don’t you remember anything at all? ¹⁹ When I fed the 5,000 with five loaves of bread, how many baskets of leftovers did you pick up afterward?” “Twelve,” they said.²⁰ “And when I fed the 4,000 with seven loaves, how many large baskets of leftovers did you pick up?” “Seven,” they said.²¹ “Don’t you understand yet?” he asked them.

Jesus Heals a Blind Man

²² When they arrived at Bethsaida, some people brought a blind man to Jesus, and they begged him to touch the man and heal him.²³ Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. Then, spitting on the man's eyes, he laid his hands on him and asked, "Can you see anything now?"²⁴ The man looked around. "Yes," he said, "I see people, but I can't see them very clearly. They look like trees walking around."²⁵ Then Jesus placed his hands on the man's eyes again, and his eyes were opened. His sight was completely restored, and he could see everything clearly. ²⁶ Jesus sent him away, saying, "Don't go back into the village on your way home."

Peter's Declaration about Jesus

²⁷ Jesus and his disciples left Galilee and went up to the villages near Caesarea Philippi. As they were walking along, he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" ²⁸ "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other prophets."²⁹ Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Messiah!"³⁰ But Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus Predicts His Death

³¹ Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead. ³² As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things.

³³ Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. "Get away from me, Satan!" he said. "You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's."

³⁴ Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. ³⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. ³⁶ And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? ³⁷ Is anything worth more than your soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

A Life Application Study Guide

James 1:22-25 tells us to put into practice what we are discovering in God's word.

REVIEW

Here is what we've covered in the series: Judgementalism, Selfishness, Legalism, Self-Sufficiency, Universalism and today we consider *Materialism*.

Jon submits that every off brand is rooted in fear and pride.

- To Judge – pride – I know who's right and who's wrong
- Selfishness – fear – If I don't arrange for it, God won't give it to me
- Legal – fear – If I don't keep all the rules, God won't love me.
- Self-sufficient – pride – I can do it myself.
- Universalism – What I do doesn't matter – God will take care of it.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. When we read the story in Mark 8, we see Jesus feeding what was likely more than 4000 people after 3 days of His teaching and they had run out of provisions. What we are witnessing is a miracle as He multiplies 7 loaves and a few small fish to feed those present that day. He engages His disciples by using their loaves and their fish and instructing them to hand out the food to 1000's of people. They are walking out the miracle.
 - How have you witnessed Jesus' compassion and His provision in your life over many years or perhaps very recently?
 - When have you asked Him and trusted Him to do something that you were humanly incapable of doing? How did this strengthen your trust in His ability to provide for you?
2. In the Jewish faith a student of a Rabbi will physically follow him daily and observe and copy his behaviors, his speech, his prayers, his religious observances, how he treats others. When he eats, what he eats, his study of the Hebrew Bible (The Old Testament) his practice of the culture and the laws. We assume that the disciples would be doing the same with Rabbi Jesus and yet we see a departure in Mark 8 where they question Jesus, reprimand Jesus and are hyper focused on their immediate needs and they have somehow overlooked a miracle....again. They seemed to have forgotten Jesus' identity and their own.
 - How often do you find yourself focusing more what you feel you need in the moment (or what you don't have) than on time spent with God and in His word?
 - In those moments what seems to be distracting you or what are you believing about your circumstances?

- If we are called to truly become more and more like Jesus, what must we know about our identity and His? How might this shift your perspective?
3. In verses 22-26 we witness another miracle in Mark 8. Jesus gradually restores the sight of a man who had been blind but also instructs him not to return to the village on his way back home.
- His sight had been restored gradually in this text implying that faith and following Jesus may be a process. Where are you in that process of trusting and following Rabbi Jesus?
 - Consider a time when you heard God's voice instructing you. How did you respond?
 - How do you imagine that the man whose sight had been restored might have responded to Jesus' instruction?
4. When we know the truth of who Jesus is and we say that we follow Him, what must we be willing to give up?

- What are you still holding onto that Jesus is asking you to let go of?
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- When Jesus asked the disciples to give up doing life their way, what do you think they heard? What do you hear as He is speaking to you about following Him and where might fear or pride be a roadblock?
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5. The rich young ruler and the Pharisees believed that they had checked the right boxes, they appeared religious, but their hearts had missed a critical step. They were holding onto the things that prevented them from fully living the abundant life described by Jesus.
 - Read Matthew 6:19-21. What are your treasures here on earth and what treasures can only be stored in Heaven?
“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

 6. Our pursuits, our possessions, how we spend our time, and our resources will tell the world something about who we are and who Jesus is. These things will identify us. How do you want to be perceived as a Christ Follower, and will others see the Real Jesus in you or a counterfeit Jesus? What is the antidote?

WALKING IT OUT

- There is only One Jesus and He is inviting you to follow Him, but only Him. And so, the question is this, will you completely commit to following Rabbi Jesus?

- If your answer is yes, share this with a trusted friend who also is fully committed to following Him. Keep one another on the path as you do this together.