CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 8 — Provision, Revelation, and the Cost of Discipleship

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 8 is the turning point of Mark's Gospel.

For seven chapters, people have been asking, **“Who is this?”**

In this chapter, Peter gives the answer.

“You are the Christ.”

But first, Mark shows how slow people were to see.

Jesus feeds four thousand people with seven loaves.

The Pharisees demand a sign from heaven.

The disciples worry about bread, even after two feeding miracles.

Jesus asks them, **“Do you still not understand?”**

Then Jesus heals a blind man in two stages.

At first he sees people like trees walking.

Then he sees everything clearly.

This healing is a picture of the disciples.

They were beginning to see, but not yet clearly.

Right after Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus begins to teach something new.

The Christ must suffer, die, and rise again.

Peter cannot accept it.

Jesus rebukes him strongly.

Then Jesus calls everyone to follow Him on the road of the cross.

“If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.”

From this point on, Mark's Gospel turns toward Jerusalem and the cross.

The chapter moves through seven movements:

- Jesus Feeds Four Thousand (verses 1–10).
- A Sign Demanded (verses 11–13).
- The Leaven of the Pharisees (verses 14–21).
- Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida (verses 22–26).

- Peter's Confession of Christ (verses 27–30).
- Jesus Predicts His Death (verses 31–33).
- The Cost of Discipleship (verses 34–38).

The central truth of Mark 8 is:

Jesus is the Christ who provides abundantly for His people and opens blind eyes, but He came to suffer, die, and rise again, and He calls all who follow Him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and value Him above the whole world.

I. ONCE AGAIN NOTHING TO EAT

Mark 8:1 — A Large Crowd

“During those days, a large crowd gathered, and once again they had nothing to eat. Jesus called His disciples to Him and said,”

“During those days.”

Jesus was still in the region of the Decapolis.

This was mostly Gentile territory.

“A large crowd gathered.”

The healing of the deaf man had drawn many people.

“And once again they had nothing to eat.”

The situation was like the feeding of the five thousand.

But this time, many in the crowd were likely Gentiles.

Jesus' care was reaching beyond Israel.

Cross References

Matthew 15:32

> Jesus called His followers to Him and said, “I feel sorry for these people.”

Mark 6:34

> When Jesus landed and saw the large crowd, He felt sorry for them.

Mark 6:39

Then Jesus told the followers to have the people sit in groups on the green grass.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' care reaches people of every background.

Key Truth

The same compassion that fed Israel now fed the nations.

II. THREE DAYS WITH JESUS

Mark 8:2 — Compassion for the Crowd

“I have compassion on these people. They have already been with Me three days and have nothing to eat.”

“I have compassion on these people.”

Jesus Himself speaks of His compassion.

He felt deeply for them.

“They have already been with Me three days.”

The people stayed with Jesus for three days.

They were so hungry for His teaching that they stayed even after their food ran out.

“And have nothing to eat.”

Jesus noticed their physical need.

Cross References

Matthew 15:32

They have been with Me three days and have nothing to eat.

Mark 6:34

He had compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

Matthew 9:36

> When Jesus saw the crowds, His heart went out to them because they were hurting and helpless.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus cares about our physical needs as well as our spiritual needs.

Key Truth

Those who stay with Jesus will find Him caring for them.

III. THEY WILL FAINT

Mark 8:3 — From a Long Distance

“If I send them home hungry, they will faint along the way, for some of them have come from a long distance.””

“If I send them home hungry, they will faint along the way.”

Jesus thought about their journey home.

He would not send them away weak.

“For some of them have come from a long distance.”

Some had traveled far.

Jesus knew each person's situation.

Cross References

Matthew 15:32

> I do not want to send them away hungry, or they might faint on the way.

Exodus 16:3

> The Israelites said, “In Egypt we sat by pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted. But you brought us into this desert to starve us all to death.”

Deuteronomy 8:3

> He humbled you by letting you go hungry, and then He fed you with manna. He wanted to teach you that people need more than bread to live. They need every word that comes from the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows the details of our lives and cares about our journey.

Key Truth

Jesus thinks about the road ahead of us.

IV. WHERE CAN WE GET BREAD?

Mark 8:4 — The Disciples' Question

“His disciples answered, “Where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?””

This is surprising.

The disciples had already seen Jesus feed five thousand.

Yet they asked the same doubtful question.

They still did not trust Jesus to provide.

How often we forget what God has already done.

Cross References

Matthew 15:33

> His followers asked, “Where could we get enough bread in this lonely place to feed so many people?”

Numbers 11:22

> Moses asked, “Even if we killed all the sheep and cattle, would it be enough? Even if we caught all the fish in the sea, would it be enough?”

2 Kings 4:43

> His servant asked, “How can I set this in front of a hundred men?” Elisha said, “Give it to them to eat, because the Lord says, ‘They will eat and have food left over.’”

Spiritual Principle

We often forget God's past faithfulness when facing new needs.

Application

What has God done for you in the past that you need to remember now?

V. SEVEN LOAVES

Mark 8:5 — How Many Do You Have?

“Jesus asked, “How many loaves do you have?” They replied, “Seven.””

Jesus asked the same question as before.

He started with what they had.

Seven loaves.

More than last time.

But still far too little.

Jesus once again would use what was offered.

Cross References

Matthew 15:34

> Jesus asked, “How many loaves do you have?” They answered, “Seven, and a few small fish.”

Mark 6:38

> He asked them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and look.”

John 6:9

> There is a boy here with five barley loaves and two small fish.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus always starts with what we have.

Key Truth

God does not ask what we lack; He asks what we have.

VI. GIVING THANKS AND BREAKING

Mark 8:6 — Distributed to the People

“He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. Taking the seven loaves and giving thanks, He broke them and gave them to His disciples to distribute, and they set them before the people.”

“He told the crowd to sit down on the ground.”

Jesus brought order again.

“Taking the seven loaves and giving thanks.”

He thanked the Father.

“He broke them and gave them to His disciples to distribute.”

The same pattern as before.

Jesus provided.

The disciples served.

Cross References

Matthew 15:36

> He took the seven loaves and the fish, gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to His followers, who gave them to the people.

Mark 6:41

> He took the five loaves and two fish, looked up to heaven, gave thanks, and broke the loaves.

John 6:11

> Jesus took the bread, thanked God for it, and gave it to the people who were sitting there.

Spiritual Principle

Thanksgiving opens the way for God's provision.

Key Truth

Jesus gives the bread; His disciples pass it on.

VII. A FEW SMALL FISH

Mark 8:7 — Blessed and Shared

“They also had a few small fish. He gave thanks for them as well and told the disciples to distribute them.”

There were also a few fish.

Jesus thanked God for those too.

Jesus gives thanks for every gift, even small ones.

Then the fish were shared with everyone.

Cross References

Matthew 15:36

> He gave thanks for the fish and gave them out.

Mark 6:41

> He also divided the two fish among them all.

1 Samuel 9:13

> The people will not eat until the prophet arrives, because he must bless the sacrifice first.

Spiritual Principle

Every gift, however small, is worth thanking God for.

Application

Do you thank God for small blessings?

VIII. SEVEN BASKETS LEFT OVER

Mark 8:8 — Satisfied

“The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward, the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.”

“The people ate and were satisfied.”

Again, everyone had enough.

“Seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.”

The word for **basket** here is different from Chapter 6.

These were large baskets, big enough to hold a person.

Paul was later lowered over a wall in this kind of basket.

Once again, there was more than enough.

Cross References

Matthew 15:37

> Everyone ate and was full. Then the followers picked up seven baskets full of leftover pieces.

Mark 6:43

> They filled twelve baskets with the leftover pieces of bread and fish.

John 6:12

> When they had all eaten enough, He said, “Gather the leftover pieces so nothing is wasted.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus provides more than enough, every time.

Key Truth

Seven loaves became seven large baskets left over.

IX. ABOUT FOUR THOUSAND

Mark 8:9 — Sent Away

“About four thousand were present. After He had sent them away,”

“About four thousand were present.”

This was a different crowd from the five thousand.

It was a different place, a different number, and different baskets.

Jesus did this miracle twice.

“After He had sent them away.”

Jesus sent them home fed and strengthened.

Cross References

Matthew 15:38

> About four thousand men ate, plus women and children.

Mark 6:44

> About five thousand men had eaten.

John 6:10

> The men sat down, about five thousand in all.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus provides for His people again and again.

Key Truth

What Jesus did once, He can do again.

X. TO DALMANUTHA

Mark 8:10 — Back in the Boat

“He got into the boat with His disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.”

Jesus crossed the lake again.

Dalmanutha is mentioned only here in the Bible.

Its exact location is not known today.

It was probably on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Matthew calls the area Magadan.

Cross References

Matthew 15:39

> After sending the crowd away, Jesus got into the boat and went to the area of Magadan.

Mark 6:45

> Right away Jesus made His followers get into the boat and go ahead of Him.

Matthew 16:1

> The Pharisees and Sadducees came to test Jesus. They asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus keeps moving to bring His message to new places.

Key Truth

Jesus never stayed long in one place; there was always more work to do.

XI. A SIGN FROM HEAVEN

Mark 8:11 — Testing Him

“The Pharisees came and began to argue with Him, testing Him by asking for a sign from heaven.”

“The Pharisees came and began to argue with Him.”

They came to debate.

“Testing Him.”

They wanted to trap Him.

“By asking for a sign from heaven.”

They wanted something spectacular.

Something from the sky to prove He was from God.

They had heard of His miracles.

They had seen enough.

But they would not believe.

Cross References

Matthew 16:1

> The Pharisees and Sadducees came and tested Jesus by asking Him to show them a sign from heaven.

Matthew 12:38

> Some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said, “Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from You.”

Luke 11:16

> Others tested Him by asking for a sign from heaven.

Spiritual Principle

Hearts that refuse to believe always ask for one more sign.

Spiritual Warning

No sign is ever enough for a heart that will not believe.

XII. HE SIGHED DEEPLY

Mark 8:12 — No Sign Will Be Given

“He sighed deeply in His spirit and said, “Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it.””

“He sighed deeply in His spirit.”

Jesus was grieved.

Their unbelief hurt Him.

“Why does this generation ask for a sign?”

They had already seen so much.

“No sign will be given to it.”

Jesus refused to perform on demand.

Matthew adds that the only sign would be the sign of Jonah.

Just as Jonah came back after three days, Jesus would rise from the dead.

Cross References

Matthew 16:4

> A wicked and unfaithful generation asks for a sign, but none will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.

Matthew 12:39

> Evil and unfaithful people ask for a sign, but no sign will be given except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

Jonah 3:5

> The people of Nineveh believed God. They announced a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus will not perform for unbelief.

Key Truth

The greatest sign would be the empty tomb.

XIII. HE LEFT THEM

Mark 8:13 — Back to the Other Side

“Then He left them, got back into the boat, and crossed to the other side.”

Jesus walked away.

He did not keep arguing.

He left those who refused to believe.

There is a sad lesson here.

Unbelief can cause us to miss Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 16:4

> Then Jesus left them and went away.

Mark 4:35

> That evening Jesus said, “Let's go across to the other side of the lake.”

John 6:1

> After this, Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee.

Spiritual Principle

Stubborn unbelief may cause us to miss what Jesus offers.

Spiritual Warning

Jesus will not stay forever where He is not wanted.

XIV. ONLY ONE LOAF

Mark 8:14 — Forgotten Bread

“The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat.”

The disciples forgot to pack food.

They had only one loaf.

Ironically, they had just seen seven baskets of leftovers.

And the One who fed thousands was right there in the boat.

Some see a deeper meaning.

They had the one true Bread of Life with them.

Cross References

Matthew 16:5

When the followers went across the lake, they forgot to bring bread.

Mark 6:52

They did not understand about the loaves, because their hearts were hardened.

Mark 8:17

Jesus asked, “Why are you talking about having no bread?”

Spiritual Principle

When Jesus is with us, we have everything we need.

Key Truth

They worried about one loaf while the Bread of Life sat beside them.

XV. BEWARE OF THE YEAST

Mark 8:15 — The Pharisees and Herod

“Jesus warned them, “Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.””

“Watch out!”

A strong warning.

“Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees.”

Yeast or leaven spreads through dough.

A little yeast affects the whole batch.

The yeast of the Pharisees was their unbelief and religious pride.

“And that of Herod.”

Herod's yeast was worldly power and a hard heart.

Both refused to see who Jesus was.

Both could spread into the disciples' hearts if they were not careful.

Cross References

Matthew 16:6

> Jesus said to them, “Be careful! Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Luke 12:1

> Jesus said to His followers, “Be careful of the yeast of the Pharisees, which is pretending to be good.”

1 Corinthians 5:6

> Your boasting is wrong. You know how just a pinch of yeast works its way through all the dough.

Spiritual Principle

Unbelief and pride spread quietly, like yeast in dough.

Spiritual Warning

A little wrong thinking can affect a whole life.

XVI. BECAUSE WE HAVE NO BREAD

Mark 8:16 — Missing the Point

“They discussed this with one another and said, “It is because we have no bread.””

The disciples misunderstood completely.

Jesus was speaking about spiritual danger.

They thought He was talking about bread.

They were focused on their stomachs.

Jesus was focused on their hearts.

Cross References

Matthew 16:7

> They talked about this among themselves and said, “He said this because we did not bring bread.”

Mark 8:14

They had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf.

Luke 12:1

Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

Spiritual Principle

Worry about earthly things can make us miss spiritual truth.

Key Truth

The disciples were thinking about lunch; Jesus was thinking about their souls.

XVII. DO YOU STILL NOT UNDERSTAND?

Mark 8:17 — Hardened Hearts

“Aware of their conversation, Jesus asked, “Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened?”

Jesus asked a series of hard questions.

“Why are you talking about having no bread?”

They should not have been worried.

“Do you still not see or understand?”

After everything they had seen.

“Are your hearts hardened?”

These were strong words.

Earlier Jesus said the Pharisees had hard hearts.

Now He asked the same of His own disciples.

Even followers can become dull and slow to believe.

Cross References

Mark 6:52

They had not understood about the loaves, because their hearts were hard.

Matthew 16:8

> Jesus knew what they were saying and asked, “Why are you talking about not having bread? Your faith is small.”

Isaiah 6:9

> Keep listening, but do not understand. Keep looking, but do not see.

Spiritual Principle

Even followers of Jesus can grow dull to what He has shown them.

Application

Has your heart grown dull to what God has done?

XVIII. EYES BUT FAIL TO SEE

Mark 8:18 — Don't You Remember?

“Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? Don't you remember?”

“Do you have eyes but fail to see?”

They saw the miracles, but they did not understand them.

“And ears but fail to hear?”

They heard His words, but did not grasp them.

“Don't you remember?”

Memory matters.

Remembering what God has done builds faith for today.

Cross References

Jeremiah 5:21

> Listen, you foolish people who have no sense. You have eyes but do not see, and ears but do not hear.

Ezekiel 12:2

> Son of man, you live among stubborn people. They have eyes to see but do not see, and ears to hear but do not hear.

Isaiah 6:9

> Go and tell the people: “You will listen, but you will not understand. You will look, but you will not really see.”

Spiritual Principle

Remembering God's past works strengthens faith for present needs.

Application

What do you need to remember about God's faithfulness?

XIX. TWELVE BASKETS

Mark 8:19 — Remembering the Five Thousand

“When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets of pieces did you pick up?” “Twelve,” they replied.”

Jesus helped them remember.

Five loaves.

Five thousand people.

Twelve baskets left over.

They knew the answer.

But they had not drawn the right conclusion.

Cross References

Mark 6:43

> They filled twelve baskets with the leftover bread and fish.

Matthew 16:9

> Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered?

John 6:13

They gathered the leftovers and filled twelve baskets.

Spiritual Principle

Knowing the facts of God's works is not the same as trusting Him.

Key Truth

They remembered the number but forgot the lesson.

XX. SEVEN BASKETS

Mark 8:20 — Remembering the Four Thousand

“And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many baskets of pieces did you pick up?” They answered, “Seven.””

Jesus asked again.

Seven loaves.

Four thousand people.

Seven baskets left over.

Twice Jesus had provided more than enough.

Surely He could handle one missing loaf.

Cross References

Mark 8:8

The followers picked up seven baskets of leftover pieces.

Matthew 16:10

Don't you remember the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered?

John 6:13

The baskets were filled with the leftover pieces.

Spiritual Principle

God's faithfulness in the past is proof of His faithfulness in the future.

Key Truth

The One who provided twice will provide again.

XXI. DO YOU STILL NOT UNDERSTAND?

Mark 8:21 — The Question Remains

“He said to them, “Do you still not understand?””

Jesus ended with a question.

He did not give the answer.

He wanted them to think.

Do you still not understand who I am?

This question prepares for what comes next.

Soon Peter will begin to understand.

Cross References

Mark 8:17

> Do you still not see or understand?

Matthew 16:11

> How can you not understand that I was not talking to you about bread?

Mark 4:40

> He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus patiently leads us to understand who He is.

Key Truth

The greatest question is not about bread but about Jesus.

XXII. A BLIND MAN AT BETHSAIDA

Mark 8:22 — Begging Jesus to Touch Him

“They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him.”

“They came to Bethsaida.”

A fishing town on the north shore of the lake.

The hometown of Peter, Andrew, and Philip.

“Some people brought a blind man.”

Again, friends brought someone to Jesus.

“And begged Jesus to touch him.”

They believed His touch could heal.

This healing comes right after Jesus asked if the disciples could see.

It is a living picture of their need.

Cross References

Mark 7:32

> Some people brought to Him a man who was deaf and could hardly speak.

John 9:1

> As Jesus walked along, He saw a man who had been blind since birth.

Matthew 9:27

> As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”

Spiritual Principle

Bringing others to Jesus is an act of faith and love.

Key Truth

The disciples needed their eyes opened as much as the blind man did.

XXIII. OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE

Mark 8:23 — Do You See Anything?

“He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When He had spit on the man's eyes and put His hands on him, Jesus asked, “Do you see anything?””

“He took the blind man by the hand.”

Jesus personally led him.

A blind man must trust the one leading him.

“And led him outside the village.”

Away from the crowd.

“When He had spit on the man's eyes and put His hands on him.”

Jesus used touch, as with the deaf man.

“Jesus asked, ‘Do you see anything?’”

This is the only time Jesus asks someone about their healing during the healing.

Cross References

Mark 7:33

> Jesus took him away from the crowd. He put His fingers in the man's ears, spit, and touched the man's tongue.

John 9:6

> He spit on the ground, made mud, and spread it on the man's eyes.

Mark 5:40

> He put everyone outside and took the girl's parents and His followers into the room.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus leads us by the hand when we cannot see the way.

Key Truth

Trust the One who takes your hand.

XXIV. LIKE TREES WALKING

Mark 8:24 — Partial Sight

“The man looked up and said, “I see people, but they look like trees walking around.””

“The man looked up.”

He began to see.

“I see people, but they look like trees walking around.”

His sight was blurry.

He could see shapes, but not clearly.

This is the only miracle in the Gospels that happens in two stages.

Why?

Not because Jesus lacked power.

It was an acted parable.

The disciples were like this man.

They saw something of who Jesus was.

But not yet clearly.

Cross References

John 9:11

> He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”

Mark 10:51

> Jesus asked him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” The blind man said, “Teacher, I want to see.”

Matthew 20:33

> They said, “Lord, we want to be able to see.”

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual sight often comes gradually.

Key Truth

Seeing a little is the beginning, not the end.

XXV. HE SAW EVERYTHING CLEARLY

Mark 8:25 — Fully Restored

“Once more Jesus put His hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.”

“Once more Jesus put His hands on the man's eyes.”

Jesus did not stop halfway.

He finished the work.

“Then his eyes were opened.”

“His sight was restored.”

“And he saw everything clearly.”

Three phrases to show complete healing.

Jesus does not leave His work unfinished.

He will finish opening the eyes of His followers too.

Cross References

John 9:7

> So the man went and washed, and he came back able to see.

Mark 7:35

> At once the man could hear, and he spoke clearly.

Isaiah 35:5

> Blind eyes will be opened, and deaf ears will hear.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus finishes what He begins.

Key Truth

The second touch brought clear sight.

XXVI. DON'T GO INTO THE VILLAGE

Mark 8:26 — Sent Home

“Jesus sent him home, saying, “Don't even go into the village.””

Jesus sent the man home quietly.

He did not want crowds stirred up.

He was about to turn toward Jerusalem.

His focus was on teaching His disciples and on the cross ahead.

Cross References

Mark 5:43

> He gave strict orders that no one should know about this.

Mark 7:36

> Jesus told them not to tell anyone.

Matthew 8:4

> See that you do not tell anyone.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' mission was guided by the Father's timing, not by popularity.

Key Truth

Jesus was preparing for something greater than crowds.

XXVII. WHO DO PEOPLE SAY I AM?

Mark 8:27 — Near Caesarea Philippi

“Jesus and His disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way He asked them, “Who do people say I am?””

“The villages around Caesarea Philippi.”

This was far to the north, near the source of the Jordan River.

It was a Gentile area full of pagan temples.

There was even a temple honoring the Roman emperor.

In a place surrounded by false gods, Jesus asked the most important question.

“Who do people say I am?”

Jesus began with what others thought.

Cross References

Matthew 16:13

> When Jesus came to the area of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His followers, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

Luke 9:18

> Once when Jesus was praying alone, His followers were with Him. He asked them, “Who do the crowds say I am?”

John 6:67

> Jesus asked the Twelve, “Do you want to leave too?”

Spiritual Principle

The most important question in life is who Jesus is.

Key Truth

Among the temples of false gods, the true God asked, “Who do you say I am?”

XXVIII. JOHN, ELIJAH, A PROPHET

Mark 8:28 — Popular Opinions

“They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.””

The disciples reported the popular opinions.

These were the same ideas Herod had heard.

All were respectful.

All saw Jesus as a great man of God.

But none was big enough.

Cross References

Matthew 16:14

> They answered, “Some say John the Baptist. Others say Elijah. And others say Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

Luke 9:19

> They answered, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others say one of the old prophets has come back to life.”

Mark 6:14

> Some people were saying, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead.”

Spiritual Principle

Popular opinions about Jesus are often respectful but incomplete.

Key Truth

Calling Jesus great is not the same as calling Him Lord.

XXIX. YOU ARE THE CHRIST

Mark 8:29 — Peter's Confession

“But what about you?” He asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.””

“But what about you?”

Now the question became personal.

It was not enough to know what others thought.

“Who do you say I am?”

Every person must answer this question.

“Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ.’”

Christ means the Anointed One, the Messiah.

The King God had promised.

This is the center of Mark's Gospel.

Peter saw what the crowds had missed.

Cross References

Matthew 16:16

> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Luke 9:20

> He asked, “But who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “God's Messiah.”

John 6:69

> We believe, and we know, that You are the Holy One from God.

Spiritual Principle

Every person must personally answer who Jesus is.

Application

Who do you say Jesus is?

XXX. TELL NO ONE

Mark 8:30 — A Warning

“Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about Him.”

Why keep it secret?

Many people expected the Messiah to be a military king.

They thought He would overthrow Rome.

If word spread, crowds might try to force Jesus into that role.

The disciples also did not yet understand what kind of Messiah Jesus was.

He would first be a suffering Messiah.

Cross References

Matthew 16:20

> Then He warned His followers not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah.

Luke 9:21

> Jesus warned them strictly not to tell anyone.

Mark 1:34

> He would not let the demons speak, because they knew who He was.

Spiritual Principle

Knowing who Jesus is must be joined with understanding what He came to do.

Key Truth

The right title can be misunderstood without the cross.

XXXI. THE SON OF MAN MUST SUFFER

Mark 8:31 — The First Prediction

“He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and after three days rise again.”

“He then began to teach them.”

This was something new.

Mark's Gospel now turns toward the cross.

“The Son of Man must suffer many things.”

The word **must** shows this was God's plan.

“Be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes.”

The religious leaders of Israel would reject Him.

“Be killed.”

The Messiah would die.

“And after three days rise again.”

Death would not be the end.

This is the first of three times Jesus clearly predicts His death in Mark.

Cross References

Matthew 16:21

> From then on Jesus began to tell His followers that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, be killed, and on the third day be raised to life.

Luke 9:22

> The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the leaders. He will be killed and raised on the third day.

Mark 9:31

> He was teaching them, “The Son of Man will be handed over to people. They will kill Him, and three days later He will rise.”

Spiritual Principle

The way to victory for Jesus was through suffering and the cross.

Key Truth

The Messiah came to die before He would reign.

XXXII. PETER REBUKES JESUS

Mark 8:32 — Taking Him Aside

“He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.”

“He spoke plainly about this.”

No parables this time.

Jesus told them clearly.

“Peter took Him aside.”

Peter pulled Jesus away from the others.

“And began to rebuke Him.”

Peter scolded Jesus.

Imagine this.

Moments before, Peter called Him the Christ.

Now he tells the Christ He is wrong.

Peter could not accept a suffering Messiah.

Cross References

Matthew 16:22

> Peter took Him aside and began to correct Him. “Never, Lord! This must never happen to You!”

Luke 24:25

> Jesus told them, “You do not understand, and your hearts are so slow to trust what the prophets taught!”

John 12:16

> At first His followers did not understand these things. Only after Jesus was raised to glory did they remember.

Spiritual Principle

It is dangerous to tell Jesus how His plan should go.

Spiritual Warning

We can confess Jesus as Lord and still resist His ways.

XXXIII. GET BEHIND ME, SATAN!

Mark 8:33 — Human Concerns

“But when Jesus turned and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter: “Get behind Me, Satan! You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.””

“When Jesus turned and looked at His disciples.”

Jesus looked at all of them.

They may have been thinking the same as Peter.

“He rebuked Peter.”

Jesus answered Peter's rebuke with a stronger one.

“Get behind Me, Satan!”

Jesus was not saying Peter was Satan.

But Peter was repeating Satan's temptation.

In the wilderness, Satan tempted Jesus to reach glory without the cross.

Now Peter was doing the same.

“You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

Peter was thinking like the world.

The world wants glory without suffering.

God's way was the cross.

Cross References

Matthew 16:23

> Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get away from Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me. You care about human things, not God's things.”

Matthew 4:10

> Jesus said, “Go away, Satan! The Scriptures say, ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.’”

Luke 4:8

> Jesus answered, “The Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.’”

Spiritual Principle

Any voice that leads us away from God's way, even a friend's, must be resisted.

Spiritual Warning

Good intentions can still oppose God's plan.

XXXIV. TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

Mark 8:34 — Deny Yourself and Follow

“Then He called the crowd to Him along with His disciples and said, “If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.”

“Then He called the crowd to Him along with His disciples.”

This message was for everyone.

“If anyone would come after Me.”

The invitation is open.

“Let him deny himself.”

To say no to self.

To stop living for our own will and comfort.

“Take up his cross.”

In those days, a person carrying a cross was on the way to die.

Everyone knew what this meant.

It meant being willing to give up everything for Jesus.

“And follow Me.”

Follow Jesus wherever He leads.

Even to the cross.

Cross References

Matthew 16:24

> Then Jesus said to His followers, “If anyone wants to follow Me, he must say no to himself, pick up his cross, and come with Me.”

Luke 9:23

> He said to everyone, “Whoever wants to follow Me must give up his own way, take up his cross every day, and follow Me.”

Luke 14:27

> Anyone who will not pick up his cross and walk behind Me cannot be one of My disciples.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus means denying self, taking up the cross, and following Him daily.

Application

What does it mean for you to take up your cross today?

XXXV. LOSE YOUR LIFE TO SAVE IT

Mark 8:35 — For My Sake and the Gospel

“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and for the gospel will save it.”

“Whoever wants to save his life will lose it.”

Living only for yourself leads to loss.

Holding on to this life too tightly means losing what matters most.

“But whoever loses his life for My sake and for the gospel will save it.”

Giving your life to Jesus leads to true life.

This is the great paradox of the Christian life.

We find life by giving it away.

Notice: **“for My sake and for the gospel.”**

Only Mark adds **“for the gospel.”**

Cross References

Matthew 16:25

> Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever gives up his life for Me will find it.

Luke 9:24

> If you try to hold on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for Me, you will save it.

John 12:25

> People who cling to their life here will lose it. People who let go of their life in this world will hold on to it and live forever.

Spiritual Principle

We find true life by giving our lives to Jesus.

Key Truth

What we hold too tightly, we lose; what we give to Jesus, we keep forever.

XXXVI. THE WHOLE WORLD

Mark 8:36 — Forfeiting the Soul

“What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?”

Jesus asks a searching question.

Imagine owning everything.

All the money.

All the power.

All the pleasure.

But losing your soul.

It would be the worst trade ever made.

Nothing in this world is worth your soul.

Cross References

Matthew 16:26

> What good is it if someone gains the whole world but loses his soul?

Luke 9:25

> What good is it to win the whole world but lose or destroy yourself?

Psalm 49:7

> No one can buy back the life of another person. No one can pay God enough to save someone.

Spiritual Principle

Your soul is worth more than the whole world.

Application

Are you trading your soul for anything this world offers?

XXXVII. IN EXCHANGE FOR THE SOUL

Mark 8:37 — What Can You Give?

“Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”

Once a soul is lost, what could buy it back?

Nothing.

No amount of money.

No good works.

No earthly treasure.

The only price high enough was the life of Jesus Himself.

That is what He was about to pay.

Cross References

Matthew 16:26

What can a person give in exchange for his soul?

Psalm 49:7

No one can pay the price to rescue another person from death.

Psalm 49:15

But God will rescue me from the power of the grave. He will surely take me to Himself.

Spiritual Principle

Nothing we have can buy back a soul; only Christ's sacrifice can.

Key Truth

The soul is so valuable that only the blood of Jesus could pay for it.

XXXVIII. ASHAMED OF ME

Mark 8:38 — When He Comes in Glory

“If anyone is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels.””

“If anyone is ashamed of Me and My words.”

Some would be embarrassed to follow Jesus.

Afraid of what others would think.

“In this adulterous and sinful generation.”

Adulterous here means unfaithful to God.

The world often mocks Jesus.

“The Son of Man will be ashamed of them.”

Jesus will not claim those who refused to claim Him.

“When He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels.”

The suffering Messiah will one day return in glory.

The cross comes first.

But the crown will follow.

Cross References

Matthew 16:27

> The Son of Man will come in His Father's glory with His angels, and then He will reward each person for what they have done.

Luke 9:26

> Whoever is embarrassed by Me and by what I teach, the Son of Man will be embarrassed by that person when He returns in the shining glory of Himself, His Father, and the holy angels.

2 Timothy 2:12

> If we keep going through hard times, we will share His rule. If we turn our backs on Him, He will turn His back on us.

Spiritual Principle

Those who boldly follow Jesus now will share in His glory when He returns.

Application

Are you ever ashamed to be known as a follower of Jesus?

XXXIX. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 8

1. Jesus Provides Abundantly

“The people ate and were satisfied.”

Principle:

His compassion reaches even to our physical needs.

2. Faith Is Greater Than Signs

“Why does this generation ask for a sign?”

Principle:

An unbelieving generation demands signs, but faith believes God's word.

3. Beware of False Teaching

“Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.”

Principle:

Like yeast, hypocrisy and unbelief spread quickly.

4. Spiritual Sight Grows Over Time

“I see people, but they look like trees walking around.”

Principle:

Like the blind man, we often see dimly before we see clearly.

5. The Great Confession

“You are the Christ.”

Principle:

Peter's declaration that Jesus is the Christ is central to the gospel.

6. True Discipleship Costs Everything

“Let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.”

Principle:

To follow Christ, we must surrender self, take up the cross, and value eternal life above the whole world.

XL. THE TURNING POINT OF MARK

Mark 8 divides the Gospel into two halves.

Chapters 1–8: Who Is Jesus?

- Jesus teaches with authority.
- He heals the sick and drives out demons.
- He calms storms and feeds crowds.
- People keep asking, “Who is this?”
- Peter finally answers: “You are the Christ.”

Chapters 8–16: What Did Jesus Come to Do?

- Jesus predicts His death three times.
- He turns toward Jerusalem.
- He teaches about the cost of following Him.
- He suffers, dies, and rises again.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Knowing who Jesus is leads to understanding what He came to do: give His life on the cross.

XLI. THE TWO-STAGE HEALING

The blind man at Bethsaida is a picture of the disciples.

Before Jesus' Touch

Blind. They did not see who Jesus was.

After the First Touch

Partial sight. Peter saw that Jesus was the Christ.

Still Blurry

“Like trees walking.” Peter did not understand that the Christ must suffer.

After the Second Touch

Clear sight. After the resurrection and Pentecost, the disciples would see clearly.

Key Truth

Jesus is patient with our partial sight and faithful to bring us to clear vision.

XLII. WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW JESUS

Verses 34–38 describe true discipleship.

1. Deny Yourself

Say no to self-centered living.

2. Take Up Your Cross

Be willing to suffer and give up everything for Jesus.

3. Follow Him

Go where He leads, every day.

4. Lose Your Life to Save It

Give your life to Jesus and find true life.

5. Value Your Soul Above the World

Nothing on earth is worth losing your soul.

6. Do Not Be Ashamed of Him

Stand with Jesus now, and He will stand with you when He returns.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The cross is not an accessory to the Christian life; it is the shape of it.

XLIII. WHAT MARK 8 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Has Compassion

“I have compassion on these people.”

He Provides

“They ate and were satisfied.”

He Grieves Over Unbelief

“He sighed deeply in His spirit.”

He Opens Blind Eyes

“He saw everything clearly.”

He Is the Christ

“You are the Christ.”

He Must Suffer, Die, and Rise

“The Son of Man must suffer many things... and after three days rise again.”

He Will Come in Glory

“When He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is the Christ who came to suffer and die, and who will one day return in glory.

XLIV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

How was the feeding of the four thousand different from the five thousand?

It happened in a mostly Gentile region, with seven loaves and seven large baskets left over.

Question 2

Why did the disciples doubt Jesus could feed the crowd?

They forgot what He had already done.

Question 3

Why did Jesus refuse to give the Pharisees a sign?

They had already seen enough and refused to believe; no sign would satisfy them.

Question 4

What was the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod?

Their unbelief, hypocrisy, and hard hearts, which could spread like yeast.

Question 5

Why did Jesus ask the disciples about the baskets?

To help them remember His provision and realize He could meet any need.

Question 6

Why was the blind man healed in two stages?

It was a picture of the disciples, who saw Jesus partly but not yet clearly.

Question 7

What is the significance of Caesarea Philippi?

It was a place full of pagan temples, where Jesus asked who people said He was.

Question 8

What did Peter confess?

“You are the Christ,” the promised Messiah.

Question 9

Why did Jesus tell the disciples to keep it secret?

People expected a military king, and the disciples did not yet understand He must suffer.

Question 10

Why did Jesus call Peter “Satan”?

Peter was tempting Jesus to avoid the cross, just as Satan had in the wilderness.

Question 11

What does it mean to take up your cross?

To be willing to give up everything, even your life, to follow Jesus.

Question 12

What should Mark 8 change about the way Christians live today?

Mark 8 should cause believers to live:

- Trusting Jesus to provide.
- Remembering what God has done.
- Believing God's word without demanding signs.
- Guarding against the yeast of hypocrisy and unbelief.
- Being patient with spiritual growth.
- Confessing Jesus as the Christ.
- Denying themselves and taking up their cross.
- Never being ashamed of Jesus.

XLV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 8 asks several important questions.

Do I Remember What God Has Done?

Or do I forget His past faithfulness?

Am I Demanding Signs?

Or am I trusting God's word?

Is There Yeast in My Heart?

Pride, hypocrisy, or unbelief?

How Clearly Do I See Jesus?

Is my spiritual sight still blurry?

Who Do I Say Jesus Is?

Have I personally confessed Him as the Christ?

Am I Telling Jesus How to Run My Life?

Like Peter, do I resist His plan?

What Is My Cross?

What is Jesus asking me to give up?

Am I Ashamed of Jesus?

Do I stand with Him in front of others?

XLVI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Crown Through the Cross”

Peter had just made the greatest confession.

“You are the Christ.”

He was right.

But he had the wrong picture.

He imagined a Messiah who would win, conquer, and rule.

A Messiah of glory without suffering.

Jesus said no.

The Christ must suffer.

The Christ must die.

The Christ must rise.

The crown comes through the cross.

And then Jesus turned to all of us.

The same is true for His followers.

We cannot have the crown without the cross.

We cannot follow Jesus and avoid the road He walked.

This creates a powerful principle.

The world says, “Save yourself.”

Jesus says, “Lose yourself for Me, and you will find true life.”

Principle:

The way to glory for Jesus, and for His followers, always passes through the cross.

XLVII. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 8 is the turning point of Mark's Gospel.

Jesus feeds four thousand.

He refuses to give signs to unbelief.

He warns against the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod.

He opens blind eyes in two stages.

Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ.

And Jesus reveals that the Christ must suffer, die, and rise again.

Then He calls everyone to take up the cross.

Mark 8 therefore reminds us:

Never forget what God has already done.

Never demand signs when God has given His word.

Never let pride or unbelief spread in your heart.

Never confess Jesus as Christ while refusing His cross.

Never trade your soul for the world.

The church does not need people who want Jesus without the cross.

It needs:

Disciples who confess Him as the Christ.

Followers who deny themselves.

Servants who carry their cross.

And believers who are never ashamed of Him.

The same Jesus still calls:

Tell people that Jesus is the Christ.

Tell people that He suffered, died, and rose again.

Tell people that their soul is worth more than the whole world.

Tell people that He is coming again in glory.

And as you live:

Remember His faithfulness.

Confess Him as Christ.

Take up your cross.

Follow Him.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that Jesus has compassion on the crowds and provides more than enough.

Thank You that Your word is enough, even without signs.

Thank You that Jesus opens blind eyes and does not leave His work unfinished.

Thank You that He is the Christ, the Messiah You promised.

Thank You that He was willing to suffer, die, and rise again for us.

Thank You that He will return in His Father's glory with the holy angels.

Forgive us when we have forgotten Your faithfulness.

Forgive us when we have demanded signs instead of trusting Your word.

Forgive us when pride and unbelief have spread in our hearts.

Forgive us when we have wanted a Savior without a cross.

Forgive us when we have been ashamed of Jesus.

Open our eyes to see Jesus clearly.

Help us deny ourselves and take up our cross daily.

Give us courage to follow Jesus wherever He leads.

Help us value our souls and the souls of others above everything in this world.

And make us bold to stand for Jesus in this generation.

“If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.”

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Then He called the crowd to Him along with His disciples and said, “If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.”” — Mark 8:34

Central Truth

Jesus is the Christ who provides abundantly for His people and opens blind eyes, but He came to suffer, die, and rise again, and He calls all who follow Him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and value Him above the whole world.

Mark 8 in One Sentence

Jesus feeds four thousand, refuses to give the Pharisees a sign, warns His slow-to-understand disciples about the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod, heals a blind man in two stages, receives Peter's confession that He is the Christ, predicts His death and resurrection, and calls all who follow Him to deny themselves and take up their cross.