



“Don’t You Understand Yet?”

Mark 7:31-8:26

³¹After leaving the region of Tyre, Jesus again went through Sidon, toward the Sea of Galilee, into the midst of the region of the Decapolis. ³²They brought to him a man, who was deaf and could hardly speak, and they pleaded with him to place a hand on the man. ³³After taking him away from the crowd by himself, Jesus put his fingers in the man’s ears and, after spitting, touched his tongue. ³⁴While gazing into heaven he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha!” which means, “Be open!” ³⁵His ears were opened, the bond of his tongue was freed, and he began speaking rightly. ³⁶Jesus ordered them to tell no one, but the more he forbade them, the more widely they spread the news ³⁷and were being completely amazed, saying, “He has done everything well! He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak!”

¹In those days a large crowd was again gathering and had nothing to eat. After summoning his followers, Jesus said to them, ²“I have compassion on the crowd because for three days they have remained with me and have nothing to eat. ³If I send them away hungry to their homes they will faint on the way, for some of them have come from far away.” ⁴His followers replied to him, “How would anyone be able to feed these people with bread in the wilderness?” ⁵He began asking them, “How much bread do you have?” They said, “Seven loaves.” ⁶He commanded the crowd to sit upon the earth. After receiving the seven loaves, he gave thanks, broke them apart, and was giving them to his followers to share, and they shared them with the crowd. ⁷They also had a few fish and, after blessing them, he said to share them as well. ⁸They ate, were filled, and gathered seven hampers full of leftovers. ⁹There were about four thousand people. Then he dismissed them. ¹⁰After he got into a boat with his followers, he immediately went into the region of Dalmanutha. ¹¹The Pharisees arrived and began to converse with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven in order to test him. ¹²After sighing deeply in his spirit, he said, “Why does this generation seek after a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation!”

¹³After dismissing them and again entering the boat, he crossed to the other side. ¹⁴His followers forgot to bring bread and they only had one loaf of bread with them in the boat. ¹⁵He began admonishing them, “Look! Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod!” ¹⁶Yet they continued to discuss among themselves that they had no bread. ¹⁷After realizing this, he said to them, “Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet comprehend or understand? Are your hearts hardened, ¹⁸*‘having eyes that do not see and having ears that do not hear?’* ¹⁹Do you not remember when I broke the five loaves of bread for the five thousand? How many baskets full of leftovers did you gather?” They said to him, “Twelve.” ²⁰“And the seven loaves for the four thousand? How many hampers full of leftovers did you gather?” They said, “Seven.” ²¹He said to them, “Don’t you understand yet?”

²²Then they came to Bethsaida and they brought to Jesus a blind man and pleaded with him to touch him.

²³While taking hold of the blind man’s hand, he led him out of the village. After spitting into the man’s eyes and laying his hands on him, he was asking him, “Do you see anything?” ²⁴Looking up, he said, “I see people that look to me like trees walking around.” ²⁵Then Jesus again placed his hands upon the man’s eyes. The man looked through, was restored, and began clearly looking within all things. ²⁶Jesus sent him to his home, saying, “Do not enter the village!”

Mark seems to have arranged chapter 8 to parallel 6:31-7:37. Both start with a miraculous feeding of a multitude, followed by a crossing of the Sea of Galilee, a conflict with the religious leaders, clean and unclean issues, a conversation about bread, and a healing.

7:33 *Why is it significant that Jesus spit while healing the deaf-mute? (Leviticus 15:8)
[Remember the preceding context of the narrative!]*

7:31-35 *Why did Jesus spit, touch the man's tongue, put his fingers into his ears, and sigh?
[Remember the preceding context of the narrative!]*

7:31-35 *What does the healing of the deaf-mute symbolize? [Mark 4:9, 23; Romans 10:9-10, 17]*

7:37 *What should we learn from this Gospel proclamation?*

8:1-8 *What was similar about this miraculous feeding and others and thus what should we be reminded of?*

8:1-8 *What was different about this miraculous feeding from others and thus what should we learn about its inclusion in the narrative?*

8:11-12 *What is ironic about the Pharisees asking for a "sign" right on the heels of Jesus' second wilderness feeding?*

8:15 *Why does Jesus warn about the "yeast of the Pharisees and Herod"?*

What is the significance of using the metaphor of "yeast"?

8:16 *What was remarkable about Jesus' disciples worrying about not having enough bread?*

8:21 & 24 *What is significant about Jesus' closing question "Don't you understand yet?" and the immediately following story in the narrative of the blind man which takes Jesus two attempts to fully heal?*

8:22 & 26 *Why is it significant that Jesus leads the blind man out of the village and then tells him not to go back into it?*