



1.17.10 – Mark 8:1-21

Materials Needed: One small loaf of bread (barely enough for each child in the group) and 1 basket

Opening Activity

- Break the bread and give each child a piece (regardless of how small or large it is)
- Explain how tonight we're going to talk about how Jesus fed four thousand people with seven loaves of bread (proportionally even less than the small loaf of bread that we have tonight) and a few fish. Tell them that Jesus asked the disciples to give up their own bread and fish for Jesus' miracle. Then, place the basket in front of each child and ask them to give his/her bread to you (the leader) and think about how they'd feel if you (the leader) said that you could use their bread to feed four thousand people. Obviously you can't do that because you're not God, but discuss their reactions and how incredible it is that Jesus can satisfy all of our needs – physically and spiritually!

Discussion

How amazing is it that Jesus could use so little food to provide for and satisfy the needs of FOUR THOUSAND PEOPLE! Wow, and the even neater part is that Jesus did do this and He continues to do it today. It may not be with bread and fish, but He provides and satisfies all of our needs beyond our wildest imaginations!

Let's dive into tonight's passage:

Read Mark 8:1-10, 14-21

In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away." And his disciples answered him, "How can one 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 small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away. And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. And he cautioned them saying, "Watch out; beware 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, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They said to him, "Twelve." And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven." And he said to them, "do you not yet understand?"

This passage sounds similar to one that we read a few weeks ago, doesn't it? (When Jesus fed the five thousand people.)

Question One: Why do you think the Bible contains two such similar situations? 1) *Well, we see from the beginning of the passage that the people needed food. Jesus had compassion on them, just like he had compassion for the five thousand people in*



Mark 6, and wanted to provide for them physically. 2) Jesus wanted the disciples to remember how He was faithful and could provide for and satisfy all of their needs, not just the physical ones. (The disciples were quick to forget this though; see verse 16 & 17.)

Question Two: a) How many loaves of bread did they start off with in this passage? *Seven* b) How many fish did they start off with? *A few small fish* c) Did Jesus and the disciples have enough food for everyone? *Yes. The people were satisfied and they even had seven baskets full of bread left over!*

Wow, Jesus provided more food than they started off with and even more food than the people needed! That's pretty incredible! Jesus provides for us abundantly!

Question Three: In what ways has Jesus provided for you and surpassed your expectations? Allow the kids to answer on their own.

Later on in the passage, we see that even though Jesus had performed many miracles in front of the disciples and that he provided for their needs, they still doubted and forgot to depend on him. We see this when they began their journey in the boat and "forgot" to bring food. Didn't they just see Jesus provide for four thousand people? Couldn't they have enough faith that he could provide for the twelve of them?

Wrapping Up

It's easy for us to fall into this trap too when we focus more on ourselves and what we *think* we can do, rather than on Jesus. But just like this situation with the disciples, Jesus wants us to remember how God has been faithful to us in the past – ways that He has satisfied our needs and provided for us – and for us to turn our eyes back to Jesus and believe that He can provide for us now and in the future! And when that seems difficult, remember that the Holy Spirit (God's own spirit) lives in all of us who believe in Jesus and whispers the truths of God to us so that we may remember and put our faith back in Jesus.

Let's close our time in prayer and ask God to remind us of His faithfulness – how He's provided for all of our needs and exceeded our expectations. Thank him for His provision and how this demonstrates His exceeding love for us.