



**A BETTER  
WORD**

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## THE GOSPEL OF MARK

A Study Through the Life of King Jesus | with Pastor Nick Gatzke

# A Diverse Dinner Party

Mark 8:1–21

## THE BIG IDEA

*Jesus satisfies the greatest need of all people — not just some kinds of people.*

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## SERMON SUMMARY

Over a couple chapters Mark recounts two distinct accounts of miraculous feedings. While they appear similar, the details differ and they send an important message. The first miracle was for a crowd of 5,000. They were Jews in the wilderness, one day, five loaves, twelve baskets left — the number of Israel's tribes. The 4,000 are Gentiles. Now they are in the Decapolis, three days, seven loaves, seven baskets — the number of completion. Both crowds “ate and were satisfied.”

Then the Pharisees demand a sign, and he sighs deeply and refuses — which stands in sharp contrast to Gentiles who believed to the point of collapse and were fed afterward. In the boat he warns about the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod: cynical self-righteousness and proud self-sufficiency, both of which spread like yeast through a loaf. The disciples think he is talking about lunch. So he asks how many baskets were left over both times, and then: “Do you not yet understand?” They had seen it three times. Familiarity had made them hard, and forgetting had made them shortsighted.

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## DIGGING DEEPER

1. In Mark 8:1, the crowd of 4,000 stayed three days without food. Pastor Nick suggested that desire often follows a decision rather than preceding it. Where have you waited to feel something before you would do it — and what would it look like to decide first and let the desire catch up?
2. Think about the two feedings side by side: the setting, the days, the loaves, the baskets, the people. What is Mark communicating through the differences that neither account could say alone?
3. The Pharisees want a sign before they will believe; the Gentiles believed and were fed afterward. Why does Jesus treat a demand for evidence as hardness of heart rather than honest inquiry — and how does that connect back to Mark 6:6?
4. Define the two kinds of leaven Jesus names in verse 15. Why is yeast the right picture for how pride and cynicism actually work in a person, a family, or a church?

5. “Do you not remember?” What has God done in your life that you have stopped rehearsing — and what would change if you remembered it regularly?

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## LIVING IT OUT

Paul Grinberg ate at ninety-nine of the world’s hundred best restaurants and could not buy, charm, or network his way into the hundredth. When he finally got in, it was because the owner came to him. There is no back door into the presence of God, no connection that gets you a seat. God has to come to you — and in Jesus Christ, he has.

**Heart Check:** Has long familiarity with the things of God quietly hardened you — the sense that you have heard it all before, or that you have this handled? Where have you started depending on yourself instead of on Christ?

**This Week:** Write down three specific things God has done in your life that you had stopped thinking about. Keep the list somewhere you will see it, and read it on the day this week when you most need to remember.

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## REFLECTION & PRAYER

*“Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember?”*

— **Mark 8:18**

Ask God to break up whatever familiarity has hardened in you — then thank him specifically for provision you had forgotten, and ask that remembering would strengthen your faith.

**Your Prayer:**

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