

Finding Satisfaction for Your Soul

Mark 8:1-10

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How many of you like watching reruns? Most of us don't like reruns when they appear in the middle of the *NCIS* season but they're OK when we choose to catch an old show like *Everybody Loves Raymond* or when binging on a *Law and Order* marathon, right?

We love the new and novel but we also go back to the tried and true. I read an article this week published in the *Scientific American* from November 2012 entitled, "Why You Like to Watch the Same Thing Over and Over and Over Again." The subtitle serves as the summary of the article: "*Reruns spark contemplation about personal growth.*" Researchers have developed a new word called "*reconsumption*" and have concluded that we use familiar entertainment to measure how our lives have changed in positive ways: "*People gained insight into themselves and their own growth by going back for a do-over, subconsciously using the rerun...as a measuring stick for how their own lives had changed.*"

Our passage today feels a bit like a rerun. Let's lock in to see if the lives of the disciples, and our lives, have changed since the first time we heard a similar story from Mark 6:30-44. Our episode is found in Mark 8:1-10. Please stand as I read: *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,* ² *"I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat.* ³ *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."* ⁴ *And his disciples answered him, "How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?"* ⁵ *And he asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven."* ⁶ *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.* ⁷ *And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them.* ⁸ *And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.* ⁹ *And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away.* ¹⁰ *And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.*

While this incident appears to be a replay or retelling of Jesus multiplying a meal, it's actually a completely different event. This is important to know because critics point to these passages as evidence of a contradiction in the Bible – some believe there was just one event and the gospel writers got the details wrong. But that's not the case at all. Let's start with some similarities:

- Both miracles involved huge crowds who were hungry
- Jesus used a small amount of bread and fish to feed a lot of people
- The disciples doubted the Lord's ability to provide but were also involved in distributing the food
- In both miracles, Jesus took the little they had, gave thanks, and multiplied it
- The crowds ate and were completely satisfied and a large amount of food was left over

But there are also some key differences:

- The first miracle involved feeding 5,000 compared to 4,000 here
- The amount of bread is different – 5 loaves versus 7 loaves
- The leftovers from the first miracle go in 12 small baskets and in the second, 7 large baskets are used
- The first meal came after a day of teaching and this one follows three days of teaching
- The first miracle took place among Jewish people and this one happens in the Decapolis, a Gentile community

Jesus Himself tells us that there were two separate incidents in Mark 8:19-20.

When critics raise this as a contradiction take them to these words of Christ:

“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.’”

BTW, if you want to become better equipped to defend your faith, and answer questions raised by skeptics, I highly recommend over 25 free resources that are available on RightNow Media by Ravi Zacharias. You can sign up for this resource by simply going to our website.

The disciples no doubt saw both the similarities and the differences between the two multiplied meals. As the Master Teacher and Trainer, Jesus wanted to “*spark*

contemplation about spiritual growth.” And this was their chance for a do-over. Likewise, Jesus desires to reinforce some truths in our lives as well. He does this through repetition. *This is a good word for us because many times we want to hear something new but God wants us to live out what we already know to be true.* Here then are six reminders from this passage that will spark our spiritual growth.

1. We’re called to cultivate the compassion of Christ. Verse 1 begins with the phrase, ***“In those days…”*** This is referring to the 6-8 month period of time where Jesus is teaching the disciples the importance of taking the gospel to the unreached. As we learned last week, that also includes those with special needs. Here’s a summary of the sermon: *“Jesus goes to an out of the way place in order to reach someone who felt out of place because He has a special place in His heart for those who have special needs!”* I wanted to mention that we have some assistive hearing devices for those who are hearing impaired at the tech booth. I also realized that I missed a whole category of those with special needs – those who are struggling with mental illness. I also wanted to make you aware that we added additional handicapped parking this week.

Last Saturday night EBC member Shawn Moreno came up to me after the service and thanked Edgewood for addressing special needs. He had polio when he was young and told me that for many years he believed that God made junk and that he was junk. And then someone shared Psalm 139:14 with him and it totally changed his life. Shawn then left to go home and as I was getting ready to leave the building, he showed up at the doors and handed me this plaque that a friend made for him. It reads, “God Doesn’t Make Junk.” And here’s what it says on the back: *“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”*

Let’s go back to verse 1. These followers of Jesus were living out our first “G” because it says, ***“...when a great crowd had gathered.”*** Jesus recognizes that ***“they had nothing to eat”*** so ***“he called his disciples to him and said to them.”*** Jesus saw a need and he wanted his disciples to see their responsibility to help meet the need.

In verse 2, Jesus says, ***“I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat.”*** This is the only time in Mark’s Gospel where Jesus says that He has compassion. There are other passages that say Jesus had compassion but here Jesus declares his deep feelings for the crowd. The word ***“compassion”*** means to be moved in the inward parts, to feel deeply in the

gut. The idea is that there is a visceral reaction including a rush of blood when faced with something sad. The word from Latin literally means, “*to suffer alongside.*” Jesus is not absent from our agony or distant from our distress. He knows the crowd is hungry and it affects Him inwardly.

They have been listening to a sermon that lasted for three days (and you thought I preached long) and had run out of food. Wanting his disciples to sympathize and empathize, Jesus says: “***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.***” The word “*faint*” means, “*to collapse.*”

I love how Jesus knows that many had come a great distance. Some of you drive a long way each week to gather with God’s people. Way to go! If you travel more than 30 minutes, can you raise your hand? More than 45? An hour? That reminds me of something my dad once said when I introduced him to someone from our previous church who drove 45 minutes each week. My dad just started shaking his head and said, “*Why would you come that far just to listen to him?*” Interestingly, the phrase “*far away*” is used to describe Gentiles in [Acts 2:39](#). Matthew records in [15:32](#) that Jesus adds, “***I am unwilling to send them away hungry...***”

Jesus knows that His disciples must first develop great compassion before they will live out the Great Commission. He’s trying to shock and startle them to feel the pain of the people who have no food and are far from home. The world has been rocked this week by a picture that has gone viral. It shows a young boy from Syria who was wounded in the ongoing war in his country. This has shocked us and stirred us...and it should. One commentator from the New York Times said in response, “*Words have died and our tongues are tied.*”

In [verse 4](#), it’s as if the disciples throw their hands up in the air: “***And His disciples answered him, ‘How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?’***” Their response is almost an exact rerun of what they said before Jesus fed the 5,000.

In contrast to the compassion of Christ, the disciples are looking for a loophole. Jesus wants them to cultivate compassion but they are quick to complain. The crowd had no *food* and His core group had no *faith*.

2. A little is a lot in the hands of Jesus. Not letting them out of their responsibility to help meet the needs of these people, Jesus wants them to know

that a little is a lot when it's in His hands. This is a missional moment and He doesn't want them to miss it. Great things can happen if we can just get what we have into His hands! Listen to the question He asks them in verse 5: “***How many loaves do you have?***” ***They said, ‘Seven.’***” These loaves looked more like pita bread, only thinner, like a cracker. There was no way this would be enough to feed these people.

Let's pause and ponder something. Do you ever think something like this? *The needs are so overwhelming, what good is the little I can do?* Let me encourage you to follow this maxim: *See a need...meet the need.* I began our staff team time this week by asking each team member to think of one person who is in need and then to cultivate compassion for that individual. After a few minutes I asked each one to think of one thing they could do to reach out this week. We did the same thing as a group of deacons Tuesday night. Let's do that exercise right now. Who is God bringing to your mind right now? What can you do to help meet that need? *See a need...meet the need.*

Listen. *No one can do everything, but everyone can do something.* The key is to first grow in compassion and then to give the little you have so Jesus can do a lot with it. Compassion is when a hurt grows in your heart that makes you want to help the hurting.

- That happens every time you give in the offering plate or online through our website. The size of your gift is not as important as the compassion and commitment that flows from your heart.
- When you see the devastation caused by the flooding in Louisiana, where too many houses to count have been destroyed, a small gift can go a long way. We have posted a Go Fund Me link on our Facebook page if you'd like to help Central Baptist Church in Baton Rouge.
- Others of you are moved in your gut to see people fleeing their homes because of fires in California.
- A number of you are giving to refugees through the ministry of World Relief. Any little bit helps.
- Many of you gave to Youth Hope this summer so campers could have toiletries and other items. Many put their faith in Jesus Christ through these camps.
- The Walk for Life on Saturday, September 17th, is a great way to raise money for the life-affirming ministry of Pregnancy Resources.

- If you're moved by the fact that many children don't have shoes for their feet, we'll be doing a tennis shoe drive next month for kids who live on the west end of Davenport through the ministry of One Eighty. Last year we donated around 100 pairs. Pastor Kyle and I sat next to Rusty Boruff, the director of One Eighty on Thursday at a ministry meeting, and he told us they have purchased 200 bags for the shoes we'll donate – Edgewood's reputation for outrageous generosity must be spreading!

3. Recognize the power of public prayer. In verse 6 we read: *“And He directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves, and having given thanks...”* In verse 7 we learn: *“And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them...”* The word for *“sit down”* actually means, *“to recline,”* which shows that this was a celebratory banquet for hungry people. Notice also that they are on *“the ground.”* This is another difference from the feeding of the 5,000 where they were seated on the grass.

Jesus publicly gave thanks for the bread and publicly blessed the fish. Here's the lesson for us – *always give thanks and bless God for what He has given to you.* There are actually two prayers here – one of thanksgiving and the other a prayer of praise. We're to thank God for what He's done for us *and* we're to praise Him for who He is. We thank him for what He's given and we praise Him for being God.

Don't miss the importance of thanking God and praising Him in public.

- When you're at a restaurant, ask your server how you can pray for him or her and then thank God for your food and give Him praise for who He is.
- I had the privilege of praying out loud at our block party last Sunday night before we ate while we all held hands. It was powerful.
- I loved watching some Olympic athletes give thanks and glory to God these past two weeks.
- Consider joining with the group of people who pray here on Tuesday nights.
- We're going to focus more on praying during our Sunday night services this fall (they'll begin again on September 11). We'll praise by singing several hymns, we'll have some brief preaching and then we'll pray for some specific requests related to revival in our church and in our country.
- Edgewood is hosting a national prayer simulcast for women on Friday night, September 19th called, “Cry Out!”

4. Pass along what has been given to you. The disciples give Jesus the little they have and then Jesus multiplies it and gives it back to them so they can distribute it to others. They were to be the conduit of blessing. We see this in verse 6: “...**He broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd.**” They did the same with the fish according to verse 7: “...**He said that these also should be set before them.**” This is mind blowing – Jesus created sushi that never swam and bread that already had ground grain in it! The tense of the word “**gave**” is continuous, meaning that Jesus “*kept on giving.*”

I love the picture here. Jesus didn't just stack up some fish and chips on the ground like a big pile of mulch that they could shovel out to people. Not at all. The disciples came to Jesus and received the miracle and then they distributed the food to the people. And then they went back to Jesus for more and then went back to the people. Jesus provided and they dispensed. Their job was to come with empty hands, get filled up, and then pass the provision to others. Jesus keeps giving as long as the disciples keep giving it away.

This makes me think of the role of parents. We're to keep coming to Jesus so that He fills our empty hearts and hands so that we can then pass along what we're getting to our children.

It's our responsibility to shepherd, guide, discipline, disciple and train our children but we can't do this on our own. We must regularly be going to Jesus and then passing along what we receive from Him to them.

I have really enjoyed watching shots of the parents of athletes at the Olympics. They get nervous, scream and yell. Did you see the parents of gymnast Aly Rusiman cheering her on?

→ Play Video Clip

Parents, as we cheer on our children I want to pass along two equipping opportunities available this fall. The first is a seminar we are hosting on Saturday, October 22 that we're calling, “Parenting with Purpose.” This is open for all moms and dads of any age. The second is a group for moms called, “Entrusted with a Child's Heart” that will be meeting on Thursday nights beginning in September. Here are some quotes from moms who've been through this training.

Kodi Kargl writes, “*After posting on Facebook about a parenting frustration, someone let me know about a class that she felt would help me through situations*”

like that. I enrolled in Entrusted and it changed my life. Not only did it lead to me being saved, but shortly after, my husband Tyler as well...I felt like every page of the book was relevant to my life...I now have a community of other moms who are equipped with answers and helpful advice when I'm in need."

And Stacey Smiley had this to say about Entrusted, *"At the very first class, I looked around and felt very of out place being the oldest mother in the room. I had made a decision that I would not be coming back. The following Sunday the sermon was, 'God has you right where you are supposed to be.' My advice to anyone considering this class would be, no matter how young or old you are, how young or old your child is, how little or how much you know, this class will develop or strengthen your walk with God and give you the path to raise a loving, godly child."*

5. Only the Savior can give you satisfaction. Check out the first sentence in verse 8: ***"And they ate and were satisfied."*** The word satisfied means, *"to be full and fulfilled."* Let me lay it out straight for you. If you are seeking satisfaction in a person or a possession or pleasure, in your career or in sports, through a substance or the pursuit of success, you will never find fulfillment. Why? Because only a saving relationship with Jesus Christ will satisfy your soul. Check out Jeremiah 2:13: ***"For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water."***

Some of us don't see the satisfaction that only the Savior can provide because frankly we're too full from other things. Luke 1:53: ***"He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty."*** Jeremiah 31:25: ***"For I will satisfy the weary soul, and every languishing soul I will replenish."***

Speaking of the Olympics and how we celebrate those who win medals, I came across a stunning verse in Ezekiel 7:19: ***"Their silver and gold are not able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord. They cannot satisfy their hunger or fill their stomachs with it. For it was the stumbling block of their iniquity."***

6. God's supply will always exceed your needs. A week ago, Chanea Drummond made homemade enchiladas for Celebrate Recovery. When I saw her bring them in on Friday afternoon she told me that she was hoping God would multiply the food so there would be enough for everyone to eat as much as they

wanted. I didn't tell her but I hoped God would multiply the enchiladas so the staff could have the leftovers for lunch! Well, a miracle took place in the kitchen because we had an entire pan for our team lunch as we celebrated the ministry that God gave to Justin Rumley, our pastoral intern this summer.

After Jesus fed the crowd and they were totally satisfied, verse 8 continues: ***“And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.”*** The word here for ***“basket”*** is a large basket, like the kind used to lower the apostle Paul over a wall in Acts 9:25. That's a lot of leftovers!

God loves to give and give and give. Ephesians 3:20: ***“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us.”*** And He wants us to live an abundant, not ordinary life as stated in John 10:10: ***“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”*** Luke 6:38 tells us that when we're generous, God is generous: ***“Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”***

Summary

Most of us need reruns and repetition because we seldom get the message the first time. Here's a replay of where we've been today. As I go through this list, which lesson do you most need to apply? I'll state them in the form of questions.

- 1. How can you cultivate the compassion of Christ?**
- 2. What little thing can you put in the hands of the Lord?**
- 3. How can you participate in more public prayer?**
- 4. In what ways can you pass along what has been given to you?**
- 5. What do you need to change to find all your satisfaction in the Savior?**
- 6. In what specific situation do you need to trust in God's unlimited supply?**

We're not going to close with a song today but rather with Scripture. I'm going to put Isaiah 55:1-3 up on the screen and I want you to meditate on it for awhile and then I'm going to use this passage as a paradigm for our closing prayer: ***“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me,***

and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live.”

Membership Saturday Night – Chris Pace