

## 1. Seeking for a Sign Mark 8:1-13

Here Jesus had miraculously fed about four thousand people. The bread as well as the fish multiplied and had satisfied the people. The multiplication of the fish should make us pause and think. The fish could not have been raw or uncooked. It had to be something that was well cooked and edible. So Jesus did not just produce more fish but fish that was ready to be eaten. Jesus developed a process to expedite cooking. This indeed was a miracle. When the Pharisees came to Jesus asking for a sign, he simply refused. Sometimes as disciples God has done several things in our lives. If we were to reflect upon them we would surely come to a conclusion that the hand of God was clearly involved. Yet at times we want new signs, new wonders to happen in our lives. We must understand to accept Jesus as God is more important than seeking signs from God.

## 2. Seeking Clear Understanding Mark 8:14-21

Jesus and his disciples were in the boat. Jesus warned his disciples to watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod. This meant that they had to watch out for the evil of both the Pharisees and Herod Antipas. The disciples misunderstood this and thought Jesus was referring to them about not having bread. So Jesus had to explain. At times we fail to grasp the plain meaning of what the Bible says. We are scared like these disciples and think about what wrong we have done. Do you understand when you read the bible? Do you understand his words? Do you understand the verses? Do you understand the background? Do you understand the culture in which the bible was written and most importantly do you ask someone when you don't understand at all? [We need to learn to pay attention and ask questions if we do not understand the words of Christ]. Let's make a decision to get a clear understanding of the scriptures. Such an understanding will motivate us to always follow God and alter our unproductive minds.

## 3. Seeking to See Mark 8:22-26

A blind man was brought to Jesus. After Jesus had put his hands on him he enquired whether he saw anything. The man looked up and saw people like trees. Jesus put his hand on the blind man's eye a second time. This time the man's sight was restored. Why did Jesus chose to do the healing in two stages? Some people may argue that healing process is gradual. I do not think this argument is valid. Even if it was a partial healing and then a complete healing the time gap was short. Jesus did not leave the guy for a few days to suffer.

Also Jesus did not leave the guy and meet him after a few days to heal completely. The reason I think for the healing in two stages is to let us know spiritual truths are not clearly seen instantaneously. At times we need a second touch of grace by the Holy Spirit so that we can deeply understand what Jesus is saying in the scriptures. When we get a new insight or hear something that stirs us from within, we should read the passage again so that a clear understanding can be grasped. A few things may be helpful

- a) Ask God for wisdom
- b) Look at the context
- c) Question your understanding

d) See if your new understanding is going against the scriptures, No new understanding should go against scriptures.

We should always seek to see clearly.

#### **4. Seeking for Explicit Answers Mark 8:27-30**

While walking Jesus asked a question to his disciples. He wanted to know who people thought he was. Their replies were John the Baptist, Elijah, The Messiah. Then Jesus wanted to know their answer about who he was. Peter answered that Jesus was the messiah. Messiah which means the anointed one or Christ.

The scripture says that he was at Caesarea Philippi, which was a pagan city of Greek Gods. A lot of pagan Gods were worshiped in its temples. Hence, Jesus wanted to talk about the so called gods and the real Son of God. Anything was ok with the pagan gods, but only holiness was accepted by the Son of God. Any sacrifice would do with the pagan gods, but only a living sacrifice was accepted by the Son of God. Convenience was allowed by pagan gods, but only a true commitment would be accepted by the Son of God. If we truly believe Jesus is God, then it will show in our connections. Jesus would stand out in our school, offices, social media, language, display pictures and fellowship. Have you noticed how quietly our fellowship changes to everything else but what convicted us? Jesus demands an explicit answer. We should provide it with our walk and talk.

#### **5. Seeking the Mind of God Mark 8:31-33**

Jesus then began to explain that he must suffer, be rejected by the chief priests, killed and after 3 days rise again. When Peter heard this he began to rebuke Jesus. In other words Peter did not want Jesus to die. The plan of Jesus, which was the plan of God, was to save the lost. This could only happen when an unblemished lamb (Jesus Christ) would be sacrificed for the sins of all human beings that were living, lived and were going to live. Jesus had to die. Peter was not happy. He did not have the mind of Jesus. Upon hearing Peter's response Jesus rebuked him and even called him Satan. Peter had mere thoughts of a human and not the mind of God. Being a disciple is all about having the mind of God. We must challenge ourselves to think like God and then act like God. What God thinks matters more than what others (include yourself) think. Our noble thoughts could be an enemy of God's thinking. That is why it is so important that whenever we read our Bible we must match our mind with God's mind and not match God's mind with our mind. What are some areas your mind is not like God – Discuss and pray.

#### **6. Seeking to Save One's Soul Mark 8:34-38**

Here Jesus explains that whoever wants to be his disciple must deny them self and take up their cross and follow him. Taking up the cross meant that a prisoner had to carry his own cross to the place of execution. The one who was carrying the cross had no power, no say and no freedom. What Jesus meant by carrying the cross was that absolute submission was required by his followers. Carrying the cross was difficult. Carrying the cross was painful. Carrying the cross meant no future. Carrying the cross meant the end of you. Yet, the apostles and the first century Christians who our own brothers and sisters never hesitated to take up this painful cross to be a follower of Christ. The reason they joyfully endured the pain is because they understood that Jesus had gone to heaven. They knew after the cross they would get the crown. As disciples of Christ we should never be ashamed to talk about God to anyone, to declare boldly what he has done to the lost people and in fellowship to one another with the mighty deeds he has done in our lives. Remember - No cross, no crown!