

BIBLE STORY: THE FEEDING OF THE 4,000

Mark 8:1-9

Central Thoughts

- Jesus has compassion for all people in their basic human needs.
- Jesus is the Creator and Savior of all people.
- Jesus is the source of daily bread.
- Jesus calls us to trust in Him for everything that we need.

Discussion Questions

According to the previous chapter (Mark 7:31) what area were Jesus and His disciples in when this multitude had gathered about Jesus?

The region of the Decapolis (ten cities) to the east of the sea of Galilee.

Was this region predominantly Jewish or Gentile?

Gentile

How does this differ from the feeding of the 5,000?

The feeding of the 5,000 took place with a multitude that was more Jewish in nature.

What do the two miracles of the miraculous feedings teach us about Jesus?

He is the Son of God and Savior of all people, both Jew and Gentile.

What motivated Jesus to perform this miracle?

He had compassion on the people because they had been with Him for three days and had nothing to eat.

What does compassion mean?

Love and mercy that has pity and empathy for the needs of others.

What do the three days remind us of?

Jesus resurrection and our Baptism in the name of the Triune God

What does Jesus say will happen to this multitude if He sends them back to their homes?

They will faint on the way because some had come from a great distance.

What question do the disciples ask Jesus?

“How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?”

What do the disciples think by the question they raise?

That feeding this multitude is impossible

What is amazing about the disciples' conclusion?

They had already witnessed Jesus miraculously feed the 5,000

How could we turn the disciples' question of unbelief into a statement of faith?

There is only One who could satisfy the multitude in the wilderness, the Son of God who is both our Creator and Savior.

How many loaves of bread did they have?

Seven

What is the significance of the number seven in the Scriptures?

It is the perfect number for God and signifies the seven-fold gifts and working of the Holy Spirit.

What did Jesus command the multitude to do and what does it signify?

He commanded them to sit down. They took on the posture of a congregation who would be provided for and served by Him

What did Jesus do with the seven loaves?

He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke, and gave to the disciples to give to the multitude.

What do these words and actions remind us of?

The Lord's Supper

What did Jesus do with the few fish they had?

He blessed the fish and commanded the disciples to set them before the multitude.

What was the result of what Jesus did?

The entire multitude ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments.

What is the significance of four in the number 4,000?

It signifies the entire earth (the "four winds" or "four corners" that is north, south, east and west). Jesus is the Savior of the world and the One who provides daily bread to all.

Meditation on the Bible Story

In the feeding of the 4,000, Jesus demonstrates His compassion for people in the most basic of human needs—the need for daily bread. He is the only One who can satisfy this multitude in the wilderness, because He is both their Creator and their Savior. As Jesus showed Himself to be the promised Messiah for the Jews in the feeding of the 5,000, so He shows Himself to be the Savior and the One who provides for all people in the feeding of the 4,000. Jesus' compassion means that His heart breaks open in love for us. He understands our needs. He cares about us and has sympathy for us. We learn in the feeding of the 4,000 that Jesus is not only the Bread of Life, as He taught after the feeding of the 5,000, but that He is also the one who provides us with daily bread for our bodies. In this miracle we see an illustration of the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer. "God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving" (Small Catechism). Jesus calls us to trust in Him for everything. He who died upon the cross to save the whole world from sin and death will also provide us with everything that we need to support us in this body and life. As the multitude had plenty to eat and were satisfied in the wilderness, so the Lord will satisfy all our needs according to His good and gracious will.

Prayer on the Bible Story

O Lord Jesus, as You had compassion on the multitude and provided food to nourish their bodies, have compassion on us and provide us with everything that we need to support us in this life. Teach us to trust in You for daily bread and to never be afraid that You will not take care of us; in Your holy name we pray. Amen.



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