

THE GOSPEL OF MARK: STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

8, The Gospel Paradox in this sin-fallen world demands faith in Divine providence integral to the salvation of the world, progressive revelation recorded in Holy Scripture, predictive prophecy terminating in Christ's New Covenant Gospel, and promised gospel consummation to the glory of God, Part 8B

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Introduction: Not only is Jesus the Gospel source being uniquely Son of God, but also by the Incarnation the perfect and personal God-Man, so the gospel of salvation in this sin-fallen world is also about the supernatural union of Christian believers with Christ.

This part of the New Covenant Gospel about the supernatural union with Christ is a holy mystery celebrated by the New Covenant signs and seals of baptism and the Lord's Supper,

“Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ, and his benefits; and to confirm our interest in him: as also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his word.” (Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter 27, sect. 1)

“Baptism...a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ...” (WCF Chapter 28, sect. 1)

“...the Lord's Supper, to be observed in his church, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death; the sealing of all benefits thereof unto true believers...and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other, as members of his mystical body.” (WCF Chapter 29, sect 1)

Remember Baptism and the Lord's Supper are public covenantal and communal Christian ordinances Christ commissioned to be kept and observed by His corporate body the Church.

One of the causes for the resulting spiritual weakness of the visible evangelical churches is an unbalanced emphasis of the personal Jesus individualized as a designer Savior:

“Reach out and touch faith/ Your own personal Jesus/ Someone to hear your prayers/ Someone who cares/ Your own personal Jesus...”, by Martin Gore of the techno band Depeche Mode and covered by other pop singers from the 90's on...

Contrast to “Baptized into Your Name Most Holy”, #415...

8, The Gospel Paradox in this sin-fallen world demands faith in Divine providence integral to the salvation of the world, progressive revelation recorded in Holy Scripture, predictive prophecy terminating in Christ's New Covenant Gospel, and promised gospel consummation to the glory of God.

vv. 1-10, Jesus' miraculous feeding of the multitude of 4,000+ people (cf. Matt. 15:38) in gentile territory further demonstrates God's providence integral to the salvation of the world...

v. 1, “In those days...”, following chapter 7 while Jesus was still in the region of Decapolis southeast of the Sea of Galilee, a predominately gentile area...

vv. 1-3, Jesus not only showed compassion by His works, He also expressed words of sympathy and pity about the human condition concerning all kinds of needs for the body, soul, and spirit...

- Another great crowd of people gathered to Jesus in a remote place out in the country for an impromptu spiritual retreat, but did not bring enough food provisions for 3 days, although there were some few “bag lunch” bread and fish, cf. vv. 4 & 7...
- These gentile people came from far and wide across this frontier region following the praise trail, cf. 7:36-37...
- Jesus would not dismiss or abandon them to hunger and thirst exhaustion, whatever the life-threatening possibilities ...

**Remember (Mk. 1:12-13, et al.) Jesus had been in the wilderness suffering from effects of hunger and thirst to the body, soul, and spirit while in a spiritual show-down with the Devil by real temptation to sin, “For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.” (Hebrews 2:16-18) As Christian ministers and believers in the New Covenant Church we too are to give and receive words and works of compassion caring for the whole body personally and the whole Body of Christ the Church. When the application of so much of Scripture is offered as individualized, designer Christian identity without the larger connection to the invisible church made visible, then we like the pre-resurrection Disciples are stumbling over realizing our better identity in Christ...*

vv.4-9, Once again Jesus proved the faith of the disciples –perhaps including more than the 12 Apostles—by reiterating His Messianic identity to be more than a prophet with occasional visitations of Divine presence and powers...

- Questioning the validity of this episode because it is similar to the feeding of the 5,000+ in chapter 6, et al., is to be more foolish than the “little-faith” disciples as well as disregarding Jesus’ other repeated miracles such as healing the lame, diseased/sick, blind, and raising the dead. Also the differences between these two accounts are explicit and offer important contrasts and historical context for Jesus’ Messianic Self-identification:
different → location, people, number of people, number of bread loaves & small fish plus leftovers (significance in symbolic Biblical numerology), separate prayers over bread and the fish not accommodating a Jewish audience perhaps not separating the men from the women and children into groups, use of large hamper-baskets (cf. Acts 9:25), significant follow up context...

**As Christian ministers and believers in the New Covenant Church, when is the last time we have missed a meal or been personally inconvenienced to give more attention to Jesus’ presence and teaching? How comfortable are we with different Christian cultural practices in social settings not formal worship (self-made rules and rituals)? Also how often has Jesus had to repeat and reiterate to us that He is not only our Savior, but the Savior of the world, e.g. every Lord’s Day+...*

