



Bible Study
2014-2015

Heart of a Servant

The Gospel of Mark

LESSON 8

Many schools throughout the country have discovered the many benefits of testing children at an early age for the ways they learn material.

Some children learn best by observation. They have to see something being performed in order to learn a new skill or they have to visualize problems in order to solve them. They can recall by memory things that they have observed much quicker than a conversation they had.

Whereas some children are auditory learners. It isn't what they see that marks their memories, but what they hear. Oftentimes teachers will encourage this kind of learner to read out loud or audibly speak about problems in order to work them out. They will recall lyrics to songs easier than what they watched on television.

Lastly, there are those children who learn best by experimentation; hands-on trial and error. They like to have something in their hands that they can touch and move or manipulate in order to accomplish a goal. They are most easily frustrated because not everything taught in school can be practically felt or touched, yet once they have learned a task by experience, it is not forgotten.

The Lord Jesus was called Master, Teacher, and Rabbi. In this chapter, we see that He was more than a brilliant professor in the way He would teach men and women truth. No matter the limitations of others, He taught by way of visual demonstrations, oral sermons, expositions, and through tactile experiences. Even the apostle John would begin his first letter by saying, "We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life." 1 John 1:1 NLT

*"Experience: that most brutal of teachers.
But you learn, my God do you learn." ~ C.S. Lewis*

Read Mark 8:1-3

1. Matthew 15:29-31 tells us that Jesus and His disciples are on a hillside overlooking the Sea of Galilee with a crowd of more than 4,000 people following them. Jesus is the Great Shepherd and highly aware of the needs of this flock, so He has touched and healed many, taught and ministered to most, and now He knows that every one of them has a practical need that must be met.

- a. When Jesus takes note that there is no food and everyone needs to eat, what is the first thing He does? Fill in the blank from verse 1 for emphasis.

“...And having nothing to eat, Jesus _____
to Him and said...”

2. Jesus is God and could have had heavenly “manna” appear in the morning just as He did in Exodus 16. He is also the Creator and could have used this opportunity to create something out of nothing for the people. But the people’s lack provided a platform to teach the disciples essential truths about Who He was, His limitless abilities, and where their faith needed to be secure. Jesus also wanted to reveal the tenderness of His love and concern for others.

- a. Once the disciples drew close, He conveyed the desire of His heart to them. Jesus said He had “compassion” on the multitude. Use the Merriam-Webster dictionary online or some other publisher and write out the definition of “compassion.”

 - b. Using your definition, think of a time when you have been greatly moved with compassion. Write out a short reflection and what you were able to do or not do in response.

***“Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed,
Because His compassions fail not.
They are new every morning;
Great is Your faithfulness.” ~ Lamentations 3:22-23***

- c. Note that the Lord didn't just identify what the people needed, but He thought of the consequences if they weren't cared for in verse 3. Can you identify two or three things from this verse that Jesus had noticed about the people?

- d. In lieu of this, please know that Jesus also notices YOUR needs. He notices when you travel to meet with Him somewhere. He notices your health and physical state. He also notices your potential weakness and limitations. Take these three qualities and apply them to your life presently. Which observation by the Lord means the most to you today and briefly explain why.

*I have a Maker
He formed my heart
Before even time began
My life was in his hands.*

Chorus:
*He knows my name
He knows my every thought
He sees each tear that falls
And He hears me when I call.*

*I have a Father
He calls me His own
He'll never leave me
No matter where I go.*

~Lyrics to “He Knows My Name”
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Read Mark 8:4-10

3. Now we get to observe the Master Teacher as He presents His twelve students with one problem to solve: how to feed the multitude. In their response, “How can one satisfy these people...”, lies a foundational question that every servant of God needs to learn.
 - a. The teacher first wants the disciples to recognize “what” according to verse 5?
 - b. How do Jesus’ words in John 15:5 also apply to this situation?
 - c. Seven loaves and a few small fish were all that was found, but they were fully surrendered even though the owners must have needed it for themselves. Such a small amount, but Jesus takes notice. Read Luke 21:1-4. What kind of perspective does He have according to verse 3?
 - d. The provision was given into Jesus’ hands and He did four things with them according to Mark 8:6-7. What were they?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - 4)

- e. Write out word-for-word what Jesus did with such a small supply in verse 8.
4. Right now, is there a place in your life where your resources feel inadequate to meet a need? You may feel that you are physically, financially, mentally, materially, or spiritually inadequate for a need you face or for a challenge that lies ahead.
- a. Briefly summarize where you feel your “supply” is inadequate and what the need is in your life.
- b. Look up the following verses from the Word that point us to the power of God in light of our lack.

Exodus 4:11-12

Jeremiah 1:8-9

2 Corinthians 3:5

Deuteronomy 33:25

Philippians 4:13,19

2 Corinthians 4:7

Isaiah 40:29-31

Ephesians 3:16

2 Corinthians 12:9

Choose one that speaks to you most and write it out here.

*“It is for us to pray not for tasks equal to our powers,
but for powers equal to our tasks,
to go forward with a great desire forever beating at the door of our hearts
as we travel toward our distant goal.”*
~ Helen Keller

Read Mark 8:11-21

5. As Jesus gave a visual, audible, experiential lesson of His power to multiply and ability to spread, He also sends a warning to the disciples of what can multiply and spread that is harmful. Pastor David Guzik writes, “This leaven isn’t merely yeast, but a pinch of dough left over from a previous batch. Just a small pinch of dough from an old lump could make a whole new lump of dough that would rise and “puff up.” So, the work of leaven was considered an illustration of the work of sin and pride. The presence of a little can corrupt a large amount.”
 - a. With this warning, the disciples made two mistakes. The first was what according to verse 14?
 - b. The second is in verse 16? Write out the first FIVE words for the answer.
6. The disciples did as we have tendency to do, they solely looked at their circumstances. Since they forgot to bring all the bread the Lord had them gather, they may have felt like they failed the Lord. Then they made a second mistake of reasoning among themselves - not the best counselors of truth. So when the Lord warns them, they have a completely wrong application.
 - a. This can happen in your own life today. The Lord speaks to you about something spiritual, yet you only hear according to what you “see” or through the limitations of your flesh. Which area are you weakest in or most prone to make mistakes: looking at your circumstances, or looking to others, or yourself when you need guidance and counsel?
 - b. Jesus’ response in verse 21 to their erroneous conclusion shows that they SHOULD have understood what He said. Based on His words from verses 17-20, why did He hold them accountable for their hardness and dullness?

*“I will remember the works of the LORD;
Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.”*
~ Psalm 77:11

Read Mark 8:22-26

7. After Jesus rebukes the disciples about their dullness and blindness, He leads them to the town of Bethsaida. Though He would later pronounce a curse upon it, there's a valuable illustration and lesson they are about to witness as Jesus encounters a man that is literally blind.
- a. Verse 22 does not tell us who "they" were that brought the blind man to Jesus, but you can see their faith and caring intercession as they beg the Lord to touch him. Though Jesus could have touched him and healed him immediately, fill in the blank from verse 23 and think about this in your mind's eye.

**"So He _____ the blind man by the _____
and _____ out of the town..."**

- b. The Man Jesus did not take this man's arm or grab his elbow, but held his hand and led the man on a walk. Notice, the man is being led by a stranger. He's also being led away from the familiarity of his town. As you picture the scene, write down what MIGHT have occurred as they walked.

- c. With each of the verses below, what do you see about the hand of God?

1) Joshua 4:24 -

2) Job 27:11 -

3) Psalm 16:11 -

4) Isaiah 49:16

5) Acts 11:21 -

8. There are many scriptures that show the power, might, gentleness, and love that are in the hand of God. But as Jesus led this man, it is very probable that trust was developed before the healing came. Remember this as you intercede in prayer for others.
 - a. When man spits upon another in our culture, it is one of the most degrading, demeaning actions that can be shown. When Jesus was going to the cross, men spit on Him to their shame. But Jesus uses His spittle to heal and then laid His hands on the blind man. What was the first thing the man saw and how did it appear to him?
 - b. When we look at others first, our vision will always be blurry. So what did Jesus tell him to do to be able to see others clearly?
 - c. Now take this principle and prayerfully ask the Lord if there are blind spots or blurred vision in regards to others in your family, in your friendships, or when looking at the lost or even church leadership. “Look up” and ask the Lord to heal you so that you can see others through the healthy lens of truth. Write any personal reflections here.

**“Oh, without prayer what are the church’s agencies,
but the stretching out of a dead man’s arm,
or the lifting up of the lid of a blind man’s eye?
Only when the Holy Spirit comes
is there any life and force and power.”**

~ C. H. Spurgeon

Read Mark 8:27-30

9. It has been said that the question Jesus asks in verse 29 is the most important question in all of the Bible.
Write Jesus' question in all capital letters.

- a. Think about this carefully and write out YOUR answer to His question in a personal way. Who is Jesus to YOU?

"A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher.

He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell.

You must make your choice.

Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse."

~ C. S. Lewis

Read Mark 8:31-33

10. As Jesus hears from His disciples what others are saying about Him, He hones in on what they believe individually. Once they express the truth of Who He is, He turns their attention to a more difficult truth to swallow: His suffering.

- a. When you came to know Jesus as your Savior, did you have much experience in the area of suffering?
Briefly reflect on a few ways that you experienced any type of pain and suffering before you came to the Lord.

- b. Since that time, have you walked with Him through any painful trials or suffering of some sort? Briefly reflect again.

- c. What kind of personal expectations or beliefs do you hold about pain and suffering as a Christian?

- d. Look up 1 Peter 4:12-13,16. What do these verses say about suffering?

- e. In 1 Peter 5:10, write down and define the four things that follow a temporary time of suffering in our lives.

“Our vision is so limited we can hardly imagine a love that does not show itself in protection from suffering.... The love of God did not protect His own Son.... He will not necessarily protect us - not from anything it takes to make us like His Son. A lot of hammering and chiseling and purifying by fire will have to go into the process.”

~ Elisabeth Elliott

“There is no mystery in heaven or earth so great as this; a suffering Deity, an almighty Savior nailed to a Cross.”

~ Various authors

Read Mark 8:34-38

11. As we come to the end of this chapter, we read that Jesus has not only called his twelve disciples to listen to what He's about to say, but He's called all the people within earshot. He uses the word "whoever" four times to show that the invitation is open to everyone. And it is in this passage, that we note the distinction between someone who is merely a "believer" versus one who is an actual "disciple" or "follower" of Christ.
- a. What three separate actions are required in order to be the Lord's disciple?
- b. Selah on question "a." What does it mean practically to "deny yourself?" How can you apply this to your life as a whole, as well as your day-to-day living?
- c. A well-known commentator once said, "God is looking for broken men and women who have judged themselves in the light of the cross. Then, when He wants anything done, He takes up these men and women who have come to the end of themselves, whose confidence is not in themselves, but in God, and uses them for His glory." What does "taking up your cross" mean to you?
- d. As Jesus openly proclaimed hard truths about His death, Peter drew Him aside and privately rebuked Him (Mark 8:32). Now Jesus says that if anyone is ashamed of Him or His words, then the same will happen to that person when Jesus returns. Peter had a hard time receiving what Jesus spoke to him. Do you now, or have you in the past, struggled with what's written in the Bible? Have you been tempted to change the meaning or discredit the words by saying it does not apply to our times or culture? Expound if possible.

- e. To help understand the importance of receiving the whole counsel of God, look up these additional exhortations from the Lord in Deuteronomy 12:32 and Revelation 22:18-19. Summarize these verses in your own words.
 - f. Jesus' instructions for discipleship did not leave out the command to "follow" Him. There are some who want the benefits of salvation, yet desire to live their lives any way they want. They still want to dictate where they go, what they do, and how they accomplish their own goals. But Jesus said the opposite in John 12:26. If He is Savior, He is also Lord. How is this demonstrated practically according to His words?
 - g. Think of the privilege of serving in places and with people that Jesus is doing a work in and among. What additional blessing comes with that privilege according to this verse?

12. Thinking back to the beginning of your lesson, Jesus was, and still is, a masterful Teacher of truth. He knows the ways we think, learn, problem solve, and are best able to grow, as His disciples. In this chapter alone, you read how He not only spoke the truth, but He demonstrated, illustrated, and personally exemplified the truth to the disciples. They also experienced the power of God just by handing out pieces of bread and fish to the multitudes, then gathering the abundance of fragments Jesus had created.

And so it is in our lives. We not only read the Word of God, but we are to hear it and allow God to teach us the reality of it in our day-to-day experiences. End your lesson by a particular reflection of praise and thanksgiving for what He is teaching you right now in your life.

**“If you look at the Lord Jesus,
after He would teach the disciples a lesson in the classroom,
He’d throw them out into life
and provide a laboratory of experience
for them to get what they were just taught.”**

~ Howard Hendricks