

Week 4: Who can stop Him?

Overview: Mark 6-8 is the widest section of the Gospel and hardest to contain in one session. Jesus is rejected in his hometown, sends out the Twelve, feeds 5000, walks on water, confronts Pharisaic tradition, feeds 4000 more, and heals a blind man in stages. Week 4 holds these chapters together under one question: why do people who see everything still not understand? What does real sight look like?

Passages covered this week: Mark 6-8:26

Key Scripture: Mark 6:30-44

CONTENT

Key Takeaway: Jesus keeps revealing himself and the disciples keep missing it. Real sight isn't just seeing miracles – it's understanding who is doing them and why.

Key Points

- Rejected in Nazareth (Mark 6:1–6)
 - His own hometown doesn't receive him. Familiarity breeds contempt.
 - He could not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith; not because power was limited but because faith was absent
 - The most dangerous spiritual condition: thinking you already know who Jesus is
- The Twelve sent out (Mark 6:7–13)
 - Authority over demons given and exercised. The mission expands beyond Jesus himself.
 - Death of John the Baptist (6:14–29): inserted as a warning of what following the way of God can cost
- Feeding the 5,000 (Mark 6:30–44) – primary focus
 - They were like sheep without a shepherd'; Jesus's compassion is the starting point, not the miracle
 - Five loaves and two fish: impossibly insufficient. Broken and distributed, there were twelve basketfuls left over.
 - The Eucharistic language is deliberate: he took, blessed, broke, gave — this points forward to the Last Supper
- Walking on water (Mark 6:45–56)
 - He means to pass them by — a theophany, an appearance of God (cf. Exodus 33)
 - Their hearts were hardened even after the feeding — they saw and still didn't understand
- Tradition vs. the heart (Mark 7:1–23)
 - Pharisees challenge hand-washing; Jesus challenges what actually defiles a person

- What comes out of a person (evil thoughts, sexual immorality, greed) that is what defiles. The problem is internal, not external.
- Syrophenician woman, deaf man, feeding of 4,000 (Mark 7:24–8:10)
 - The gospel reaches the Gentiles – the woman’s persistent faith is rewarded
 - Ephphatha — be opened: he touches the deaf man’s tongue and ears directly. Intimate and personal.
- Blind man healed in stages (Mark 8:22–26) – *close the week here*
 - Unique in all the Gospels: the healing happens in two stages. First attempt: ‘I see people like trees walking.’ Second touch: complete clarity.
 - This is not a failed miracle: it’s potentially a parable of discipleship. Sight comes gradually. Understanding takes time.
 - It sets up perfectly the question of next week: do you see clearly yet?

Gospel Application: Jesus took five loaves and two fish (ridiculously insufficient) and fed thousands. What you bring to Jesus will never be enough on its own. That’s exactly the point. He takes what we offer, breaks it, and multiplies it. The cross is the ultimate version of this: Jesus himself broken and given, producing life for thousands.

Key Question: Where is your sight still blurry? Where do you see Jesus, but not clearly yet? What would it take for that to change?

APPLICATION

Activity Suggestions

- What do you bring? Have students write on a card what they have to offer Jesus (their talents, time, weaknesses). Ask: What would it look like to hand this to Jesus and watch him use it?
- Blurry vs. Clear: make two columns. On one side, have students list what they understand about Jesus. On the other side, have them list what’s “still blurry”; discuss these lists honestly.

Community Group Questions

- Read Mark 8:14–21 together. The disciples have just seen two mass feeding and they’re worried about bread. What does it look like when we miss what Jesus is doing? Do you see this pattern in your own life?
- Jesus couldn’t do many miracles in Nazareth because of their unbelief. What does it mean that familiarity with Jesus can become an obstacle to faith?
- The blind man saw people like trees walking before he saw clearly. Where are you in that process? What’s still blurry?
- Jesus had compassion on the crowd because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Who in your world is wandering without direction? How does that move you?
- What is your ‘five loaves and two fish’ — the thing that feels hopelessly insufficient but that you could offer to Jesus?