

Series: I Have Decided. A study of Mark 8
Sermon: Jesus is more than enough for you
Date: 8.16.2020. Sermon # 1 – Mark 8.1-10

MPT: Jesus will satisfy you if you will receive from him

MPS: Jesus is more than enough for you

Brief Hello. Good morning Mercy Church! I'm so glad, so glad, to be worshipping with you. The past few months have been difficult. And The pandemic is not over. BUT, I want to turn our attention church to what we have to celebrate. I want to turn our attention to the one who gives us a reason to hope in these hard times. See God is teaching me this year to look for what I see him doing and to be thankful. To be thankful for the lost who found Christ this year. I'm thankful for my kids, my wife, and I'm thankful for my church family. I'm thankful for the way you've sought to follow Jesus in a hard time. I'm thankful for how you've stuck together with me and your elders as we've tried to lead you through it. I'm thankful for the way you've encouraged the preachers we've had the past few weeks. God has given us a great team here.

Actual Intro

I grew up going to a church where we had this book that contained all of our songs we would sing. Pretty Convenient. It was called the Hymnal. And one of our favorites was the song I have decided to follow Jesus. I don't know if its because it is easy to play on the pipe organ or what, but man we sang that

thing into the ground. So as a kid you hear something over and over and it grafts itself onto your memory as just a part of your childhood. I have decided to follow Jesus.... Though none go with me....I STILL WILL FOLLOW. THE WORLD BEHIND ME, THE CROSS BEFORE ME.

The power of the song is its simplicity. It's a simple statement of decision. I have decided to follow Jesus. And its one that as I grew up and went to churches where we didn't have those hymnals the song kind of faded into the memory bank. But the idea didn't. In fact the simple crusty tune flooded into my head during my freshman year of college when I realized I had trusted Christ for salvation as middle schooler but I wasn't really following him. Wasn't even sure what that meant. I was just kind of a customer of Jesus, not a follower. Like thank you for your salvation and now I'll go on about my life. And then a guy pointed out to me that Jesus doesn't separate those two things. I was living a contradiction. I was trying to get what I wanted **From Jesus** without it costing me anything.

And I bring that up because I think we need to grapple with the simple decision of whether or not we will **follow** Jesus. Because there is no such thing as a Christian who isn't a follower of Jesus. And that decision to follow him is one we gotta make not just once, but daily. Hourly.

We need to tear down the notion that we can be customers of Jesus who receive his salvation and then go on about our business. We are either followers or we are not.

So here's what I want to do. For the next 4 weeks we are going to join in the group of disciples who followed Jesus in his ministry. We are going to look at one rich, deep chapter of scripture. Mark 8. See at the end of this chapter Jesus draws a line in the sand. This is where the whole thing is leading...

He's going to say "if anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." It's bold. He says whoever wants to save his life...will lose it. But whoever will lose his life because of me and the gospel will find true life." In short you must decide to follow Jesus. This week and the next 2 Jesus is preparing them...to draw that line in the sand right there in front of them. It will cost you everything...and it's the only way to save your life. And in our 4th week we are going to be confronted by Jesus. Will you **REALLY** follow Jesus?

But Mark 8 STARTS with Jesus doing a really cool miracle. He's going to feed 4 thousand people with 7 loaves of bread. And one reason he does this is to show his disciples they cannot provide on their own...even for themselves...but he can provide more than enough. Abundance. That's what I want you to see today. You will only choose Jesus...you will only cross that line...if you really believe Jesus is more than enough.

In those days there was again a large crowd, and they had nothing to eat. He called the disciples and said to them, 2 "I have compassion on the crowd, because they've already stayed with me three days and have nothing to eat.

- STOP – check this...its **another** large crowd. That doesn't have food. That Jesus has compassion on. This sounds very familiar. That's because in Mark 6 Jesus

fed 5 thousand men plus women and children. Fed them with 5 loaves and 2 fish. Been there, done that. Is mark telling the same story again? Are Jesus' miracles were so few that mark had to run a repeat? No, Mark tells this one precisely because it is so similar. And the reason he tells it is because it's a different crowd. See in this scene they are in a region filled with gentiles. NON-Jews. Which was a big, big deal. Because the jews thought the savior was coming only for them. But here is Jesus among gentiles saying that he has the exact same compassion on them he has on the Jews. Jesus is saying to the disciples...SEE THESE PEOPLE? They don't look like you. They are from a different place. And guess what... I LOVE THEM. **Splangnizomai**. FUN GREEK WORD. Gut-level groaning compassion. I feel their pain and love them and care for them.

- Jesus is saying his love is for every single person who will receive it. See you and I are gentiles. As Jesus shows the disciples his love is for all peoples, you and I need to hear that as his love for US! He is bringing ALL peoples to himself. And that's big because he's going to send them on a mission and that mission is going to be to make disciples of ALL PEOPLES. This is why we as a church send God's people to all peoples. And they are going to look at people who don't look like them and who have all kinds of brokenness in their past and they are going to remember SPLANGNIZOMAI.
- **A follower of Jesus never looks down on another human. Instead he or she kneels down...and with the splangnizomai of Jesus asks how can I meet a need today?**

3 If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, and some of them have come a long distance.”

- IF they try to go get food on their own...they will collapse. See what he's preparing the disciples to hear? If they try to save their lives they will lose it. If they try to feed themselves they will starve. If they try to save their lives they will lose it. Jesus is about to demonstrate in this miracle that HE is more than enough to meet every need we have. And we are hopeless without him.
- Sometimes I think I run myself completely ragged trying to provide for myself apart from Jesus. Trying to create security through finances, health for my family, trying to get approval from others...man I get real tired. I've been on the verge of collapsing. I know many that have collapsed from the famine they experience trying to feed their souls with the empty things of this world.

4 His disciples answered him, “Where can anyone get enough bread here in this desolate place to feed these people?”

- They are in this place, most likely, called Decapolis. Rugged hilly terrain. What an image for 2020. What a question.
- And what a question right? Mark is very intentional with his placement here. We are going to see Jesus have a little heart to heart next week with the disciples next week about how easily they forget his PAST PROVISION when they are IN THE MOMENT of need. Isn't this true of us? I mean the disciples aren't that

dense. But in their moment of need...they lose perspective. The answer to the question is intentionally obvious. NO WHERE. There isn't anywhere in the Decapolis region you can get bread for 4 thousand people.

- So let me pause for a second and ask you if you are in a desolate place right now? Is your loneliness to the point of desolate? Is your marriage? Is your work? What about your friendships? Maybe you've got some hurt, some suffering that has you to the point where you'd describe yourself as desolate.

Maybe God has allowed you to get out to the desolate place. Where he can finally be your only option. Nothing else is going to work. Can we stop kidding ourselves with the “putting on a good face while my world is crumbling” thing? Can that be the lesson of 2020? Denying the reality of the desolate place...isn't going to take you out of it. You can't positive attitude your way out of the desolate place. That's just starvation with a smile. You gotta be honest ok. With yourself and with somebody else.

You are NOT alone in your suffering. You are not alone in your pain. You are not the only one in crisis who isn't sure if you will make it. THE DESOLATE PLACE IS FILLED WITH A CROWD OF PEOPLE WHO NEED TO BE FED! In fact they had traveled a long way away and at this point they knew what Jesus knew...they are in a place where they can't provide for themselves. They can't make it back. They are sticking with Jesus and hoping

he will provide.

Watch...remember Jesus is preparing them for the line in the sand where they will have to lose everything to follow him.

- And he's showing them right here – YOU CAN'T FIND LIFE ANYWHERE ELSE! It's not just that Jesus is better than the other options. As if there were bread trucks stationed all around and Jesus says nah I got better bread than those bread trucks. It's that Jesus is a source of abundant life in a desolate land. THAT'S the claim of the gospel. He's not the better option for you...he's the only option! But he's more than enough. Watch this.

5 "How many loaves do you have?" he asked them. "Seven," they said. 6 He commanded the crowd to sit down on the ground. Taking the seven loaves, he gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people. So they served them to the crowd. *(because Perfect Jesus ate bread, thanked God for bread, & served bread all diets that then deny bread are from the devil)* 7 They also had a few small fish, and after he had blessed them, he said these were to be served as well.

- Ok for just a second can you put yourself in the Birkenstocks of these disciples? How humbling is this? How awe inspiring is this? Here's what I want you to see right here...**Jesus doesn't go AROUND the forgetful disciples to feed the crowd. REPEAT INSTEAD...**he invites them in and allows them to participate in the distribution of his provision. OH. MY.

GOODNESS. He multiplies. He has the power. He performs the miracle.

- Couldn't he have just SPOKEN the words...BELLIES...BE FULL. And they would have been right?
- But he commissions them as servers to the crowd. They serve the food that will feed the people. And every time they hand it to someone...miracle. This isn't one miracle ya'll. It's 4 thousand miracles. And the disciples get to participate. That is insane. Can you imagine getting to personally distribute $4000/12 = 333$ miracles at dinner tonight?
- THE POINT – Jesus HAS THE POWER to give life in a desolate land. And in his divine sovereignty he has invited his followers in to be the servers of the feast he has prepared. That's who the church is. That's you and I. And the best thing for OUR faith...is to be a part of distributing his gospel to the desolate world. When you take your eyes off of you and get caught up in what God is doing in someone else's life...all of the sudden your belief is strengthened for what he can do in your life.

8 They ate and were **satisfied**. Then they collected seven large baskets of leftover pieces. 9 About four thousand were there. He **dismissed** them.

- Satisfied. One thing you will come to understand as you read the bible, especially the gospels is that no word is wasted. The people ate...and they were satisfied. There were leftovers! In a desolate land they

didn't just survive...they had ABUNDANCE! When God brings you to a point where all you have left to say is all I have is Christ...that place right there is where you can experience the ABUNDANT life God offers you IN CHRIST. CHRIST REALLY IS ENOUGH! AND the purpose of feeding their bellies is to show them he can feed their souls.

The gospel of John records a conversation between Jesus and a crowd about him feeding the 5 thousand. They come back looking for more bread. Because they were hungry again. And he says you need the bread of God.

- 33 For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 Then they said, "Sir, give us this bread always." 35 "I am the bread of life," Jesus told them. "No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again. -- John 6:33-35 (CSB)

Bread is an image that's going to show up again next week. Shows up a lot in Jesus' teaching. And here is the point: Your main need isn't bread. You don't need a quick fix from God. You don't need the circumstances to get a little better. **Your greatest need isn't the bread from Jesus...you need Jesus!** You need to draw close to him. HIS LOVE, HIS FORGIVENESS, HIS SECURITY...THAT's the bread your soul was meant to be nourished by.

- You want your marriage fixed...it begins with an absolute desperation for Jesus. I'm not minimizing hurts that have happened. YOU must deal with those,

you probably need counseling BUT...unless you cling to Jesus you'll never have the marriage you were meant for. AND IF YOUR SPOUSE ABANDONS YOU - Jesus will be enough for you in that moment too.

- Maybe you've been laid off or furlowed or taken a pay cut and you are in a desolate place where anxiety is locking you up. I'm not minimizing income. What I'm saying is...you can have PEACE even when you don't have those things figured out. A peace that passes understanding. A peace that WILL NOT COME apart from Christ even if money comes in abundance. Financial Stability is NOT stability. You only find that in Christ. You need the bread of life!
- Many of us are thinking that HAPPINESS, or at least STRESS RELIEF, will come when the world starts back up & I can return to my rhythms. Well think for a second...did those rhythms satisfy the deep longings of your soul? OR JUST DISTRACT YOU? Cause as I recall...stress levels weren't at an all time LOW pre-covid. No maybe God has you out in a desolate place so you will finally be open to finding your happiness in the BREAD OF LIFE alone!
 - ABIDE IN ME & THEN YOU WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT. ABIDE.
 - That's time together. Living out of that. That's walking with him.
 - That's the bread giver saying that he is bread – That's a little crazy.

Let's bring this home – We named this series "I have decided."

That's because the decision to follow Jesus is a decision you face every day. In fact you face it moment to moment. Some of you have some big decisions that will surface in this series. The person you are dating...if you have decided to follow Jesus what does **Jesus** say about that relationship?

Listen for some of you this means you need to set an alarm in the mornings. Use your phone and label that alarm "I have decided." Because your action of getting up and meeting with God won't happen accidentally. You gotta DECIDE to. Meet with God. My alarm is called "I HAVE DECIDED." Because tomorrow morning when that thing goes off...I'm gonna say "I have decided" and then get out of bed and go spend time with the one who gives me MUCH DEEPER REST than my bed ever could.

When temptation comes at you...I HAVE DECIDED.

When peer pressure comes at you...I HAVE DECIDED.

When the chance to step out and share the gospel comes to you...I HAVE DECIDED.

When the chance to bless your friend by sacrificing your time, your money, your energy...I HAVE DECIDED

When the chance to choose revenge or forgiveness comes...I HAVE DECIDED

Following Christ is a decision each day. And each day he is there to show you again how he is not just the better option, but the only option for true life.

*Now here's the great news - the gospel is a gospel for people who are trying to follow...and sometimes mess up. Jesus doesn't shame you. He invites you back to his love.

CLOSE - STORY of I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW Jesus

- Welsh Revival – People leave to go to the nations as missionaries. First man in an Indian village converted to Christianity - Nokseng. Others started to follow.
- Chief ordered him and his family to be executed unless they recant
- Chief kills 2 sons in front of him & Nokseng refuses. Chief kills wife & Nokseng refuses. Chief kills Nokseng.
- Chief haunted by Nokseng's words each time: "I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back." Chief meets a missionary, hears gospel & believes. Whole village follows.
- Indian Missionary Sandhu Sundar Singh writes the song after hearing the story. Then in the 60s a guy connected with Billy Graham adapts it into an English hymn.