

Mark 7:24-8:10 – The King who satisfies

1. I can't get no ...

"I can't get no satisfaction. I can't get no satisfaction.
'Cause I try and I try and I try and I try I can't get no, I can't get no..."

This is about the only time, I'll ever say this.

But Mick Jagger and Keith Richards actually got something right.

And today, as we celebrate Father's day,
It is a day for tremendous satisfaction for some of us,
in the knowledge of the love that our Dad's have for us.
Saying thanks to our fathers for their dedication and commitment to us.
And yet also, it is also a day for tremendous dissatisfaction for many of us,
In the knowledge of that absent, negligent, or abusive Father.

Today is a day of strong and powerful emotions, at both ends of the spectrum,
Because of the depth of significance of fathers in our relationships.

And so the question is how do we find satisfaction in our relationships?
More specifically, how do we find satisfaction in our relationship with our fathers,
And for those of us who are fathers, or grandfathers, how do we give our families satisfaction?

We'll return to the topic of Father's and satisfaction at the end of this talk.
Today we have three encounters with Jesus.
We have three events that Mark sets out for us. As you can see on your talk outline.

And Mark sets the scene for us briefly in v. 24. << v. 24 >>

First note, Jesus left “from there”.

That is, Jesus has left the comfortable surrounds of the Judean countryside.

Jesus has left behind the massive fight he just had with the religious officials.

If you recall, last week, we looked at the first half of this chapter,

Jesus took on the Pharisees and the teachers of the law.

Here’s a quick re-cap:

Jesus declared all human traditions null and void.

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because they are only a band-aid solution to our massive internal problems.

Because they could never really address our spiritual gangrene.

You see, the real problem is that our hearts are far from God.

The real problem is our internal spiritual disease – our hearts are far away from God.

And yet, last week,

We also got the small hint that Jesus has come to fix the real problem.

We got a glimpse of the man who could declare all foods “clean”.

Second note Jesus’ new location.

Jesus has escaped across the border, into Gentile territory, into Tyre,

And he is keeping a low “profile”,

2. "Even the dogs under the table" (7:25-30)

However, Jesus' location is blown almost immediately. v. 25. << vv. 25-26 >>

Now, Mark draws a character profile for us, of this woman who comes to Jesus.

She is a common, garden variety pagan – A Greek from Syro-Phoenicia!

She has no connection with God's people.

She has no understanding of the law.

She probably hasn't even heard what a synagogue is.

She belongs to the "unreached people groups" of the world.

And yet, she comes to Jesus for help.

She comes to Jesus, like the Gerasene Demoniac, and falls at his feet.

Now, we expect Jesus to deal nicely with this woman.

We expect Jesus to heal this woman's daughter, exactly the same way he did for Jairus.

And yet, the opposite occurs.

v. 27 Jesus retorts with a metaphor "Let the children be fed first",

Literally reads "First let the children be satisfied".

Now, Jesus is essentially saying here–

"I have come to bring salvation to God's children first"

"I have come to bring healing to Israel, and not to you pagan nations."

And if that isn't shocking enough, then the woman's response is worse.

v. 28 – "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

Which really means:

"Yes, I am a Gentile dog, and yes, I am not one of God's people,

But even the dogs under the table get the crumbs from the kids."

And on this basis, Jesus accedes to her demands, and heals her daughter.

Don't you find this shocking?

Don't you find this completely at odds with the Jesus we know?

Well, the problem is not with Jesus, but with us.

You see, we suffer from the disease I've called John 3:16'itis.

<< Illustrate – John 3:16 – "For God so loved the world" that we forgot – God loved Israel first. >>

3. "Ephphatha!" (7:31-37)

And immediately after this encounter, Jesus moves to another Gentile area. v. 31 – the Decapolis.

The last time Jesus went to the Decapolis,
he encountered the spiritual opposition of Legion.

This time Jesus goes to the Decapolis,
And we have this average, garden variety miracle.

Jesus heals a deaf man, he's done it once, he's done a million times, whooped-di-doo.

And yet, Mark is telling us something very important.

Mark has put this miracle here to point something out to us.

The question is, do we have the eyes to see it.

The key to seeing the picture comes from Isaiah 35:1-6. << vv. 1-6 >>

And so when Jesus heals this deaf-mute,

Mark is telling us that we are seeing the very glory of God,

That we are seeing the salvation that God promised to Israel, back in Isaiah's time.

That we are seeing the joy and jubilation that Israel has been waiting for, for 700 years!

4. "The people ate and were *filled*" (8:1-10)

The third and final encounter is found in Chapter 8, verse 1.

And even though it is not part of our lectionary read, it is the climax of this section,

Particularly, in regards to the concept of satisfaction << vv. 1-10 >>

Well, these feeding miracles are exactly that – miraculous.

Back in Chapter 6, we had a similar feeding miracle.

On the surface it was equally as impressive.

But if we dig deeper Jesus is making a much more impressive statement.

Jesus is declaring himself to be the one true shepherd of Israel. << "sheep w/o a shepherd">>

Jesus was stating that all the other shepherds of Israel had failed,
and that he is the only one that can care for Israel.

And so we need to dig deeper into the meaning of this feeding miracle.

And I think Mark gives us 3 clues to the deeper meaning.

Firstly, v. 2 - the shortage - these people have had nothing to eat for three days.

Secondly, v. 3 – the distance – these people have travelled along way from home.

Thirdly, v. 4 – the location – they are in the desert.

Hold that thought and

Now come with me over to Exodus 15, and verse 22.

It's a short episode in Israel's history,
they've just left Egypt and passed through the Red Sea. << Ex 15:22-25 >>

Notice here. 1) The shortage – they have no water.

2) The distance – they've just travelled out of Egypt.

3) And the location – they are in the wilderness.

On the one hand,

Moses was the leader of Israel during the Exodus.

And Moses gave the people temporary satisfaction through the water (and manna)

However, on the other hand,

Jesus is the leader of God's new people in a new Exodus.

But even more Jesus gives this new people true satisfaction –

Did you notice in Mark 10:8. – "They ate and were filled"

literally it reads "they were satisfied"

That is, Jesus provides for the crowd in a physical way,

And that Jesus will provide true, everlasting satisfaction to this new people.

5. True Satisfaction

Well, where does that leave us, on the issue of “satisfaction”?
How are we to comprehend satisfaction this Father’s day?

1) We need to locate the eternal source of satisfaction.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is eternal whereas every other source of satisfaction is only temporary.

For those of us who have a huge hole in our heart from absent Fathers,

Or those of us who have wear the scars on our hearts from abusive fathers,

Know that only Jesus can fill that hole.

Know that only Jesus can give that life long, eternal satisfaction.

For those of us who have Fathers that love us,

Or those of us who fondly remember our fathers, who have died,

Praise God! Rejoice in the love your father has or did have for you.

But also know that our fathers’ love is

about a fraction of the love that our heavenly Father has for us in Jesus Christ.

For, Jesus came to earth, died on the cross, and rose again, to give us true satisfaction.

Jesus came to earth,

Giving the Syro-phonician woman what she needed,

But more than that, Jesus told her he had come to satisfy Israel 7:27.

More than that, Jesus came to earth,

Satisfying the need of the crowd 8:8.

And finally, more than that, Jesus came to earth,

Giving us what we need,

The true satisfaction of the being brought back to God, when we were far off.

2) For those of us who are Fathers.

It is right and proper to seek to care for and nurture your family, in a way only fathers can.

It is right and proper to follow Jesus’ example and lay down our lives for our families,

In service, in care, in love, in generosity, in kindness.

And yet, it is also right and proper to acknowledge that we will fail as Fathers.

And it is right to acknowledge we will fall short in our care for our children or grandchildren.

And in these moments that we can point our children to Jesus,

We can point our children to Jesus, for unlike us flawed fathers who fail,

Jesus provides for all our family’s spiritual needs.

He gives the spiritual nourishment that lasts for eternity.

So this Father’s day, let us turn to our heavenly Father in prayer.