

GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

48 – Still Not Getting It

Announcements:

11/1 @6:30 -

Women's Bible
Study

11/2 @7:00 -

Prayer

11/3 @6:30 -

Grace Group

11/6 @8:30 -

Sunday School

11/14 @5:30

Joint Service
La Luz Bible
Church

ICE BREAKER: What was your hardest subject in school?

READ: Matthew 15:32-39

On Sunday, our focus in looking at this passage was on how Jesus' mission and message was global in scope. This message was really at the heart of his whole life and ministry, and can be seen as the focus of the whole book of Matthew. Just to help us see this: In Jesus' Birth there was the visit of the foreign Magi (2:1-12), and the fact that Jesus had to go to Egypt (2:13-15); as his ministry began this is seen in things such as the healing of the centurion's servant (8:5-13); these thoughts are seen in Jesus teachings such as the woe to the unrepentant cities (11:20-24) and thoughts of the sign of Jonah (12:28-42); and even just the life of Jesus shows us this in places like getting rejected at Nazareth (13:53-58); and all of this is only in the first half of the book! It's like Matthew is really trying to get us to see this point, which makes it even more tragic that the disciples didn't seem to get it! This is what we will be looking at today.

At the heart of all of this there are really two issues that I can see with the fact that the disciples seem to not understand Jesus or his mission, and both are instructive for us. The first "excuse" that there might be for their statement that there is not enough to eat in this "desolate place" is that they have a sort of short term memory loss. It's possible that they really didn't see a solution for these people other than sending them away. The great miracle of Jesus feeding 5000 that happened in the past had fallen into the vague recesses of their memories as the crisis of today consumed their vision. Their excuse *might* be that this just seemed impossible. If we didn't have that last miracle we can understand: How can 4000 men plus women and children be fed by only seven loaves and a few small fish? The problem here is we do have the last miracle. And the disciples didn't just read it, they *lived* it! But before we judge them for this type of thinking, let's remember our own hearts. How often do we forget God's continual faithfulness as the troubles of today pile up around us? How likely are we to remember all the miraculous times God has provided for us when the cares and stresses of today seem so overwhelming? It turns out the disciples are not the only ones that suffer from this "miracle near-sightedness".

DISCUSS: What are the reasons for our forgetfulness of the goodness of God? What is the solution?

But the second reason is actually a bit more harsh against the disciples. It is more likely that they did remember Jesus' last feeding, they just didn't think these people were worthy. As we noted on Sunday the only key difference between these two feedings is the location. The first one was to Jewish people, who have a history and even we could say a legacy, of being fed by God. But these people were Gentiles! It is not for them to be fed by God, it is not for them to experience this great joy and provision. It is as if the disciples are saying "that's *our* thing, Jesus can't or shouldn't do that for *these people*." Again, before we judge, let's note that this can be a stern but important reminder for us. How often do we take it upon ourselves to have the exact same thoughts? God could never or will never save *them*. That person is too much of a sinner, God's grace can't reach there. Or worse: I really just don't like them, so I will not be a light to them, they *deserve* darkness! We might proclaim the far reaches of the Gospel, but do our actions speak louder that we really just don't get it?

DISCUSS: Why are we so quick to see people in such a negative light? What is the solution?