



#10: Follow the Leader | David Lewellyn | August 22, 2010

A. Fellowship Time (10-15 minutes)

1. Chitchat, perhaps offering coffee, tea, or a cold drink with some snacks.
2. Pray, or invite someone to pray, and open the discussion.

B. Review Time (Read the summary below to the group; 5-10 minutes.)

Introduction: This week we are continuing in our study of the book of Mark. Today in chapter 8, we see Jesus perform an incredible miracle and we see the response of two different groups of people. [Read **Mark 8:1-21** together now.]

1. Jesus provides.

Jesus has been teaching a large crowd for three days. Similar to the story of the feeding of the five thousand, which happened just a bit earlier, we see a hungry crowd and a compassionate Jesus. Once again, Jesus turns to His disciples to see what they can do. We think they would remember how Jesus had just multiplied bread to feed a large group, but they don't. So Jesus takes loaves from them and multiplies them. After the disciples see the bread multiplied, they find some fish. And again, Jesus does what only He can do: the miracle – and He trusts the disciples to do only what they can do: the distribution of bread. There are basically three elements to this story:

1. A problem – the hungry crowd;
2. A compassionate Jesus - His desire to feed the crowd; and
3. A solution to the problem - Jesus' work through His disciples.

When we look at the story in this way, it's easy to see how it relates to our lives. For example, if we have a problem in our marriage, we know it is God's will for us to have a good marriage. He wants to partner with us to make our marriage healthy. The problem is there and so is God's desire to remedy the problem. Our role is to give what we have to Jesus and watch Him provide. In Matthew 6, Jesus reassures us of His provision to help us do His will. [Read **Matthew 6:25-33** together now.] It's not about what we have. It's about whether or not God can be trusted. We give Jesus what we have and watch Him fill the gap between our life and His will. Jesus provides when we seek to do His will. After this miracle, it says in **Mark 8 11-13** "*The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. He sighed deeply and said, 'Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it.' Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.*" Jesus and the disciples hopped on a boat and left. Following this incredible miracle, Jesus is tested by the Pharisees to see if He can do a bigger miracle. The ones He had been doing weren't enough for them. They are looking for an answer about God and don't even realize they are staring the answer Himself right in the face. We can do this too. We tell God that if He will do such and such, we will follow Him forever. But Jesus doesn't do miracles with the intention of convincing hardened unbelievers. He does them to show His mercy. God is not going to give us a sign to show us more about Himself. He has already done this in the person of Jesus.

2. Jesus is the clearest thing God can say to us about Himself.

God is not keeping anything that can be known about Himself from us. **Romans 1:18-23** says, "*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known*

about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

*For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools **and** exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.”* God tells us anything that can be known about Him has already been revealed to us through His creation. And **Hebrews 1:1-2** says, *“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by their prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.”* People have seen what God has done but are not satisfied. We want God to speak to us or reveal Himself to us supernaturally but Christ is the clearest thing He will say. He can't make it any clearer than how He has already done it. The challenge is for us to be satisfied. We should stop asking for more, and pay attention to what's already in front of us. So Jesus leaves the situation, not giving them a sign and is seemingly grieved. He and the disciples get on the boat again and leave. [Read **Mark 8:14-21** together again.] Once again, the disciples forgot what Jesus had done. They had twice seen Him multiply bread in a miraculous way, but what do they worry about? Bread. Why would guys in a boat with Jesus ever be worried about what they are going to eat? Because people forget. We forget. They saw the work Jesus did but didn't transfer it to their own lives. The call is to remember who we are with.

3. Remember, you are with Jesus.

It's possible to see a story like this but not know how it relates to our life. We read this story and think, “Wow, Jesus was powerful back then.” But we don't acknowledge that Jesus is powerful in our lives today to meet our needs. It is all about Jesus. He is still the provider for us and He is still including us in His incredible plan for our good and His glory. It is in Him that we see the Father and His incredible love for us. Let's not forget that we are not doing life alone or for ourselves. This life is His, and we live it with Him currently.

C. Life Group Questions (Select, revise, and add as desired: 20-40 minutes.)

1. Consider a problem you are currently facing. What part of it are you surrendering to God, and what part are you holding back and trying to handle yourself?
2. Do you believe that God can be trusted? Why or why not? What are some ways you cultivate the truth that God can be trusted?
3. What has God been saying to you lately through Jesus?
4. How has God displayed His power recently in your life?

D. Personal Application (1-3 minutes)

Take time to read **Deuteronomy 8**. Make a list of ways that God has used His power in your life. During the week, refer to your list and remind yourself of His faithfulness, trustworthiness and awesome power.

E. Prayer Time (As a whole group or subgroups of 3-4; 10-15 minutes.)

- Give thanks to God for all the ways that He has used His power in your life.
- Ask God to help you fully surrender everything you have so that He can use you completely.
- Ask Him to fill any gaps between your problems and His solution.
- Share prayer requests with the other members of the group.