

LIFE OF A SERVANT**Good Food and Bad Yeast****Mark 8:1–21***“I have compassion for these people....”* Mark 8:2**Day 1: Read Mark 8:1–3.**

1. Someone else might have faulted the people’s lack of foresight in not bringing enough food for their journey. What are Jesus’ feelings for the crowd? (vs. 2)
2. How would you define compassion? Does compassion concern itself with matters of just deserts and consequences, or is it of a different order? How is it different from justice? From mercy?
3. Share a time when you showed compassion. Share a time when you were the recipient of compassion—from God or from another person.
4. How does God describe himself in 2 Corinthians 1:3? Do you always think of him that way?

Day 2: Read Mark 8:1–8.

5. The people listening to Jesus are so enthralled with him, and with his word, that they forget to eat (Recall Jesus’ own experience in John 4:31–34). How do you feel about God’s word?
6. How is Jesus’ feeding of the four thousand a vivid illustration and fulfillment of God’s promise in Matthew 6:31–33?
7. If your idea of God’s love for you has been one of purely spiritual and nonmaterial love, how does the incident related in this chapter change your view?

Day 3: Read Mark 8:1–10.

8. Are you surprised that the disciples seem to have forgotten about the time when Jesus lately fed 5,000 people? (Mark 6:30ff) Share an occasion when you yourself have been a slow learner.
9. What does the Son of God and Creator of the Universe do before partaking of a morsel of bread and fish? (vss. 6–7) How does his example speak to you? (Phil.2:5; Matt.10:24)

10. What role do the disciples play in the miraculous food distribution? How is Jesus an effective teacher in the way that he involves them?
11. Why the leftovers? (vs. 8) Is it sloppy calculation on Jesus' part? What might be his purpose in leaving behind tangible, visible evidence of the miracle? What else might Jesus want to illustrate in making too much bread and fish that day, and an excess of superior wine at the feast of Cana? (John 2:1–11. Consider Psalm 23:5–6; 1 John 3:1; Luke 6:38)

Day 4: Read Mark 8:11–21.

12. Right on the heels of this miraculous sign, the Pharisees ask Jesus for a sign and are refused one. (vs. 12) Why does Jesus give the crowd a sign but not the Pharisees?
13. And yet, this “generation” (vs. 12) is not left totally without a sign after all. What sign does Jesus leave them? (Matt.12:39–40)
14. Verse 12 shares with us that Jesus “sighed deeply.” Discuss this detail in the light of Jesus' true humanity.

Day 5: Mark 8:14–21.

15. What do the disciples have on their minds in the boat? (vss.14, 16–17) What does Jesus have on his mind? (vs. 15)
16. Read the amplified version of this boat incident in Matthew 16:5–12, and find what Jesus means by the “yeast” of the Pharisees and Saducees.
17. What does yeast do to dough? What can bad teaching do to you once it has done its insidious work? What can it do to the Church?
18. Jesus says to the disciples, “Do you still not understand?” What is it that he wants them to understand?
19. Jesus helps the disciples to think through what they have seen of him and his deeds in order to spur them to understanding and a life of faith. Where do you see a need for this in your own life?