



We are in week four of a series called “Misunderstood: Jesus According to Mark.” This series is an opportunity for us to prepare our hearts and lives for Easter as we study the book of Mark together. This discussion guide is designed to help your small group or class dive deeper into what is being taught each weekend, and to be intentional about applying it to your life as you prepare to celebrate Easter. If you weren’t able to hear the sermon this weekend, please check it out at:
<http://www.firstdecatur.org/sermons/>

WEEK 4: BREAD

This week we continue to look at how Jesus was misunderstood by the religious leaders, his disciples, and those who came out to seek what he could do for them. Despite the two miraculous feedings of large crowds with just a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish, the disciples and the Pharisees continued to Mis/Understand who Jesus was and what he was about.

START

If you were able to attend church on campus last weekend, you know that tantalizing references were made to the aroma of fresh baked bread. Just for fun, discuss what some of your favorite food smells are. Maybe it is holiday dishes or comfort foods or a favorite restaurant like Jimmy Johns...but let the feast begin. What memories do these aromas evoke in you?

We are now on Week 4 of the study of Mark. Looking back over the sermons and study times, which Mis/Understanding has had the greatest impact on you?

As a refresher:

- ▶ **Week 1:** We learned to put on some new lenses to look at Jesus through the eyes of Mark. We also learned that Jesus both **proclaimed** and **is** the Gospel (the Good News), that he came to bring a Kingdom of which he is the King, and that he is fully God/fully man.
- ▶ **Week 2:** We don’t want to be the Opposition or a Fan; but as a Follower, we also want to guard against becoming so comfortable with what we know of him that we begin to slip into spiritual boredom.
- ▶ **Week 3:** We looked at how a father and the crowd expected Jesus to address their concern, and instead Jesus addressed their faith. We also looked at the idea that Jesus is not in a panic about our current crisis.

- ▶ **Week 4:** We looked at how we can be guilty of looking for “signs” we want Jesus to perform, instead of looking for what he is teaching us about himself. We also studied how “little pinches” of bad things OR good things can make a huge impact on our spiritual life.



VIDEO

Take a minute to watch “Week 4: Bread” and think about what Mark wanted us to understand about Jesus. You can stream or download the video at <https://vimeo.com/album/4987313> or on the Grow Together Blog at: <https://fccgrowtogether.org>



READ MARK 4:30-32 AND MATTHEW 17:15-21

In the video, Pastor Brian talked about how Jesus used the analogy of yeast to warn people about the power something small can have in their lives. Jesus referred to both sin and faith as small things that can have an exponential impact in our lives. Let’s look at this teaching from these two angles using our new lenses.

- ▶ Have you ever been able to insert a positive comment into a negative, volatile situation? What impact did that have on others who were fueling the fire for a confrontation? Or have you experienced a time when all you had was a little faith but you applied it and God grew a “gargantuan mustard tree?” Sharing about these things is a way for us to boast in the Lord, so take some time to give God the glory as a group!
- ▶ What good things does the Spirit sow into our lives that bring about great dividends? Hint: Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 5 and Titus 3:1-11 are all good places to begin this quest. How can you encourage one another and urge one another on to work these “small pinches” into the whole dough of being a FOLLOWER of Christ?
- ▶ Perhaps this study of Mis/Understanding Jesus has stirred up some areas of conviction in your spirit. We certainly don’t want to pass up the opportunity during any season, and especially as we approach Easter, to address those things that we need to get rid of. What are some attitudes/characteristics/habits/“just the way I am” things that have been surfacing during this study? PONDER those...and if you are comfortable sharing, do so. Otherwise...we will be addressing this in our closing prayer at the end of today’s study?



READ MARK 8:11-12

We are now at the halfway point of the book of Mark and have already covered some incredibly miraculous things Jesus did. Yet, the Pharisees were requesting a “sign” to prove Jesus was who he said he was. As Pastor Brian pointed out in the sermon, they were looking for a Messiah who would be one with political power and authority. *{We can see this attitude of the religious leaders more clearly in the*

full context of all the Gospels and in passages such as Mark 11:27-12:40} As a group, skim back over the first seven chapters of Mark's Gospel and note some of miracles Jesus did.

- ▶ What "signs" did Jesus perform that would indicate he was indeed "God?" How did Jesus' response to their questions and "testing" affirm some of the truths we have gleaned so far in our search to understand better who Jesus is and what he came to do? Can you think of "signs" you have hoped for Jesus to do for you to prove he is who you think he is?
- ▶ Pastor Brian pointed out that the "signs" Jesus performed highlighted a Kingdom characterized by a heavenly King. Reflect on the miracles you discovered as you looked back over Mark's Gospel. How do you see these aspects - **healing, grace, forgiveness** - displayed in the "signs?"



READ MARK 6:33-44 AND 8:1-10; 13-21

Even after Jesus remarkably provided food for 5,000 plus and then 4,000 plus people; the disciples completely misunderstood his reference to the "yeast of the Pharisees" and thought he was reprimanding them for not packing enough food. They not only completely missed the point he was trying to make about the misguided steps of the religious leaders, they also totally missed that he could actually multiply something small to the point of ridiculous abundance.

- ▶ Sometimes people have "misunderstood" and thought there was only one miraculous feeding of a multitude, with differing accounts being given. However in Mark we find BOTH of them recorded. Divide your group between the two accounts and make a list of the details noting the similarities and differences. Compare and contrast the events as noted. ***To dig deeper, fill in the details of both of these miraculous meals by using the other Gospel accounts of the feeding of the five thousand in Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17 and John 6: 1-14 and the feeding of the four thousand in Matthew 15: 32-39**
- ▶ We can roll our collective eyes at the ignorance of the disciples when they thought Jesus was frustrated with them for bringing only one loaf of bread on the boat. However, in honesty, have you seen God work in some amazingly miraculous way only to turn around days, if not hours, later and fret over some hitch in your plan? Do you ever doubt that your "little" can be multiplied when placed in the hands of Jesus? What steps do you intend to take after this study to continue to pursue disciplines that will increase your faith?



BRING IT HOME

Pastor Brian used James 1:13-15 in his sermon.

"When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after **desire has conceived [just a little desire, just a little bit of yeast], it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."**

In one of the FCC small group discussions during this study, someone pointed out how Jesus was tempted in every way, just as we are. (Hebrews 2:18)

And since Scripture points out that temptation only works if we have within us a desire for something, then Jesus must have had within him the same desires that we do for love/fellowship, purpose, provision and to be connected to God and eternity.

So it is not the desire we have inside us that leads us to sin but the desire to meet those needs outside of God's will. The temptation for Jesus and for us is to fulfill those desires in ungodly ways, by going outside of God to meet and satisfy them in our own way or the ways of this world. We can take comfort in using the "fully God/fully man" lens of this study to know that he really does understand our struggles.

As you close your group time, take a few quiet moments to ask God where you have allowed some yeast to enter into the batch of your life lived for him.

Ask him to help you remove that yeast and replace your wrong methods of fulfillment with all that he has planned for you.

Renew your covenant with him and then pray for one another to continue to engage in study and reading of the word and in prayer even after this series ends.