

**First Thought**  
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**Text: Mark 8:13-21**

## NOTES

### A. Introduction

1. The incident of the disciples misinterpreting Jesus' words (Mark 8:13-21) shows their reaction flowed out of first thoughts of lack.
2. Jesus takes them back to the origin of their thinking to give them a new "first thought" – Mark 8:17-21.
3. When we handle resources, what are our first thoughts on the subject: a] A faithful Father, or lack? b] What is His, or this is all mine? c] Now, or eternity?

### B. Live and give first from source not from supply or need

1. Jesus, in His miracle of multiplying bread for the 5,000 (Mark 6:35-44) was aware of the pathetically small supply (5 loaves, 2 fish – Mark 6:30)
2. But His first thought was toward heaven (Mark 6:41).

### C. Faith and Wisdom

1. Faith and wisdom work together; they are complementary.
2. Out of balance an overemphasis on faith can lead to recklessness; an overemphasis on wisdom can lead to fear.
3. Jesus showed a healthy balance. Faith gives all. Wisdom collects the leftovers.
4. Psalm 65:11 – a good verse to claim at the beginning of a new year. **Pastor Mike:** *"If God's cart is traveling somewhere, valuable things can't even be contained in it fully and they will be found as the cart drives by."*
  - a. God's heart is to bless us over and above what we need, not to spoil us but so that we can bring transformation to the world.
  - b. God sees our hearts and their attachments. Out of His goodness, He hesitates to pour out extra blessing if it will harm us.
5. Who does God trust? The people who learn how to handle resources with faith and wisdom. Faith to give; Wisdom to handle and steward things well.

### D. Grow in wisdom – Proverbs 21:5

1. Practically get on a good financial plan (enroll in the upcoming finance seminar – go to clachurch.com, click on "Classes").
2. By doing this you may be able to fulfill dreams that you've had as a family.

### E. Grow in faith – 2 Corinthians 8:1-7

1. Despite their severe trial, Paul praises the Macedonian churches for their generosity.
2. Our first thought when confronted with an opportunity to give could be: God is a faithful provider; how can we not give?
3. Generosity rarely makes good sense at first glance. But if our first thought is God's provision, we will be inspired to generosity.
4. When we give, God entrusts more to us because we have less attachment to money and possessions.
5. Generosity is rebellion against the world's ways. E.g. Isaac obeyed God and stayed in Gerar during the famine (versus leaving for Egypt as everyone was doing). He planted crops and harvested multiplication (Genesis 26:1-14).
6. Pastor Mike told of how he and Laura were challenged to quit work, sell their house, and give a financial offering. God was faithful. Their gift was multiplied back to them many times over and became the supply for future ministry.
7. God is always supplying to our lives. It is important to discern what is bread and what is seed—what we should consume and what we should save to plant – 2 Corinthians 9:6-11.
8. Kingdom generosity can invade other areas of life in addition to the financial, including how we interact with people.

## DISCUSSION

1. How did the disciples demonstrate their first thought was one of lack (in Mark 8:13-21)? What are our first thoughts when: the roof springs a leak, we lose a job, we discover another baby is on the way, the diagnosis is bad, we're attracted to the newest, fastest, shiniest model of something we already have? Discuss.
2. What does it mean to live and give from source and not first from supply or need? How did Jesus demonstrate that (Mark 6:35-44)?
3. How are faith and wisdom complementary? What might an imbalance of either lead to? What is your reaction when confronted with an opportunity to give and what does that say about your first thought?
4. How is generosity a Kingdom of God value? How do you and your family determine what is bread and what is seed? Discuss ways that a generous spirit impacts more than just how we handle money.

## PRAYER

Dear Father, please speak to our hearts what You want to do in and through our lives this year. Grant to us a generous heart like Yours, faith like Yours, wisdom like Yours. Amen.