

## **SLOW FAITH**

Monday, July 31

Reading: Mark 8:1-21

**Mark 8:17** *Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? 18 Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember?"*

This is the second miraculous feeding of a crowd recorded in this gospel. This time Jesus is in Gentile territory and He feeds a crowd of 4000 men plus women and children with 7 loaves and a few fish. Despite seeing Jesus feed a large crowd before, the disciples still have little faith. Jesus takes what they have and repeats the miracle He had done months before in Galilee. This time they have 7 large baskets left over.

Jesus now returns to Israel and the Pharisees are waiting for Him. If they had been upset that Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners, they would be even angrier that Jesus would spend so much time ministering in Gentile regions. They demand Jesus prove Himself by giving them "a sign from heaven." Jesus' deep sigh indicates His irritation with the constant disbelief of the religious leaders who should have recognized Him as Messiah. Jesus' miracles and message should have been all the proof they needed! Jesus will not give them ANOTHER sign which they would refuse to believe as well.

Jesus may have expected confusion and misunderstanding from the religious leaders or even the crowds, but not His own disciples. Yet they totally missed the point of Jesus' warning about "the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod." They thought Jesus was talking about their lack of bread when Jesus was talking about the sin that had corrupted His enemies. Jesus did not want His disciples to be infected with the same pride and envy that was destroying them. You can hear the disappointment in Jesus' voice as He piles question on top of question to the Twelve: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? Do you still not understand?"

### **POINTS TO PONDER:**

1. "Watch Out For the Yeast of the Pharisees." In the Bible, yeast is often a picture of sin. It only takes a small amount of yeast to "infect" the whole lump of dough and make it rise. So just a little sin infects the entire person and grows until it consumes a person's whole life. Is there a "little" sin in your life that you are not dealing with? We need to keep "short sin lists" with God. Don't allow that "pet" sin to destroy your life.
2. "Do you still not understand?" Sometimes we, like Jesus' disciples, miss the point. They were looking at their own shortcomings instead of looking at what Jesus had done! We tend to focus on temporary issues that really have no bearing on the kingdom of God. We get caught up in worrying about where to get "bread" and forget that Jesus is our Provider. What things in your life distract you from focusing on what is most important – your relationship with God and serving Him? What steps might you need to take to get your priorities in order?