



And He Sighed Deeply...

Perhaps more than any other gospel, Mark shows the deep emotions of Jesus. Jesus truly became one with us. He took on a human body; he took on human limitations; he took on genuine human emotions. Mark tells us that Jesus felt pity, anger, and grief.

In Mark 8, the doubting Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign from heaven. They were not honestly seeking truth. Their purpose was “to test him.” In response, Jesus *“sighed deeply in his spirit and said, ‘Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.’”*

A sigh often expresses disappointment and defeat. A parent has tried to counsel a rebellious child. They have listened; they have wept; they have prayed, but all to no avail. As the child walks out the door for the last time, you hear a deep sigh as the parent realizes, “My son is making a dangerous and foolish decision and there is nothing I can do to prevent it.”

Sometimes a sigh comes from frustration. You have struggled to resolve a problem at work, but you can’t find a solution. Finally, you sigh in frustration as you realize, “I can’t fix this!”

What made Jesus sigh? He never sighed with frustration at the demands of a needy world. Earlier in Mark 8, Jesus fed 4000 men, plus women and children, with seven loaves and a few fish. Later in the chapter, he will heal a blind man. Jesus is not frustrated with human need.

Jesus never sighed in disappointment with people who struggled honestly to understand truth. As a teacher, I may sigh when a student asks a question that I feel should require no answer; “Dr. McElwain, who wrote the Gospel of Luke?” But Jesus never sighed when people came to him seeking truth.

Jesus sighed when faced with intractable disbelief. The Pharisees have watched Jesus cast out demons, but they demand, “Give us a sign.” They have watched Jesus feed thousands with a few loaves and fish, but they say, “If we only could see a sign of your power.” They have seen him heal the sick, restore sight to the blind, and empower lame legs to walk, but they insist, “We must have a sign!” And Jesus sighed deeply.

Do you need to bring major needs to Jesus today? Don't worry - your needs will not make him sigh in frustration.

Do you have struggles, questions, and even doubts? Don't worry - he will not utter a disappointed sigh over your confused thinking.

Jesus doesn't sigh when we bring him our most difficult problems. He doesn't sigh when we repeatedly ask for his help. He sighs only when we refuse to believe. How often we ignore the evidence of his work in our life and say, "I would believe *if he gave me a sign!*" Jesus must say, "I have given them life. I have cared for them. I went to the cross for them. What more can I do?" And he sighs deeply.