**Don’t you remember? (A History Lesson)**

Mark 8:1-21

Key Verse: 18 & 21, “Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don’t you remember?” “He said to them, ‘Do you still not understand?’”

In today’s passage, Jesus feeds 4000 people out of his compassion. Jesus’ compassion is limitless and endless. In his compassionate messianic work, Jesus works together with his disciples with the hope that someday they will grow as compassionate shepherds just like him. Also, related to this event, Jesus teaches his disciples to have a sense of history. To grow as men and women of God, having a sense of history is very critical matter. When we have deep sense of God’s history, we can grow very stable, mature, and Jesus’ fragrance-spreading men and women of God. May God bless each of us today to really grow as man and woman who have a deep sense of God’s history! Amen.

**I. Jesus’ compassion (1-10)**

Look at verses 1-3. During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance.” As we studied in previous passages, wherever Jesus went, he couldn’t hide himself from people. Even in Gentile territory, a woman who heard about Jesus came to him and now many people came to Jesus. Now Jesus’ messianic work and his popularity were at peak. In today’s passage, another large crowd gathered around him. And Jesus said to his disciples, “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat…” When you are surrounded by ever- increasing demanding needy people, how do you feel? Probably you including myself will feel burdened and want to escape from the fact there are so many needy people around us. But how was Jesus? Jesus said, “I have compassion for these people.” When Jesus said, “I have compassion for these people,” we can learn two things.

First, Jesus is a compassionate shepherd. “Compassion” means “suffer together”. It was his compassion that brought Jesus from heaven to earth giving up all his privilege and glory in order to be true friend for suffering people on earth. It was his compassion that made him born in most pitiful way; born in a manger in order to comfort all miserable and humble people. It was his compassion that opened the blind’s eyes, the deaf’s ears, and the mute’s mouth. It was his compassion that led Jesus to feed 5000 hungry people with 5 loaves and 2 fish. Now Jesus has same compassion for another large crowd of 4000 people. Wow! Jesus’ compassion is endless. Jesus is never burdened by people who come to him for help. What a wonderful compassionate shepherd Jesus is! Indeed compassion is the most distinguishable character of Christ Jesus that characterizes him, which makes him most distinguishable from any others, even heroes or heroines in human history. People are neither truly excited nor happy from their deep soul by other things except true love; true compassion. Brilliant knowledge, glamorous worldly success, sin-sick human love, endless pleasure-seeking do not give true happiness to man’s soul. Each person must make a choice about what type of life they want to live. If we want to live truly beautiful and meaningful life, we must choose a life learning compassion from Jesus. When we do so, we will truly come to know God because God is love.

Second, Jesus wanted his disciples to grow in his compassion. When Jesus had compassion for the people who had been with him for 3 days but had nothing to eat, Jesus did not feed them all only by himself. Jesus shared his compassion with his disciples with the hope that his disciples will grow as good shepherds who have compassion like him. I believe that in our generation Jesus has same hope that we and our children and our bible students also will grow as shepherds who have compassion like him.

How did the disciples respond to Jesus? Look at verse 4. “His disciples answered, ‘But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?’” When we read this verse, we may think that their attitude toward the crowd didn’t seem to be changed. But if we read carefully comparing with the previous time, we can find some progress in their compassion toward the crowd. They grew a little bit in their compassion. At least this time, they did not suggest Jesus to send them away because they did not have enough food. They showed their concern; how they could feed them. Here, we learn that we should never be discouraged by our Bible students or children who look like there are no progresses in them. We should believe that they can grow when we continue to serve them out of endless compassion.

Look at verses 5-7. When the disciples showed their concern and small compassion toward the crowd, what was the next step that Jesus took? In verse 5, Jesus asked his disciples. “How many loaves do you have?” Here, we learn that in order for the disciples to grow as compassionate shepherd, Jesus made his disciples get involved in his crowd-feeding work by asking this question. By asking this one question, Jesus treated his disciples who had actually almost no resources as his precious coworkers. Co-working starts from asking others for small thing such as asking their opinion or what they can offer. Co-working is very powerful way for someone and ministry to grow. Dr. Henry Kim always asks other’s opinion and in this way he makes co-working environment and God has blessed our ministry through co-working.

The disciples replied that they had 7 loaves and Jesus took the 7 loaves before 4000 people and prayed to God with thanks. And then he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people and the disciples worked hard to set the broken pieces of bread before all the people. They had a few small fish as well. Jesus again gave thanks for them and told the disciples to distribute them. When they obeyed Jesus’ instruction, the result was God’s overflowing blessing. All the hungry people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. About 4000 men were present. This scene is one of the most beautiful and powerful scene that shows the evidence that Jesus is caring, compassionate shepherd and at the same time he is Almighty God who can meet our need in any circumstances no matter whether we are poor or not. In this event, we should learn that where there is endless compassion and humble co-working in faith, there is always God’s miracle.

**II. Don’t you remember? Do you still not understand? (11-21)**

After feeding the 4000 people and sending them away, Jesus got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha. Unlike Jesus who made a beautiful scene by feeding the hungry crowd out of his compassion, there were people who always created dark and ugly scene. They were Pharisees. The Pharisees came to Jesus and began to question Jesus right after hearing the great news that Jesus fed 4000 people by 7 loaves and a few fish. Their motivation and purpose of coming and asking Jesus was not pure. They asked Jesus for a sign from heaven to test Jesus.

Jesus had already shown so many miraculous signs revealing that Jesus is the Messiah who had been prophesied in the Old Testament so that they could believe in him. But instead of believing in Jesus, they demanded another miracle from heaven. At this, how did Jesus respond?

Look at verse 12. “He sighed deeply and said, ‘Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it.’” Jesus was very grieved by the Pharisees’ miracle-seeking mentality. Their problem was that they were not interested in believing in Jesus but the miracles that they wanted to see from Jesus. The majority of the Jews longed for the Messiah who would perform the miracles from heaven such as the fire from heaven like Elijah did to destroy their political enemy, the Roman Empire, and establish earthly Messianic kingdom like in the time of King David. But they missed the point of the Messianic work. The Messianic work is not outward change of the world such as miraculous political revolution or better economical environment but inward change of each individual person through sincere repentance and faith in Jesus. When we understand who Jesus is by understanding his messianic work and accept him personally, Jesus enables us to be transformed from inside out. This is mysterious gradual transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit.

In verse 13, Jesus avoided encountering the evil religious leaders by getting back into the boat and crossing to the other side. Look at verse 14. When the boat reached possibly in the middle of the lake, the disciples realized that they had forgotten to bring bread except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. In the boat, there were 12 plus Jesus. But there was only one loaf. Then the disciples began to worry about how they could feed all 12’s mouths and Jesus. At that very moment, Jesus warned the disciples, “Be careful, watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.” After leaving the Pharisees, Jesus had been still thinking about the Pharisees and also Herod especially about their bad influence. Here yeast symbolizes influence. As we know, the yeast is very small quantity compared with the entire volume of dough, and invisible but it has great power to influence the entire dough. The Pharisees’ yeast was hypocrisy and deliberate unbelief. The Herod’s yeast was his immoral pleasure-seeking, secular life style. People form their mentality mostly by what they have seen or heard. In Jewish society, the Pharisees and the Herod were the representative two leaders who influenced the people of Israel. So it was very easy for those people to follow their influence whether it was right or not. The disciples were not exception. The same is true with us who are living in this generation. By what type or pattern of life are we most influenced who live in this generation? Hypocrisy; dishonesty; deliberate refusal and unbelief, immoral pleasure-seeking life are most common pattern of life for this generation as well. Jesus gives us warning to be careful and watch out such yeast. Jesus came to restore the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the kingdom of truth, holiness, compassion (true love). All his teaching, prayer, and hope are about truth, holiness, and true love. Without repentance of all our bad yeast, we cannot enter the kingdom of God.

When Jesus was giving warning to the disciples about bad influence of the Pharisees and the Herod, what was the disciples’ reaction? Look at verse 16. They discussed this with one another and said, “It is because we have no bread.” Jesus did not mention about bread at all. All his sayings were about how we should be careful and watch out the bad influence of the Pharisees and Herod. But the disciples only remembered one word, “the yeast.” And when they heard about the yeast, they immediately thought about bread because they knew the yeast was related to the bread. We cannot but laugh at how they could react in this funny way but it all happened because their minds were fixated on bread.

Let’s look at verses 17-21. Let’s read together these verses. “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? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don’t you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of piece did you pick up?’ ‘Twelve,’ they replied. ‘And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?’ They answered, ‘Seven’ He said to them, ‘Do you still not understand?’” The disciples had already seen many miracles done by Jesus. Especially they experienced two times of Jesus’ feeding thousands of people (5000 and 4000) with 5 loaves and 2 fish in one time, and 7 loaves and a few fish in the other time, just short time and maybe a little bit longer time ago. Those were really unforgettable supernatural events revealing clearly about who Jesus is. Jesus is God who could feed limitless people with just a very little amount of food. Therefore they should have had clear faith in Jesus that in the future Jesus would again feed them. But when they did not have enough bread in them, they became too anxious. Jesus could be disappointed and discouraged by them. However out of his compassion, Jesus did not give up on the disciples. Jesus asked them about what he had done one by one and rebuked them gently, “Don’t you remember? Do you still not understand?”

Through today’s passage, we learn Jesus’ endless compassion and we should not be discouraged or despair by anyone whom we are helping. Most of all we learn that we should remember what Jesus has done for us. By remembering what Jesus has done for us and understanding what it means, we can live life worthy of gospel; compassionate; pure and holy life with deep sense of God’s history. May God bless each of us to grow in learning Jesus compassion and in deep sense of God’s history! Amen.