

Unique Miracles

Mark 7.31-37; 8.22:26.

Mark records two unique miracles as a framework for the feeding of the 4,000.

1. Why are these miracles unique?
2. Why do these miracles serve as the framework for the feeding of the 4,000?
3. What practical lessons do we learn from these miracles?

These are the questions I intend to answer in today's sermon.

1. Why are these miracles unique?

They are unique not because of their type. Jesus had healed deaf, mute, and blind people before.

They are unique because Jesus spits on the floor or on His fingers in both miracles. (Why?! I don't know either! I have looked into some explanations, but I honestly don't know!)

They are unique because of their documentation. Mark is the only evangelist who tells us about these miracles.

Moreover, the icing on the cake is precisely the last miracle (the blind man), which is the only *gradual* miracle Jesus ever performed.

You may remember that I taught you about the five characteristics of Jesus' miracles found in Scripture:

1. Instantaneous
2. Public
3. Testable
4. Beyond medicine's scope

5. Not “premeditated”

All these characteristics help you differentiate what is common grace (medications, natural healing of the body, surgery, physiotherapy...) from supernatural healing. They also function as protection against false teachers with their false miracles.

Some skeptics might argue that the doctrine of the five characteristics is not entirely precise. However, even though this was the only gradual miracle Jesus ever performed in Scripture, it was still an **instantaneous** miracle. The gradual aspect is part of the miracle itself.

Why did Jesus perform this gradual miracle? You will have the answer later on.

2. Why do these miracles serve as the framework for the feeding of the 4,000?

Do you remember that Jesus rebuked His disciples for not understanding their mission? They were too busy with ministry maintenance, to the point that they forfeited the mission itself. Jesus was feeding (salvation, evangelism, reconciling people to God) the world right in front of them, but the disciples—like the religious leaders of His day—were selfishly worried about their own baskets of bread.

Thus, this is precisely why these miracles function as the framework for Jesus’ rebuke to His disciples: Though they hear, they seem deaf to Jesus’ mission. Though they see, they seem blind to Jesus’ mission.

This becomes even clearer with the last miracle, the gradual one that restores the man’s sight. At first, Jesus opens his eyes, and he does not see clearly. He sees people who look like trees. Then Jesus touches him again, and now he sees people clearly.

Don’t you find it interesting that he specifically says, “I see people; they look like trees,” and then next, “he sees people clearly”? Can you see that the vision is completely connected to seeing people? That is exactly what the disciples failed to see while feeding the 4,000!

The two lessons you can learn from this:

A. Religion/legalism gives you partial sight.

B. Selfish Christianity/ministry maintenance gives you partial sight.

Disciples of Christ, transformed by His teachings and life, know that they have a mission. The treasure of the Gospel that saves them also seeks to save others. When you look around you, you must see people.

Warren W. Wiersbe says: “Jesus did not want people to follow Him because of His miracles; but the more He told people to keep quiet, the more they talked! On the other hand, He tells us to tell everyone the Good News, and we keep quiet!”

(Side note before moving to the next point: skeptics may ask, “How could the blind man know what trees look like?” The answer: this man was not blind from birth. He had sight in the past and, for some reason, had lost it.)

3. What are the practical lessons we learn from these miracles?

A. Jesus’ presence

As you read that Jesus fed the 4,000, went to Tyre and Sidon to save the Syro-Phoenician woman, and went through the Ten Cities, remember: Jesus spent at least 2–4 months ministering on Gentile soil.

Jesus was connecting with those of the wrong religion, with strange practices, and of another tongue.

B. Jesus’ agenda

Everyone knew what the prophet Isaiah said: that the Christ would open the eyes of the blind, open the ears of the deaf, and loosen the tongue of the mute. Jesus is the Messiah.

The word Mark uses to describe this mute man is unique—used only once in the New Testament. It is the very word used in Isaiah 35:6 in the Greek translation known as the Septuagint (LXX), the Bible version used in their time.

Because of His Messianic identity, Jesus healed these people outside their towns and prohibited them from spreading the news further.

Jesus did not want half-truths told among the people (that He was “just” a miracle worker). Jesus wanted the full Gospel proclaimed: that He is the Savior of the whole Gentile world.

C. Jesus' heart

I want to conclude by inviting you to pay attention to Jesus' deep sigh. It shows how much He cares for us. He is not indifferent; He has compassion, and He feels the man's pain. He then looks up and heals him.

From above—from heaven—compassion and salvation come our way.

Conclusion

All for the glory of God! And the people praised God by saying that Jesus “did everything well; He made the blind see, the mute speak, and the deaf hear.”