

Mark 8:11–21 — Jesus Takes On Unbelief

June 16, 2019

Happy Father's Day to all the fathers. Dads get a bad rap in our culture, but at CrossWinds, we celebrate fathers. Being a father is a very high calling. If you are a father, I hope you feel extra encouragement from your family today.

As a church, we are studying through the Gospel of Mark. Today, we come to Mark 8:11. This is a passage that talks about the danger of unbelief and how subtle unbelief can creep into our lives. Turn in your Bibles to Mark 8:11. Feel free to use the Bible on your phone or the one in the pew. Stand as I read the text and you follow along with your eyes in your own copy of God's Word.

The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. And he 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." And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side. Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. And he cautioned them, saying, "Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread. And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They said to him, "Twelve." "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven." And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?" Mark 8:11–21 (ESV)

In these verses, Jesus is warning us about the danger of unbelief. These verses describe two kinds of unbelief. One is hard-hearted unbelief that we see in the lives of the Pharisees with their open opposition to Jesus. The other kind of unbelief is just as spiritually lethal but it is more subtle. It is what we might call practical unbelief or subtle unbelief. At this point, we see it in the lives of the

disciples. We will begin our study with the Pharisees and their obvious hard-hearted unbelief. Let's see what we can learn from it. We will begin our study with the final verse of last week's passage.

Rejecting Jesus can lead to hard-hearted unbelief.

And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha. Mark 8:10 (ESV)

Last week, Jesus fed the 4,000. That took place in the southeast corner of the Sea of Galilee in primarily, though not exclusively, Gentile territory. As soon as Jesus finished, he traveled north east by boat to an area Mark called Dalmanutha. Matthew called it Magdala. They were the same region. Since Mark was writing to Gentiles, he gave the Gentile name for the area. Since Matthew was writing to Jews, he gave the Jewish name for the area.



As soon as Jesus stepped off the boat with his disciples, the conflict began.

Those in hard-hearted unbelief will never have enough evidence.

The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. Mark 8:11 (ESV)

Jesus and his disciples were out of town for months. They just finished a trip that was approximately 150 miles of walking. They were out of town for a while but as soon as they returned, their old adversaries — the Pharisees — were ready to pounce. The English doesn't provide all the color and description the Greek does about this meeting. It says they *came* to him. The word come

means to come out as if in military rank. They didn't come to congratulate Jesus or welcome him back to town. They came to fight with Jesus. They were going to street fight with Jesus and the disciples because they hated them so much.

It also says they began to *argue* with him. That literally means to oppose him. Picture modern politics. It doesn't matter what someone says, the opposite political party takes it out of context. They twist it and manipulate it to discredit the person and undermine the person in public. That is what the Pharisees came out to do with Jesus. Anything he said, they used to discredit and attempt to humiliate him.

It also says they wanted to *test* him. The word test doesn't mean to test something to prove is it working, like we test with a fire drill. This word for test means to push something to the point of failure. It is to test it to break it. It is the same word used in Mark 1:13 used to describe the kind of tests Satan put to Jesus when he was in the wilderness fasting for 40 days. None of those wilderness tests were intended by Satan to show how Jesus would succeed but to make Jesus fail. That is the same thing the Pharisees intended to do to Jesus in this scene.

The Pharisees intended to test him to the point of failure by asking him for a sign from heaven. Why would they ask him for a sign from heaven? The Jews had a superstition that only God could perform heavenly miracles but that demons could perform counterfeit earthly miracles. How did this superstition develop? This came from the book of Exodus. You will remember that when God called Moses to lead the charge to take his people out of Egypt, God performed a

number of miracles through Moses. Amazingly, the Egyptian magicians were able to mimic some of the first miracles, such as turning water into blood. Once Moses moved to plagues from heaven, such as gnats and hail, the Egyptian magicians could not copy the plagues God performed with Moses.

From that observation, the Jews reasons that Satan could perform counterfeit earthly miracles but he could not perform miracles in the heavens. The goal of the Pharisees was to make Jesus fail. The Pharisees were convinced Jesus was powered by Satan so they expected that Jesus could not perform a sign in the heavens. By asking for him to perform a sign in the heavens, they were sure he could not perform one of those signs so they could claim that as evidence that Jesus was powered by Satan.

They were sure Jesus could not make the sun stop in the heavens, like God did for Joshua. They were sure Jesus could not call down fire from heaven, like God did for Elijah when he contended with the prophets of Baal.

It sounds like this was a perfect set up for Jesus. All he needed was to perform a sign in the heavens to prove them wrong. The problem is no matter how much evidence Jesus gave, the hard-hearted Pharisees would never have had enough evidence to believe!

Let me give you three reasons Jesus didn't give in to their wises and perform a heavenly sign like making the sun blink on and off.

First, all of Jesus' miracles were acts of compassion to help people in need. They were not demonstrations of power for the entertainment of an audience. Flashing the sun on and off or rearranging the stars for the Pharisees

would not have demonstrated compassion for anybody. It would only have entertained. In addition, even if Jesus performed a power show for them, they still wouldn't have believed, because their hearts were closed to belief.

Second, they have already seen enough to believe. They didn't need more evidence to believe. They already saw the feeding of the 5,000. They had seen thousands healed. They saw the deaf have their hearing restored. They saw the mute speak, with perfect grammar, a language they never heard or spoke. They saw lepers completely healed with missing limbs restored. Satan doesn't do those things. Satan wouldn't be showing compassion and pushing back the effects of sin. Jesus had already given signs from heaven for everyone to know he was not in league with Satan. Do you remember his baptism? God the Father spoke with an audible voice saying, "This is my son, in whom I am well pleased." That was a sign from heaven but they conveniently forgot about it.

Third, other religious leaders claimed they already had enough signs to know the truth about Jesus. Do any of you remember Nicodemus? In John 3:2, we see Nicodemus came to Jesus at night. He was a leading teacher among the Pharisees. Look what he said.

This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." John 3:2 (ESV)

Nicodemus said the religious leaders knew there were more than enough signs to prove Jesus' identity.

Here is the point. The Pharisees were so hardened in unbelief, no matter what evidence they were given they still wouldn't have believed.

Even if Jesus had stopped the sun, these people's hearts were so closed to Jesus' identity, no matter what he did, they would not have believed.

If there were people that hard-hearted in Jesus' day, we should expect to meet people that hard-hearted in our day. Expect there will be some people to whom we can share the gospel as clearly as possible, with whom we can give all kinds of historical and archaeological evidence, who can hear testimonies of changed lives, but it will never be enough evidence for them to believe. Why is there never enough evidence for them to believe? The problem is not a lack of evidence. The problem is the hardness of their hearts. They need softer hearts to believe.

Those hardened in unbelief will work together against those who believe.

Something else worth noting comes from the parallel account of this story in the Gospel of Matthew.

And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. Matthew 16:1 (ESV)

While Mark only tells us about the Pharisees in this encounter, Matthew tells us the Pharisees and Sadducees came together to harass Jesus. This is noteworthy. The Pharisees and Sadducees could not have been more different. They were severe theological enemies. The Pharisees were the conservatives of the day. The Sadducees were the liberals of the day. The Pharisees memorized the Bible. They read something spiritual into every little part of the Bible. They bound themselves with extra rules and regulations beyond the Bible. When it came to the Romans, they despised the Romans' presence and secular Greek

culture. The Sadducees were the opposite. They were pragmatists, not theologians. The Sadducees ran the temple and the sacrificial system. People didn't like them because they extorted money from people by jacking up the price of sacrificial animals. Theologically, they had a very low view of the Bible. They denied the existence of the resurrection and of angels. They were skeptics about the supernatural. They loved the presence of Rome and embraced Greek culture. The best illustration in the Bible to show how opposite these groups were is in Acts 23. In that chapter, Paul called out to the crowd that he was on trial because of his hope in the resurrection of the dead. When the Sadducees and the Pharisees in the crowd heard this, they literally broke into a street fight over this issue with fists flying. The Sadducees were claiming there is no resurrection of the dead, while the Pharisees claimed there is a resurrection of the dead. They came to blows over this issue. That shows you how theologically and ideologically opposite these groups were. Under normal circumstances they would never have worked together, but when it came to opposing Jesus, they were willing to put aside their differences and join forces. This tells us something about the way hard-hearted unbelief works.

People that are natural enemies will work together because of their hard-hearted unbelief to fight Jesus. You find that today, not just in the ancient world. Look in our modern culture, every other religion is accepted and endorsed. We have gay rights. We have endorsements and protections of many other faiths but the Christian faith is opposed and rejected and undermined.

This is humorous but true. Why is Chick-fil-A being harassed because they are closed on Sunday¹ but nobody is harassing the Chinese restaurant because it is closed on Monday? Expect those in unbelief will work together against Jesus and his people. It happened then. It will happen now. Nothing has changed.

Those in hard-hearted unbelief move further away from Jesus, the more evidence they are given.

And he 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.” Mark 8:12 (ESV)

Jesus sighed deeply in his spirit. This was not an expression of anger but of despair. Jesus was pushed to his limits with these people. He was at the end of his rope. He had lost patience.

In Matthew’s parallel account, Matthew gave a few more details about the way things unfolded.

He answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” So he left them and departed. Matthew 16:2–4 (ESV)

“You guys are better meteorologist than theologians.” Jesus picked up on their request for a sign in the heavens and said they could read the weather patterns in the heavens but they could not read what was happening right in front of them. Even if Jesus had given them a sign in the heaven, they would still have missed it.

¹ <https://www.thenewamerican.com/culture/faith-and-morals/item/32581-texas-governor-signs-save-chick-fil-a-bill>

Notice how Jesus responded to them at this point. It was a decisive move. Jesus told them he was now done with signs and miracles in front of them. From this point forward, Jesus just focused on training his disciples. He did not perform miracles and healings in the presence of the Pharisees or in Galilee. They didn't need any more signs. They had enough miracles. They had seen thousands healed. They had seen storms calmed. They had seen thousands fed. They had seen people healed from every conceivable disease. What additional evidence did they need to see the identity of Jesus? What was happening was the more evidence Jesus gave them, the more hard-hearted they became against him.

Expect this same response from some people toward Jesus. The more evidence you give them for Jesus, the more hard-hearted they will become against Jesus. We must expect some people will react this way. The Pharisees did in Jesus' day. Some people will react the same way today. What is needed for them is not more evidence. What is needed is a softer heart to see the evidence that is already there.

In Matthew, Jesus said there would only be one more sign they would be given. That was the sign of the prophet Jonah. Jonah was as good as dead when, for three days and nights, he was in the belly of a great fish, until God caused the fish to vomit him up and brought Jonah back from what looked like certain death. Jesus would be dead and in the heart of the earth for three days and nights until he came back to life. After three days, Jesus would not just come back from what appeared to be death, he would come back from what was actually death.

When Jesus died on the cross, the religious leaders saw him die. They certified his death. The religious leaders posted the soldiers to guard Jesus' grave. Three days after Jesus died, he rose from the dead. Did these religious leaders believe when Jesus's resurrection was a sign greater than anything he could give in the heavens? Absolutely not! They made up a story that the disciples came by night and stole the body. Jesus gave them the best evidence he could give them. He rose from the dead, but they still would not believe! You see people who are stuck in hard-hearted unbelief, like the Pharisees, find themselves only moving further away from Jesus when they are given more evidence for Jesus. The problem is not a lack of evidence. The problem is the hardness of their hearts.

The same is true today. Expect there are some people that will only grow harder against Christ, the more evidence they are given for Christ.

Those in hard-hearted unbelief must remember, the opportunity to turn to Jesus doesn't last forever.

And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side. Mark 8:13 (ESV)

This doesn't sound like it is an important verse but it is actually very important. Rather than continue to argue with these Pharisees, Jesus simply said he was done. He got in the boat and sailed away. At first, the Pharisees were happy. Their problems were gone because Jesus was gone. What they didn't realize was what also had left was their window of opportunity to turn to Jesus.

Jesus no longer performed miracles in the region of Galilee or in the eyes of these religious leaders. Their window of opportunity to repent and trust in Jesus was gone.

In the interest of transparency, as we work our way through the rest of this Gospel, we will see Jesus pass through Galilee once more in Mark 9, but he was low profile and he didn't do any miracles.

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know... Mark 9:30 (ESV)

What I want us to notice is for those who have abundant evidence for Christ, yet have chosen to remain hard-hearted against him, there comes a time when God says, "Enough is enough" and shuts door on the opportunity for repentance, just like he did for these Pharisees.

You may wonder if we see this any other places in the Bible. Yes, we do. Do any of you remember the Exodus generation? The Exodus generation saw God perform plague after plague on the nation of Egypt bringing one of the world's largest superpowers to its knees. The Exodus generation saw God fight for them and all they needed to do was watch. The Exodus generation walked across the Red Sea on dry ground with a wall of water on their left and their right, yet they saw Pharaoh's army drowned and destroyed when they tried to follow them through the sea. The Exodus generation was fed with manna from God every morning. Twice they were given water out of the rock in the desert. They Exodus generation had repeatedly seen God fight for them and Jesus provide for them, but when it came time to go into the Promised Land, and they saw the giants in the land, what did they do? Their hearts melted like a wax candle in

front of fire. They would not go in because they were afraid God would not take care of them. They persisted in hard-hearted unbelief even though they had more than enough evidence to believe.

What did God do in that situation? He did the same thing Jesus did with these religious leaders. He said, "Enough is enough. You persist in hard-hearted unbelief so your opportunity is taken away." The Exodus generation was condemned to walk in circles around the desert for 40 years until they all died so their children could go into the Promised Land that the older generation lost their opportunity to possess. Let's read what the writer of Hebrews says about this.

As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. Hebrews 3:15–19 (ESV)

The same things happens here with the Pharisees in front of Jesus. Since they have persisted in hard-heartedness against Jesus in the face of more than enough evidence for Jesus, Jesus walks away and removes their opportunity to turn to him.

That can still happen today. Some of you are here this morning because you were forced to come by relatives. The truth be told, you have no interest in Jesus, but growing up you have been given abundant evidence for Jesus. Maybe you grew up attending church but now you have practically walked away from church. If that is you, this passage is a warning to you. Be very careful about persisting in hard-hearted unbelief when you already have abundant evidence to

believe. It is very possible that when you least expect it Jesus will say, “Enough is enough,” and he may shut the window of opportunity to believe.

Familiarity with Jesus can lead to practical unbelief.

Now we move from the religious leaders of Israel, who developed hard-hearted obvious unbelief against Jesus, to the disciples. The disciples were also falling into unbelief at this point but it was a different type of unbelief. Instead of open and obvious unbelief, they were succumbing to subtle unbelief. Either form, open hard-hearted unbelief and subtle covert unbelief is spiritual cyanide. Both of them are capable of sending you to hell.

In Mark 8:22, we learn that when Jesus and his disciples left that area in the boat, they headed to the region of Bethsaida. This was on the opposite side of the lake to the northeast. This was right next to the area where Jesus fed the 5,000. The story picks up on that boat trip.

They forgot to bring bread on the trip and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. And he cautioned them, saying, “Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.” Mark 8:14–15 (ESV)

In Matthew’s parallel account, we learn a little more about when this conversation about bread took place.

When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. Matthew 16:5 (ESV)

They got to the other side of the lake, opened the lunch sack and realize they only had one loaf of bread in the boat. Earlier, we learned the size of these loaves. They were about the size of pita breads. I am sure they were hungry from the trip to the west side of the lake and left abruptly for the east side of the lake because of the fight club with the Pharisees. They were famished after all that

sailing, but they had no lunch to eat. I am sure everyone was frustrated with the unnamed disciple who was in charge of sandwiches for that day. Maybe the reason they didn't have bread is because Jesus had them leave the west shore so abruptly after meeting the Pharisees that they didn't have time to pack more bread.

While the disciples were having a meltdown because they didn't have lunch, Jesus was lecturing them. The Greek language is explicit. On the trip over, he was busy cautioning them about the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. The word caution in this sentence means to give explicit instructions. It is a very strong piece of communication. Jesus was telling them to avoid the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod with the same kind of force and intensity that your mother told you not to play in traffic when you were a child. Jesus wanted to make sure they understood to avoid this.

In addition, this is in the Greek imperfect tense. That means Jesus didn't simply caution them once but he cautioned them repeatedly to avoid the leaven the Pharisees and Herod.

While the focus of the text is more on the intensity and importance of Jesus' communication at this point, the question arises, "What is the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod?"

I believe it is the unbelief of the Pharisees and Herod. The first clue that it is unbelief is because that is the topic Jesus just finished discussing. Why is it described as leaven? Since most of us don't bake bread, we are not familiar with the properties of a leavening agent such as yeast. It only takes a pinch of leaven

in a batch of dough and it quickly spreads through all of the dough, causing rot and decay. In the Bible, in every instance but two, leaven is always used as a picture of sin and evil because of its decay properties.

Jesus was warning them to be extremely careful to avoid the unbelief they just saw in the Pharisees. “Watch out because it is catchy. It doesn’t take much. It can easily spread into your life and you will also find yourself living in unbelief.”

How did the disciples respond to Jesus’ warnings about the danger of unbelief?

Practical unbelief is being more concerned about little things than our relationship with Jesus.

**And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread.
Mark 8:16 (ESV)**

Instead of realizing Jesus was talking about something of eternal importance — the danger of unbelief — all they could think of was something of temporary importance. Where is lunch?

Here is the danger. They were in daily contact with Jesus. They saw the miracles of Jesus but because they were so familiar with Jesus, their hearts were growing hard to Jesus, they were also drifting into unbelief because they had become too familiar with Jesus and were taking him for granted.

This is the same thing we saw earlier in Mark when Jesus’ mother and brothers came to take him away when he was working miracles in Capernaum because they thought he was out of his mind. They were so close to him they were blind to his true identity. It is the same thing we saw earlier in the Gospel of Mark when Jesus returned to his hometown of Nazareth. They were so familiar

with Jesus they had unbelief in Jesus. When Jesus read from a passage in Isaiah while in Nazareth and told them he was the Messiah in their midst, they tried to murder him by throwing him off a cliff. Familiarity with Jesus can also lead to unbelief in Jesus. Hard-hearted open unbelief in Jesus and subtle covert unbelief in Jesus because we are too familiar with him both send people to hell.

This is the danger many of us face. We are in such constant contact with Jesus that our hearts have grown dull to the true identity of Jesus and the good news we have in him. As a result, we end up in subtle unbelief.

An example of someone that was sent to hell because of subtle unbelief in Jesus is Judas. He was with Jesus for three years. He saw all the miracles. The evidence was right in front of his eyes, but he failed to see Jesus for who he truly was because he was too familiar with Jesus.

Is that you today? Are we like the disciples? Are we too familiar with Jesus that we live in practical unbelief?

One way to recognize practical unbelief in our lives is if we find ourselves doing the very thing the disciples did in this situation.

He was strongly warning the disciples to stay away from the unbelief of the Pharisees. Jesus was having a very important spiritual conversation with them of eternal significance. Were they listening to him? Did they care what he had to say? No! All they were worried about was where they were going to find lunch! You know subtle unbelief has crept into your heart when the concerns your heart are the little unimportant things, such as where to get lunch, instead of the much bigger issues of eternal significance, such as how I can please Christ and

walk faithfully with him? Practical unbelief is in our lives when we are more concerned about the little and insignificant things than we are concerned about much greater eternal things in our walks with Jesus.

This story reminds us of Jesus' words from the sermon on the mount that we studied last week. It was our memory verse for last week, Matthew 6:33. Let me read that verse in context from the Sermon on the Mount. It tells us how Jesus takes care of little things like lunch.

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matthew 6:31–33 (ESV)

Instead of worrying about where to find enough bread, worry about following Christ and obeying Christ. When we do that, God will take care of providing our next meals. In this case, instead of worrying about bread, they needed to listen to Jesus and learn about the subtle dangers of unbelief. If they did that, Jesus would take care of the details and make sure they had enough to eat.

Then Jesus put down the hammer, and we learn another way we can see subtle unbelief creeping into our hearts.

Practical unbelief is forgetting how God provided in the past when faced with a problem in the present.

And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They said to him, "Twelve." "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did

you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven." And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?" Mark 8:17–21 (ESV)

Jesus said, "You guys have miracle amnesia." Did they forget what Jesus did in this same area when the 5,000 (actually 20,000 people) were without food and fed with five small loaves of bread? Did they forget what just happened in the Decapolis when 4,000 (actually 15,000 to 17,000 people) were fed off of seven loaves of bread?

There may only have been one loaf of bread with them in the boat, but Jesus multiplying it to feed a dozen people was a cake-walk compared to feeding 15,000 to 20,000. How could they so quickly forget what Jesus had done only a few months before?

The reason they quickly forgot how Jesus provided for them in that past when they had a problem in the present is because unbelief subtly crept into their hearts. When unbelief creeps into our hearts, it produces miracle amnesia.

We are no different than the disciples. We know unbelief has subtly crept into our hearts when we have a trial or difficulty and we fall apart at the seams instead of remembering how God has faithfully provided for us in the past and carried us through our trials and given us more than we deserve. We don't remember God's faithfulness to us in the past because unbelief has subtly crept into our hearts.

Just as persistent hard-hearted unbelief sends people to hell, persistent, subtle unbelief also sends people to hell. Judas is our example. He looked great on the outside but his heart was infected with unbelief on the inside.

Conclusion

For the first half of this Gospel, we assumed the Pharisees were the bad guys and the disciples were the good guys. Now we have a big question mark over the disciples. The disciples were not struggling with obvious hard-hearted unbelief. They were struggling with a practical, subtle unbelief because they were too familiar with Jesus.

The question we must ask ourselves is, are we in the same boat? What is the focus of our thoughts? Are we more worried about little things, like where to eat lunch, than we are about the big things, such as how to please Christ with our lives. If we are more worried about those little things than the big important things, that probably means unbelief has crept into our hearts.

If we fall apart at every trial we face instead of looking back with confidence to how God has carried us through the past and will faithfully carry us through the present, the reason we fall apart is probably because unbelief has crept into our hearts.

In this Gospel, we have seen Jesus make the lame walk, the mute speak, the deaf hear, the lepers cleansed, demons cast out of people, and the wind and waves instantly calmed. Thousand upon thousands were fed from food created in the palms of Jesus' hands. Jesus walked on water like we walk on a sidewalk. Do you believe that Jesus is who he claims to be, the very son of God?

If you say, "Yes, I believe." I have a follow-up question for you. You may not live in open hard-hearted unbelief but have you slipped into a subtle unbelief which is just as deadly?

What should we do if practical unbelief has crept into our lives? The answer is found in our memory verse for this week.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 (ESV)

Come before Jesus and confess your struggle with unbelief. Confess your heart's desire to be more concerned about temporary and unimportant things that the greater eternal things. Confess your tendency to fall apart in a trial instead of remembering God's faithfulness.

1 John 1:9 reminds us that when we confess our unbelief, not only will Jesus forgive us for our unbelief but he will cleanse us from our unbelief, which means he will revitalize our faith in him as we look to him for forgiveness.



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