**MIRACLE SERIES #8-"THE MINISTRY OF THE MASTER'S HAND"....(Mark 8:1-9)**

**Intro**: **Of the 33 miracles mentioned by name that Christ performed, this is the only one that is recorded by all four Gospel writers. This signifies its great importance. This miracle was designed by the Lord to do more than just feed a bunch of hungry folks on a hillside. It was designed to reveal Jesus as "Christ, the long awaited Messiah of the Jews" and to reveal His nature as God. In fact, there were three distinct reasons this miracle was performed:**

1. To illustrate Jesus Christ as the Bread of Life, Who was to be broken for the sin of humanity on the cross. 2. To show the Jews that One greater than Moses was here. The Jews revered Moses because they believed that he had given the Israelites bread in the wilderness. Jesus set the record straight in **John 6:32-33 by saying "I am the BREAD OF LIFE"!**  He reminded them that God gave the Hebrews the manna, but that Jesus Himself was the true Bread of God. 3. To demonstrate His power as the Lord of all creation. This miracle and the miracle of transforming water to wine in **John 2** are the only miracles in which Jesus actually used His power to create. In all the other miracles, He used resources that were already present.

***\*There are some clear similarities between this miraculous feeding of the people and the first one.***

         Both miracles involved huge crowds.

         Both miracles took place in a location where no food was available.

         In both miracles Jesus used a small amount of food to feed a lot of people.

         Both miracles involved the use of bread and fish.

         In both miracles Jesus involved the disciples.

         In both miracles the disciples doubted the Lord’s ability to meet the need.

         In both miracles Jesus asked the question, “***How many loaves have ye?***”(Only 7 out of 12!)

         In both miracles, Jesus took what He had, thanked God for it, and broke it.

         In both miracles the bread and fish multiplied in the hands of Jesus.

         In both miracles the crowds were entirely satisfied.

         In both miracles a large amount of food was left over.

\****While there are many similarities, there are also several differences between this miracle and the first.***

         The number of people fed in this miracle is different; 5,000 before versus 4,000 now.

         The amount of bread used in this miracle is different; 5 loaves verses 7 loaves.

         The amount of food left over in this miracle is different; 12 small baskets verses 7 large baskets.

         The first miracle took place after a day of teaching. This one took place after three days of teaching.

         In the first miracle Jesus was motivated by the ***spiritual needs*** of the crowd, **Mark 6:34**. In this miracle Jesus is motivated by the ***physical needs*** of the crowd.

         The first miracle was performed using food from an outside source (the lad), **John 6:9**. In this miracle, it appears that Jesus used what (the disciples) already possessed.

         The first miracle was designed to teach the disciples that Jesus was “***the Bread of Life***” for the Jews. This miracle is designed to teach them that Jesus is “***the Bread of Life***” for the world because he was returning from Tyre/Sidon and through Decopolis...Roman Gentile areas!

**Above all, this miracle reveals Jesus to be *The Savior Who Cares*. It teaches us that He cares about the spiritual side of our lives; He also cares about the material side of our lives. Remember as we study this miracle that what He does for this bread, He can and will do for you, if you will place all you have and all you are into His hands!**

I. **THE MASTER BLESSED THE BREAD--** Jews were always very careful to render their thanks to God for His blessings. They always prayed over their food at mealtime. Often, their prayer went like this:**"Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who hast produced this food, and this drink from the earth and the vine".** The point His, Jesus took this bread in His hands and He looked up to Heaven and the thanked God for His provision; and by doing that, he set a standard that we are to follow as well! You ought to always take the time to thank God for the food He gives you! **1 Tim. 4:3-4**) **Remember, we are relating this message to our lives today; so, just as Jesus blessed the bread and fish that day, He blesses the lives of His people! Think about His blessings upon you since the day He placed His hand upon your life! His blessings are wonderful and He deserves to be thanked for them! Have you done that lately? (Note: Even the lost folks among us today should be aware of the Lord's blessings. The air you breath, the food you eat, the water you drink are all His blessing on your life. Even your life itself is nothing more than something God has blessed you with! Yes, His grace and blessings extend to every member of the human family!- *Matthew 5:45   That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*** The Lord doesn't expect us to repay Him for the blessings He gives us. All He wants in return is our love, our obedience and our praise. Is He getting that from your life?

II. **THE MASTER BROKE THE BREAD**--**After He had blessed the bread, He used the same hands to break the bread! The reason? Before the bread could be shared with others, it had to be broken! One of the hardest truths for people to grasp is the great truth that those God would use greatly, He often hurts deeply! A period of brokenness always precedes a time of usefulness!-(**Moving away in 1968 (to understand what it is to say goodbye to family and friends), Mom & Dad Divorcing (to understand children today who have to endure separation), Having to leave home and live on my own at age 17 (to understand fear and challenges of young adulthood), Dragging logs and hand digging a footing while cleaning old blocks from a demolished building (to better understand people's money problems), A former pastorate throwing me out (So I could understand those pastors who are struggling!)! **You can see this principle at work even in the life of the Lord Jesus Himself. Before He could provide salvation to the world, He had to be broken on the cross! We love His blessings, but we shrink from His breakings! One has said that "*W*hile the blessings of the Lord are nice, the breakings of the Lord are necessary!-(Look at Job's life!) \*If you feel that you are being broken by God, remember that it will do you good in the end!-(Romans 8:28)....on and on we could go to speak of people like....Daniel, Noah, 3 Hebrews, Disciples in boat, Widow in Zarephath, Elijah by the dry brook, Widow of Nain; Mary, Martha and Lazerus!!!**

**If you feel as though you are being broken with your Job & money problems...your failing relationships or secret sins you can't seem to get control over as a believer...just notice where the bread was while it was being broken? It was in the Master's hands!**

III. **THE MASTER BROADENED THE BREAD--** The seven loaves and few small fishes were just enough to maybe be an appetizer for 12 hungry disciples...but they were woefully insufficient to feed a vast multitude. However, when they were blessed and broken by the Master, their ability was broadened. He took what was designed for a dozen men and used it to feed 4,000! That is what the Master can do with those things He blesses and breaks! God only breaks us so that He might broaden our ministry! Therefore, do not try to run away when the hand of the Lord lays heavy on your life!. When He is breaking you, it is so that He can use you in a greater manner! If you have been blessed and broken for the Lord, then get ready, He has a plan for your life that is glorious beyond imagination***! Conc: That bread and those fish were greatly used of the Lord. Before He could use them, however, they had to be placed in His hands***