



SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

HOW NOT TO BE SECULAR - WEEK 3

“WHOLE GRAIN JESUS”



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PRAYERS	DISCUSSION
<p><u>CONNECTION:</u></p> <p>Cross & Culture February 6th at 6 PM with guest speakers David Taylor & Sandra Bowden. This event will examine and celebrate the vital role that the visual arts play in worship, culture, and Christian life. Tickets are \$15 (\$10 for students). allsaintsaustin.org/cc.</p> <p>Men’s Retreat February 20-21 at T Bar M Ranch. Guest speaker is Aaron Jeffrey - former RUF campus minister at Univ. of Iowa and Georgia Tech, and now currently on staff at Redeemer Seminary. Cost is \$75. Sign up at allsaintsaustin.org/mensretreat.</p> <p>All About All Saints Interested in learning more about All Saints and the PCA? Come to this 4-week class beginning February 15th at 9:15 AM at St. Gabriel’s. Sign up by emailing Rebekah at rrice@allsaintsaustin.org</p> <p><u>REQUESTS:</u></p> <p>Seeing Jesus as Satisfactory How can we pray for you in your pursuit to delight in Jesus? What is distracting you from this vision and joy right now?</p>	<p>INTRO <i>(Question:)</i> What does it mean to have an “out of body” experience (OBE)? Have you had one before? Was it good or bad? Would you say that these experiences are more or less “spiritual,” in the biblical sense?</p> <p><i>(Transition:)</i> Wikipedia defines OBEs as “an experience that typically involves a sensation of floating outside one’s body and, in some cases, perceiving one’s physical body from a place outside one’s body.” I think we often consider OBEs as something pleasant, but that was not the connotation of the term when it was first coined, nor is it the contemporary scientific understanding. <i>(You can choose to read these next sentences in italics or not, depending on whether it would be helpful.)</i> – The term “out-of-body experience” was introduced in 1943 by George Tyrrell, and was adopted by many researchers in replacement of more spiritual explanations, such as “spirit walking.” OBEs can be induced involuntarily by brain traumas, sensory deprivation, near-death experiences, psychedelic drugs, dehydration, sleep, electrical stimulation of the brain, etc. They can also be deliberately induced by some. –Scientists generally regard OBEs as dissociative experiences arising from different psychological and neurological factors. This is neither a pleasant nor healthy phenomenon, nor is it more “spiritual” in the Christian sense. Being disembodied is not the biblical ideal nor the end of our story. But, in some senses, being disembodied is how many Americans live, and how they understand the function of faith. Christ seems so irrelevant to their actual lives.</p> <p>We are currently in a series entitled “How Not To Be Secular.” We are discussing this topic because we acknowledge that our world has transitioned from a place in which belief in God was assumed to an age in which atheism or agnosticism is almost inescapable. Doubt is the default, but even those who do not believe in God are skeptical about their unbelief, and feel pressured with the memory of God. Most still long for transcendence and greatly fear death. They aren’t totally committed to secularism, and wonder, “What if I am wrong?” But we are all, even Christians, impacted by the pervasiveness of doubt. As we read our text be thinking about this question: “Does Christianity have enough to satisfy our longings?”</p> <p>READ the text aloud.</p> <p>DISCUSS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about the Pharisees dissatisfied Jesus? What does it mean to seek a sign from heaven? What is wrong with that? How does it distract from understanding God’s works in the world? • What strikes you as interesting in the responses of the disciples in this passage? • In what ways do churches often make Jesus/Christianity seem irrelevant to real life? • Just looking at this text, how would you say that Jesus responds to our real life needs and longings? (<i>Look especially at vv. 2-3, 8.</i>) • What is leaven? What does Jesus mean by the “leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod” (v. 15)? (<i>You can look at Luke 12:1–hypocrisy; 1 Cor. 5:6-8–malice and evil, as opposed to sincerity and truth.</i>) How does this hold us back from understanding Jesus? • How did the crowd receive satisfaction from Christ? (<i>Look at v. 8.</i>) What might it mean for us to eat from Jesus? Is there significance in the fact that Jesus invited the disciples to distribute the food? • Where does this miracle feeding occur? Is there any significance in the fact that they are in a “desolate place” (v. 4)? In the Old Testament making a place desolate was the result of the judgment curse of God. In the Gospels we find Jesus going to desolate places to pray, teach, heal, and perform miracles. What is Jesus doing? In what ways might desolate places be the perfect circumstances for receiving revelation from/gaining understanding about God? <p>CONCLUDE Jesus cares about our real needs and longings, and satisfies us with himself. He is the true bread, and calls us to trust him to provide for us, gives himself to us in tangible ways, and invites us to bring his provision and satisfaction to others.</p>

MARK 8:1-21

ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION (ESV)

[1] In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, [2] “I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. [3] And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away.” [4] And his disciples answered him, “How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?” [5] And he asked them, “How many loaves do you have?” They said, “Seven.” [6] And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. [7] And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. [8] And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. [9] And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away. [10] And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

[11] The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. [12] 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.” [13] And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

[14] Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. [15] And he cautioned them, saying, “Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.” [16] And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread. [17] 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? [18] Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? [19] 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.” [20] “And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” And they said to him, “Seven.” [21] And he said to them, “Do you not yet understand?”