

Home Group Community Notes
Week of February 15, 2026
Mark 6:6-8:21

The response to Jesus

Throughout the book of Mark, people were “amazed” by Jesus. He had demonstrated and taught that He is the Messiah and Son of God who has all authority and power. In this passage, Jesus is calling out how they should respond: In faith!

As you read through Mark 6:6-8:21, notice the different groups of people and if they respond with or without faith and what real faith looks like.

Tips for understanding

6:8: “Take nothing.” Jesus was instructing them about what it means to follow Him. He was teaching them faith in God and focused on their mission. Later, he would change His instructions.

6:14: Why talk about King Herod? The King was focused on himself, John the Baptism paid the ultimate price of trusting in God. Those who follow Jesus the Messiah must be willing to sacrifice and suffer for Him and for the mission of spreading the good news of the Kingdom.

6:34: Jesus had “compassion on them.” Jesus always has the qualities and character of God including compassion. (See Exodus 34:6-7)

6:51-52 and 8:14-21: “Hardened hearts.” A hard heart was the characteristic of Jesus’ opposition and Pharaoh in Exodus. It points to lack of belief in one’s heart. In this case, Jesus is fully God and the disciples, though seeing God at work, had not yet fully given themselves to belief.

7:2, 8, and 7:14: “Defiled”. The disciples were eating without practicing the ceremonies/rituals of the Pharisees and were labeled as “defiled” – unworthy of God’s presence. Rarely did Jesus say, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand.” He corrected the sin of the Pharisees: “You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.” What Jesus taught was that the Pharisees created their own source authority rather than what God had revealed. In this case, it was not what enters a person that makes them “defiled” but what comes out of them (i.e. what they say or do).

7:27: “Dogs?” To call someone a dog was an insult. It was a common slur that the Jews used of gentiles. To Jews, dogs were wild scavengers and not pets. However, the Gentiles did have them as pets. Jesus used a softer form of “dog” rather than the slur. Here, Jesus repeated what she had heard before to stir up faith. And, she got it. She recognized that He was speaking as the one sent to the Jews first and also understood that this could mean salvation for the gentiles. She recognized that “dogs” didn’t need to wait until the children faith and healed her daughter.

7:37-38: The repeated theme of “amazement” in “Mark” has now risen to people being “beyond measure” or “overwhelmed with amazement.” Compare this to Isaiah 35:5-6.

READ THROUGH MARK 6:6 – 8:21 AND CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

This was a lengthy passage with multiple episodes. Which story stands out to you? Why?

What themes do you notice? How is this different from the previous chapters?

How did the various audiences respond to Jesus? How might we characterize them?

- The people that the twelve visited
- King Herod
- The crowds
- The Pharisees
- The woman with a daughter who had an unclean spirit
- The people in the region of Decapolis

The “twelve” are repeatedly in the spotlight of these stories. They saw and experienced much with Jesus. How were they responding? What was Jesus teaching them?

Moses was the hero to the Jews. What allusions to Moses (in Exodus) do you notice? How did Jesus demonstrate that He is superior to Moses?

Who responded to Jesus with faith? How was/is that unexpected?

What seems to keep these people and us from fully putting their trust in God / Jesus?

What do we learn about being a disciple of Jesus?

What do we learn about helping others learn to follow Jesus as His disciples?

APPLY IT THIS WEEK

We saw multiple examples of Jesus’ authority and power and a variety of ways to respond to Him. What did you learn from this passage about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus? What is God teaching you about your own journey of walking with Jesus?