

June 3, 2012 by Steve Brandon



# Do You Understand?

## Mark 8:1-21

- 1. Feeding the 4,000 (verses 1-9)**
- 2. Seeking a Sign (verses 10-13)**
- 3. Warning the Disciples (verses 14-16)**
- 4. Asking the Questions (verses 17-21)**

There are two types of people in this world: Math people and Artsy people. Math people are those who grasp all things logical, but fail when it comes to the aesthetic. Artsy people are those who overflow in creativity, but struggle when it comes to numbers. Some like to call this being left-brained or right-brained.

Those who are left-brained are the math type. They like things organized. They like a schedule. They prefer to focus on one task at a time. They think in words. They prefer to be alone with a book. They like non-fiction. Those who are right-brained are the artsy type. Their desk is a mess. They are the ones who day dream. They like to think in pictures. They like music. They tend to follow their intuition. They prefer spending time with people in social settings.

Now, of course, these things are generalities. The right-brain/left-brain dichotomy is simplistic at best. Very few are able to be compartmentalized as being entirely one or the other. And there are many questions to be answered in the scientific world regarding the specifics of how the brain works. But, you know what I'm talking about, don't you? Most of you will easily identify with one side or the other. Many of you are strong at both sides.

Now, in our house, we span the spectrum. I'm a left-brainer, for sure. I excel in the areas of math and science. I was a physics major in college. My son is a right-brainer, for sure. Math is painful for him. He much prefers the artistic. My wife and oldest daughter excel at both.

This has led to some interesting dynamics when it comes to teaching math to my son. We have often gone over a math lesson which I have attempted to explain. In my mind, it is as clear as day! In his mind, it is as clear as mud! Eventually, he gets it, but it takes many examples and much repetition and a few tears and sometimes a few years. In some measure, all who are good at math reach some limit where the concepts boggle the mind. I remember struggling in upper level math classes. I remember struggling in grasping the mathematics behind quantum mechanics. I remember going in to speak with a professor about a question I had regarding quantum physics. I sat in his office and he tried to explain to me this particular concept. I would try now to explain what it was, but I never really understood it! He explained it to me and when he was done, something wasn't happening in my mind. It just wasn't computing. I remember his frustration at trying to teach me. I remember my frustration at trying to learn. I remember that he was even getting angry with me. But, I just didn't understand.

When I explain math to my son, I often ask him, "Do you understand?" Understanding often comes slowly. But, I'm the same way when it comes visual things.

There is a parallel for us in the spiritual realm. There are two types people in the world: those who grasp the gospel and those who don't. We wouldn't be unbiblical to say that there are those who are spiritually minded and those who aren't spiritually minded. The Biblical categories are called, "natural" and "spiritual."

1 Corinthians 2:14 says, "A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned." Note how Paul put it. The natural man is the one who is earthly. The spiritual realities of life don't compute. The spiritual man, on the other hand, discerns the heavenly realities. In the next verse, Paul says, "But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one" (1 Cor. 2:15).

You can very well argue that the Bible argues for a complete dichotomy between these two sorts of people. You have those who see the spiritual realities of life. You have those who are blind. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 tells us, "If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ." We see two categories: those who see the gospel and those who are blinded to the gospel.

And yet, you can also argue a continuum as well. Do you remember the parable that Jesus told of the four soils -- the hard soil, the rocky soil, the thorny soil, and the good soil? The hard soil and the good soil were on the edges of the spectrum. But, the rocky soil and the thorny soil were somewhere in between. There is some grasp of spiritual realities. They received the word with joy and began to grow. And yet, they fail to come to full faith and die away. The fact is this: understanding and grasping spiritual realities often comes slowly for us.

In our exposition of the gospel of Mark, we come to chapter 8. We are going to look at the first 21 verses. In these verses, we see how slowly spiritual understanding can come. The climax of our section comes in the very last verse of our text (verse 21), in which Jesus asks His disciples, "Do you not yet understand?" And as we will see in coming months, this is a predominant theme in Mark's gospel. The disciples of Jesus just don't get it. They saw Jesus feed thousands of people and then are worried because they forgot to bring bread on their trip (Mark

8:16-21). Jesus tells them that He is headed to Jerusalem to be killed and the disciples are talking about who is the greatest (Mark 9:33-34). They see Jesus heal the leper, raise a paralytic, calm the storm, walk on water, and grant sight to the blind. Yet, they all scatter from Jesus in His hour of greatest need (Mark 14:27-28).

Verse 21 can be asked again and again and again in the gospel of Mark, "Do you not yet understand?" From this phrase, I have taken the title of my message, "Do you understand?" As we work through this text, I want to continually ask you this question: "Do you understand?" We will see the Pharisees, who had no understanding. We will see the disciples, who had slow understanding.

We can find great comfort this morning in how slow the disciples were to grasp these things, because we are often the same way. Let's begin with the first 10 verses, ...

Mark 8:1-9

In those days, when there was again a large crowd and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples and \*said to them, "I feel compassion for the people because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come from a great distance." And His disciples answered Him, "Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people?" And He was asking them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven." And He \*directed the people to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people. They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He ordered these to be served as well. And they ate and were satisfied; and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces. About four thousand were there; and He sent them away.

Here we have the ...

1. Feeding the 4,000 (verses 1-9)

If these words sounds familiar, it's because they are. In chapter 6, we read about Jesus feeding the 5,000. In many ways, the circumstances were the same. Jesus had been teaching thousands of people (6:44). He had been teaching them for a long time (6:35). Those who had been listening were hungry (6:36). Jesus felt compassion for them (6:34). He fed them all with a few loaves of bread and a few fish (6:41). All who ate were satisfied (6:42) The disciples picked up the scraps afterwards (6:43).

Yet, in many ways, the circumstances surrounding these miracles were different. In one, there were 5,000 people numbered. In the other, there were 4,000 people numbered. In the one, the crowds had been there all day and remained until late (6:35). In the other, the crowds had been there for three days (8:1). In the one, Jesus began with five loaves and two fish (6:38). In the other, Jesus began with seven loaves and a few small fish (8:7). In the one, the crowds sat down on the grass (meaning it was springtime) (6:39). In the other, the crowds sat down on the ground (indicating another time of year) (8:7). In the one, the disciples picked up 12 small baskets (6:43). In the other, the disciples picked up 7 large baskets (8:7). Jesus performed the one miracle in Jewish territory. Jesus performed the other miracle in Gentile territory. These are two miracles that Jesus performed on two different occasions. I point this out, because there are some liberal scholars who claim that these two miracles were actually one miracle. But, there are too many differences in the two miracles to bear this out.

Let's walk through the miracle. From the best we can tell, this was in the land of the Gentiles (where chapter 7 left off). The context of the feeding takes place in the first three verses.

Mark 8:1-3

In those days, when there was again a large crowd and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples and \*said to them, "I feel compassion for the people because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come from a great distance."

Jesus had been teaching the crowds. In verse 1, it is merely described as "large." We read in verse 9 that there were 4,000 people in the crowds. Perhaps there were more. When reporting on the number of people who were fed in feeding of the 5,000, Mark explicitly said that there were five thousand "men" (Mark 6:44). We know from Matthew's account that this excluded the woman who may have been present, as he pointed out, "there were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children" (Matthew 14:21).

They had been with Jesus and the disciples for three days. This was, in effect, a Bible conference, similar to many that run across our land. Only they didn't stay at a nice hotel, and their food probably wasn't so nice. Even by our standards, this is a big conference. There were thousands of people. And they stayed for three days. And they ran out of food.

This shows that they probably weren't expecting to stay for so long. They probably went out to meet Jesus in haste, as occurred so many times before. Such as the last time that Jesus fed the multitudes. Jesus went away in the boat with His disciples (Mark 6:32). "The people saw them going, and many recognized them and ran there together on foot from all the cities, and got there ahead of them" (Mark 6:33). They had gone out spontaneously to listen to Jesus, and were unprepared to stay so long. And such was surely the case here in our text.

Having remained for three days and now without food, Jesus said, "I feel compassion for the people" (verse 2). He knew that they would "faint on the way" if they didn't get any nourishment. The disciples knew what Jesus was thinking. The last time that He had compassion upon the crowds (6:34), Jesus fed them. That's why ...

Mark 8:4

... His disciples answered Him, "Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people?"

What an amazing statement. The disciples rightly discerned Jesus' intentions. But, they didn't comprehend His power to do so. Even though they had seen the miracle-working power of Jesus before, they still didn't believe. And this is the point of this entire section of Scripture this morning. The disciples have seen so much. And yet, they have faith so small. Their response should have been, "Yes, Jesus. If you send them away hungry, they will certainly faint on the way. They need some food. You have done it before. You can do it again. So, feed them. Let us see your power once again!" But, instead, they say, "Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people?" (verse 4).

They were men of little faith. We have seen this before. Remember when they were in the boat and the storm came upon the waters. Jesus was sleeping in the boat, but the disciples were frightened for their lives! They woke Him up saying, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" (Mark 4:38). Jesus "Got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Hush, be still'" (Mark 4:39). Then Jesus asked them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" (Mark 4:40). They had seen many miracles that Jesus had done, but they had failed to believe. The disciples were men of little faith.

We will see this again. In chapter 9, Jesus will be on a high mountain with Peter and James and John (Mark 9:2). And while they are on the mountain, the other disciples are encountering a problem at the foot of the mountain. A man had come to the disciples with a son who had an unclean spirit who seizes him and throws him into convulsions, often drawing him to the fire and to the water (Mark 9:17-18, 20, 22). The man brought his son to the disciples and they couldn't cast out the demon (Mark 9:28). Fundamentally, they weren't able to cast out the demon, because they had little faith. Jesus said, "This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer" (Mark 9:29).

Now, before we throw stones at them, let us realize that we are often the same way. Oh, we profess to believe, but many times we don't believe. Time and time again, we have seen God work. And yet, time and time again, we fail to fully believe in His power. May God give us His grace to believe! Do you believe? Do you understand?

In verse 5, we see Jesus stepping into action, just like He did when feeding the 5,000.

Mark 8:5-7

And He was asking them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven." And He \*directed the people to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people. They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He ordered these to be served as well.

I have no idea how this took place. It may have been that Jesus was handing out freshly created bread and freshly prepared fish. It may have been that they multiplied in the containers that the disciples carried. It may have been that they multiplied in the hands of the disciples. It may have been that they multiplied when people were eating. The Bible gives no details about how and when the food was created. All we know is that it was a miracle. From seven loaves and a few small fish, Jesus was able to feed thousands.

And it's not that everyone had only a little bit, like communion wafers. No, we read in verse 8, ...

Mark 8:8

And they ate and were satisfied; ...

That is, they all had as much as they wanted.

A few years back we had some Chinese students in our home over the Thanksgiving holiday. We had a great time with them. And in our exchange back and forth with learning their culture and their words and them learning about America, we learned the word for when you are full of food. You know that feeling that comes at the end of every Thanksgiving meal. You have eaten too much turkey. You have eaten too much bread. You have had your fill of mashed potatoes. And you say, "I'm full" or "I'm stuffed!" In China (according to our friends), they say "Baola!" "I'm full" - "Baola!" And all 4,000 people that day could say, "Baola!" They were all "satisfied." There was no lack of food.

Mark 8:8-9

... and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces. About four thousand were there; and He sent them away.

These seven baskets were large baskets. They were similar to the baskets used to hold Paul as they lowered him down from the walls of Damascus (Acts 9:25). These were large containers -- enough to pick up quite a few leftovers!

Do you understand the power of Jesus? He could stuff 4,000 people full of food and have plenty left over.

Let's move on to my second point. In verses 10-13, we see the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees. I have called my point, ...  
2. Seeking a Sign (verses 10-13)

Verse 10 directs us geographically.

Mark 8:10

And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha.

Our best guess places Dalmanutha directly across the Sea of Galilee where they were. And when the boat moored to shore along the western shore, ...

Mark 8:11

The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him.

This is a shocking statement! The Pharisees had seen (or heard) of plenty of signs from Jesus before. Jesus cast the demon out of the man in the synagogue (Mark 1:21-28). Certainly, the leaders of the synagogue were able to report to the Pharisees what took place there. Jesus healed the crowds that were coming to him in Capernaum (Mark 1:34). Surely, the Pharisees heard all about this. Jesus cleansed a leper (Mark 1:40-45). This leper went and reported to the priest all that happened to him. Jesus healed a paralytic right in front of their eyes (Mark 2:1-12). Jesus healed the man's withered hand in the synagogue (Mark 3:1-6). They saw plenty of signs from Jesus.

On top of this, they would have heard of many others. They would have heard about Jesus calming the sea (Mark 4:35-41). They would have heard about the legion of demons that Jesus cast out of the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:1-20). They would have heard about Jairus' daughter and the woman who was cured of her issue with the blood (Mark 5:21-34). They would have heard about the little girl that Jesus raised from the dead (Mark 5:35-43). Some of them may have been in the crowd when Jesus fed the 5,000. And now, after feeding the 4,000, "The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him" (verse 11).

You can see right there in verse 11 that their motives were far from clear. They weren't asking Jesus for a sign so that they would believe. They were asking Jesus for a sign, "to test Him." In other words, "So that they might trap Him." Furthermore, they came out "to argue" with Jesus. Such an attitude demonstrates that the Pharisees didn't understand Jesus.

Over the years of preaching, I've had a few people who have visited our church, who have "began to argue" with me. Some that I said has made them angry enough for them to come to me and tell me all of the things that I said wrongly in my sermon. It's pretty easy to spot their attitudes. They come, not with teachability, but with a contrary spirit. Such people will not be a help to the church. This is how the Pharisees were coming to Jesus. They weren't coming with humility. Rather, they were coming to oppose Him at every step. That's why Jesus was done with the Pharisees.

Mark 8:12-13

Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, "Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." Leaving them, He again embarked and went away to the other side.

Jesus was done with the Pharisees. They saw Jesus and knew His power; and they rejected Him. Eventually, the Pharisees would kill Jesus, nailing Him to a cross. Now, it's not that they were never exposed to Jesus. They had a front-row seat to the miracles of Jesus. Turn back to chapter 3, ...

Mark 3:1-6

He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there whose hand was withered. They were watching Him to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. He \*said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!" And He \*said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" But they kept silent. After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He \*said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

Do you see their hard hearts? They saw a sign from Jesus. And that very sign became the reason why they wanted to destroy Him! And now they are asking for another sign? (8:11).

Eventually, they did go out and destroy Jesus. They crucified Him. Paul tells us why they crucified Jesus -- because they didn't understand Jesus. 1 Corinthians 2:7-8 says, "We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;" They saw Jesus, but they didn't understand Jesus. They witnessed His miracles, but they didn't embrace Him. So they crucified the Lord of glory.

Now, in God's sovereignty, this wickedness done to Jesus is good news to us. Because, it was through the sacrifice of Jesus that we are made right through faith in Him! This is the glory of the gospel -- that believing in His sacrifice reconciles us to God!

You say, where did the Pharisees go wrong? I believe that it's right here. They were sign-seekers. They wanted a sign from heaven (verse 11). They wanted something to confirm Jesus. Their problem continued after the resurrection of Jesus. Paul said "Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified" (in 1 Corinthians 1:22-23). The message of the cross of Christ will never satisfy sign-seekers. It just won't. Jesus knew this, and left (verses 12-13).

Now, before we move on to my third point, I have to ask: are you a sign-seeker? Are you one who is always looking for proof for your faith? Always looking for God to work in specific ways? Always wanting to see things with 100% clarity?

Know this, this is not how God has made the world. If He had wanted to, God could certainly have made Himself known in a greater way than

He has chosen to do. That's not to say that the ways of God are insufficient. Because they are sufficient. But, it is to say that God has chosen to whisper to us.

He could have chosen to walk and talk with everyone on the planet like He did with Adam and Eve. God could have chosen to have a daily, personalized podcast, explaining the mysteries of His ways for you for that day. But, that is not how God has made the world.

God has made the world, so that we come to Him by faith. That's the reality of our existence. And those who seek for signs before they believe are seeking something contrary to this creation. And such ways are contrary to God's way. So, let's not be sign-seekers.

Let's move on to my third point.

### 3. Warning the Disciples (verses 14-16)

Picture them now. They are in the boat, ...

Mark 8:14-16

And they had forgotten to take bread, and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them. And He was giving orders to them, saying, "Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." They began to discuss with one another the fact that they had no bread.

This is classic missing the point. Jesus had just taken seven loaves of bread and fed thousands of people. And now, the 12 disciples were concerned that they had only one loaf of bread in the boat. Jesus warned the disciples of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod (verse 15). And they talk about not having bread.

Have you ever been misunderstood? Being misunderstood can be quite humorous. We were recently in California with Yvonne's parents. They are going hard of hearing. We were sitting down to eat. We were getting ready to pray. Things were a bit chaotic, with the children excited to see their cousins. My mother-in-law says, "Shhhhhhh! Uncle Steve is going to pray." At this point, my four year-old son asked his cousin, "Who's uncle Steve?" My mother-in-law heard something, but obviously, not very clearly. She said, "No, David. We don't have any cheese." And then, she continued on like nothing else happened. My daughter, Hanna, and I caught the whole thing and shared a quiet laugh before dinner. Being misunderstood can be humorous.

Being misunderstood can be tragic as well. I remember hearing the story of the man who was looking for work. He saw a sign in someone's window saying, "PAINTER WANTED." So, he went to the house, knocked on the door and told the owner, "I'm here for the paint job." The owner says, "OK" and hands him a couple of cans of paint, saying, "Here's the paint. I want you to paint the porch." The man says, "Sure. No problem." He takes the paint and sets off to work. It's not very long until he knocks on the door again. "All finished." Handing over the money, the owner exclaims, "That didn't take very long!" "I even gave it two coats," he said, pocketing the money. "And oh, by the way, it's not a Porch, it's a Ferrari."

That's about what took place in that boat on Galilee some 2,000 years ago. Jesus was warning them about the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod, talking about the teaching of the Pharisees and of the influence of Herod (Matthew 16:12). But, they mistook Him to be talking about bread. They didn't understand the warning. They didn't understand what Jesus was talking about.

Jesus had just finished this confrontation with the Pharisees. And He was warning His disciples of their influence, using parabolic language. Beware of their leaven. Beware of the influence that they might have in your lives. Beware of their teaching. It may be only a little bit, but "a little leaven, leavens the whole lump of dough" (1 Corinthians 5:6). So, steer clear of them, because their influence is bad. "The Pharisees, who loved their traditions (Mark 7:1-23), will lead you down a bad path. The Herodians, who have a secular mindset (Mark 6:17-29), will lead you down a bad path. So, avoid them. You saw the way that I rebuked them and left them. Do the same. Have nothing to do with them."

And, particularly, what is Jesus warning against? Certainly, there are many things that the Pharisees missed. I do think, though, that Jesus was speaking about how they were seeking for signs (verses 10-13). Perhaps that may seem like a small thing. But, would the whole truth be known, seeking for signs turns into a huge thing. When you seek for signs, you no longer approach God on the basis of faith. And "without faith, it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11:6).

Seeking signs is like starting your walk on the wrong trail head. Though you may miss the right trail head by only a few feet, when you have walked to the end of the trail, you will be far from where you want to be. Do you understand the warning?

Let's look at my last point this morning.

### 4. Asking the Questions (verses 17-21)

In verses 17-21, Jesus asks seven questions, seeking to help the disciples understand. It's really quite humorous.

Mark 8:17-21

And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart? 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 you picked up?" They \*said to Him, "Twelve." "When I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?" And they said to Him, "Seven." And He was saying to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

In many ways, Jesus is treating the disciples like little children. "David, there is no need to cry. If your brother takes your potato chips, we

have more in the bag. See? We have more right here. It's OK. You don't need to cry." That's about how Jesus treated these disciples, "Hey guys, don't you remember how I fed the thousands? Don't you remember the abundance that was left over? I didn't merely do it once. I did it twice! Don't you think that I can feed you? Food is no problem! Will you trust me?"

On another level, Jesus is treating the disciples like the prophets of old. Verse 18 is an allusion to the Old Testament prophets, who often used this terminology to address the hard hearts of the people of Israel. In fact, the prophets said this same thing to the people so many times, it's impossible to say where Jesus was quoting from, because similar quotes come from several prophets.

Isaiah was told to:

"Go, and tell this people:

'Keep on listening, but do not perceive;

Keep on looking, but do not understand.'

Render the hearts of this people insensitive,

Their ears dull, and their eyes dim,

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,

hear with their ears,

understand with their hearts,

And return and be healed" (Is. 6:9-10).

Jeremiah said to the people, ...

"Hear this, O foolish and senseless people,

Who have eyes but do not see;

Who have ears but do not hear" (Jer. 5:21).

God told Ezekiel, ...

"You live in the midst of the rebellious house,

who have eyes to see but do not see,

ears to hear but do not hear;

for they are a rebellious house." (Ezek. 12:2).

All of these prophets said the same thing. You have eyes, but you can't see. You have ears, but you can't hear. How can that be? Is your heart hardened? Do you understand?

As I bring my message to a close this morning, I want to press this question upon you: Do you understand? I do believe that this is our greatest struggle in life -- really grasping and really understanding the realities of what God has done for us and really trusting God.

The story is told of a guy who walked a tight rope across Niagara Falls. I'm sure that this story is fictitious, but it helps to get the point across. The crowd assembled to watch this mighty feat. He picked up his balancing pole and proceeded to walk step by step across the dangerous falls. When he accomplished the feat, the on looking crowd cheered for joy. Then, he placed his long balancing pole down on the other side and walked back across the falls without a pole. Again, the crowd cheered wildly.

At this point, the man turned to the crowd and said, "Do you believe that I can walk the falls pushing a wheelbarrow?" The crowd cheered, "Yes we do." And so, he proceeded to walk the tightrope pushing the wheelbarrow. When he reached the other side, the crowd cheered even more loudly than before.

He then placed two hundred pounds of bricks in the wheelbarrow and said to the crowd, "Do you believe that I can walk the falls pushing this loaded wheelbarrow?" The crowd cheered, "Yes we do." Again, he was able to cross the falls pushing the loaded wheelbarrow! At this point, the crowd was hysterical!

He then turned to crowd and said, "Do you believe that I can walk the falls with someone in the wheelbarrow?" The crowd shouted, "Yes!" He then said, "Do you really believe that I can do this?" The crowd shouted, "Yes!" And then, the man asked, "Who's first?" Suddenly, the crowd was quiet.

Isn't this often our experience? We believe things with our heads. We express them with our mouths. And yet, when it comes to acting upon our beliefs, we find that our real faith is actually quite small. We are just like the disciples. May God give us grace to grow in our faith.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on June 3, 2012 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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