***Remix Theory: How Jesus Brings New Color, Dimension, and Values***

As early as the 1960s a new musical artform started to surface. And throughout the 70s and 80s it continued to emerge and develop. And it is still alive and well today.

And although what I’ve said so far could also be true about other musical expressions such as rock and hip hop, I’m actually talking about the remix.

The remix has its roots in the island nation of Jamaica but it quickly gave rise to new forms of music in the dance halls and clubs of New York City and other major cities over the years.

So what is a remix? Well as the name suggests it is when you mix a song again. And from a production standpoint remixes are generally the same. One has to isolate the lyrics and beats you want to highlight and then you begin to build up the rest of the song with some of the same and often times new loops, beats, and rhythms.

Now I am not simply wanting to wax philosophic about music theory here today. And I’m certainly not wanting to sound snarky or pretentious by passing on knowledge I only acquired in the last few days. In fact I’m not sure how you could think that if you knew I stream my music on Pandora, not Spotify, which apparently isn’t all that cool with the kids these days. And by the way I still have an active Hotmail email account too.

So there you have it. However, I did get the sense that we would be looking at a remix of sorts today from Mark 8.

**Title Slide:**

***Remix Theory: How Jesus Brings New Color, Dimension, and Values***

You may even think, “didn’t we just hear this story a few weeks ago?” Well, sort of. But as we’ll hopefully see today, Jesus puts out his same message to a new audience. So let’s look at Jesus’ masterful remix as we read Mark 8.

**Mark 8:1-21**

**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?”**

I’ll admit that for me this week it was difficult to not view this passage with the same old eyes as before. I’ve read it before, probably dozens of times. It’s the feeding of the thousands, 2.0. Big whoop, right?

But Jesus’ question at the very end haunted me. “Do you not yet understand?” Maybe I hadn’t yet. Maybe you haven’t yet understood either? What is it that he wanted his disciples and us to understand?

1. **Jesus is radically inclusive.**

Let’s be honest. This account seems strangely similar to the miracle to the 5,000 we found in Mark 6. And there is a lot of parallel. The main components are pretty much the same: skads of people, a desolate location, + a food shortage = Jesus’ opportunity to shine.

But whenever you notice in the gospels that things seem to be identical accounts you should probably be on the lookout for what makes them different. Mark’s gospel is way too short for him to simply COPY + PASTE a retelling of the same story again.

Mark isn’t just trying to meet the page number or word count requirement for a professor:

* Maybe I’ll just increase the font size?
* What if I just copy this one story and change a few details?

No, no, no. Mark (and Jesus) is trying to tell us something.

There are a few subtle, yet important distinctions. Of course the most obvious difference to me are the numbers. The slight size of the crowds. The number of available loaves and fish. But Jesus keys in on the numbers.

**Mark 8:19-20**

**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.”**

Jesus redirects their conversations away from who forgot the travel cooler to remember and reflect on what they had seen and heard. Remember the 12? Remember the 7?

Next there’s the difference in location. Both events happened in the countryside. The first miraculous feeding happened well within Israel’s traditional borders. This second miracle happened in Gentile country- the region of the Decapolis. As they say in real estate it’s all about “location, location, location.”

So then there’s our connection. The 12 you might recognize to correlate to the 12 tribes of Israel. The 7 correlates to the 7 Gentile nations of the ancient promised land. But instead of Jesus driving them out. He’s providing for them just like he provided for Israel.

Jesus remix miracle here is not accidental. He is less Brittney “Oops I did it again.” and more like Pitbull: Mr. Worldwide. Jesus’ gospel is for everyone.

This gospel is meant for all people of all nationalities and ethnicities. Jesus’ gospel isn’t here to re-draw the lines of nation-states. His gospel is here to transcend borders and give access into God’s Kingdom!

He’s not here to rake the scraps off the table like the Syrophoenician woman insinuated last week. He’s here to bring the good news in all its fullness to everyone. Jesus’ gospel is the most inclusive message out there. Jesus is being radically inclusive.

So let me say this. One of the bad raps on Christians is that we tend to NOT be inclusive. And there’s some truth to that unfortunately.

We usually get stuck on defining who is in and who is out, that we often leave people on the outside looking in. But Jesus is clearly pointing out to his disciples that these people have come from far away and he isn’t going to turn them away.

Paul reminds us that we too can identify with the crowd. Remember last month’s Fighter Verse? Well here is a little more of the context

**Ephesians 2:17-19**

**And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,**

We’re included spiritually and socially. We are not second class citizens in the Kingdom either. We have full membership. And we are treated like family.

I’m not trying to make a politically charged point here this morning. I’m not necessarily saying that you need to rethink your stance on immigration. Although maybe you do.

Instead of thinking primarily about how the gospel affects who is allowed to cross our nation’s border, maybe we should consider who we allow to cross the thresholds of our homes and allow into our lives.

Are our friendships just an echo chamber? I need to consider what it means for me to have friends, not on social media, but in real life who are just all white, middle class males like me. Jesus is radically inclusive. And his gospel should drive me that direction as well.

And just so you know, Jesus message of inclusion is not a new concept to the nation of Israel. There is ample evidence of this throughout the bible. From Abraham to the prophets, the Bible is replete with examples of how God intends for his glory to be known among all people. Here’s one OT example:

**Isaiah 49:6 (b)**

**I will make you as a light for the nations,**

 **that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”**

Furthermore, Jesus made it clear in his parting message to his disciples.

**Matthew 28:19-20**

**Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

Jesus words to his disciples include us as his disciples. It is what lead us to plant a church here in Murfreesboro. It’s why if you’re here and you’re not a follower of Jesus, I hope it is because someone was inclusive enough to invite you here. We’re here as a church, like many others in this city, because there are people in the Boro that do not know the hope of the gospel. We are here for those who are still far off to be brought near. We are a church that wants to invite others into knowing and worshiping this Jesus.

And we also take it seriously to keep taking it to the ends of the earth. Church Planting in Portland, OR and Atlanta, GA. South Asia and Peru. This Gospel is just too good to keep it only in the Boro. That’s why we invest part of what you give to support these efforts financially.

So when you give financially you are helping support this gospel to go out not only here in Murfreesboro but around the world. And I hope many of you will take seriously the challenge to go on short-term trips to these places as well. Be part of the work, not just a funding source for it.

Jesus message is inclusive for sure. But...

1. **Jesus is unapologetically exclusive.**

After the miracle, Jesus sends away the crowd. Then he and his disciples jump in a boat and head to the other side of the lake. When they arrive, the haters are out in full force. The Pharisees are on the prowl… and they’re ready to argue with Jesus.

They demand a sign.

SERIOUSLY? Have they not been paying attention?!?!

At the root of their demands is a deep sense of entitlement. They feel that they hold the religious and spiritual authority and that they need to authenticate Jesus’ claims and miracles. They want Jesus to bow down his authority to theirs.

**Mark 8:11-12**

**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 Jesus’ response is so awesome: Nope. Then he turns and walks away after he tells them that he will NOT be giving them any signs.

Which again is ironic because Jesus continues to perform signs. It’s just that Jesus signs were not going to bow down to the authority of the Pharisees. His signs were going to point to his divinity as the Savior.

You know I said that Jesus made following him the most inclusive religion in the world. Being inclusive doesn’t mean Jesus has to just give people whatever they want or demand.

To be clear Jesus said anyone can come to him. He just performed a miracle that communicated as much! But Jesus is the Son of God. We come to him on HIS terms, not ours!

Jesus makes that very clear in a different time/place in the book of John:

**John 6:35**

**Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.**

The problem with the Pharisees is that they wanted Jesus to come to them on THEIR terms. Jesus doesn’t play that game. God doesn’t bow to your demands. We bow to his divinity, or else he really isn’t God. If God bows to our demands then God really isn’t God is he?

Therefore we must be careful when we get huffy and puffy with Jesus. If you’re just wanting Jesus to validate your choices, attitudes, and lifestyle with a sign or two then you also may be in danger of being tuned out and turned away like the Pharisees.

Now let’s get down to the question you’ve probably really been wondering about this whole time. What is leaven?

It’s one less than a dozen.

Just kidding. I know you were wondering about Jesus words in verse 15.

**Mark 8:15**

**And he cautioned them, saying, “Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”**

Well actually leaven is yeast. It is the ingredient in making bread that enables it to rise. And though in the 1st century they probably didn’t know it was a living thing they did know that it spread. And if they weren’t careful it could ruin the whole batch of bread.

You see, leaven consumes the sugar, the sweetness, in the bread. As it does it creates gas which causing the bread to rise. But if the yeast isn’t removed it will consume all the sweetness, making the bread bitter and inedible.

Jesus is warning the disciples with this analogy. Put away your selfishness pride and sense of entitlement that puffs you up. Understand and remember that you are not much different than the Pharisees

And just like them we have the same sin problem that endangers us...

1. **Jesus was unfairly excluded so that we could be unconditionally included.**

I learned this week that one of the greatest remixes of all time was by the hip-hop duo Eric B & Rakim. In 1988 their Song “Paid in Full” was remixed sub titled “Seven Minutes of Madness”.

The message of the song is pretty clear. The rapper needs money. He’s broke. But rather than turning back to old ways of life, things he knows from getting money on the streets, he’s going to rely on something else- himself. He’s going to make money through his creativity, by rapping. The conclusion is that he’s going to get paid in full.

But in the remix there’s an added voice at the beginning that says

**This is a journey into sound**

**A journey which along the way will bring to you**

**New color, new dimension, new value**

The remix is catchy. But the message, despite the added elements at the beginning, still falls short. The song doesn’t lead me to new values.

Relying on your own abilities to make up for what you lack still leaves you lacking, if not wanting more. We call that works-based righteousness.

What we need instead is a Savior who can remove the leaven within us that grows a prideful, entitled attitude within our hearts and lies to us to say that we do really need a savior. We can just do this ourselves.

But only the gospel can do that. And that’s where you need to remember that the gospel tells us of what Jesus has Paid in Full. Only Christ as lead you on a journey where he brings to you new color, dimension, and values.

You know another irony in this story is that the disciples argue over forgetting the bread and over the one piece of bread that they do have.

But sitting in the boat with them was the only Bread they needed. Jesus, the Bread of Life, was there.

Yes he was here for everyone. But he was also there for them.

And the same is true for you and I. Jesus has been excluded on the cross for you. In your place. And he has given you the wonderful privilege of being included in his Kingdom, and in his family.

Through his sacrifice he removes the penalty of our sinful, leaven-y hearts. And through his death and resurrection we can remember for ourselves and proclaim to others that our debt has been Paid in Full.

He says to you now. I am the bread of life. Come to me. Whether you are far away or close by he is here to preach peace to you. Peace with God.

Come to the bread of life.

And that’s something we’re going to do now symbolically through the Lord’s supper. We will have the chance to all visibly answer the question of Jesus, “Do you not remember?” Indeed as often as we do this we are to remember the sacrifice and hope that he’s given us through his death and resurrection...