

Mark 8:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

Analysis

When Jesus knew it (*γνοὺς*, gnous)—Jesus possesses supernatural knowledge of their private discussion, demonstrating His divine omniscience. He doesn't wait for them to voice confusion but proactively addresses their misunderstanding. **Why reason ye, because ye have no bread?**—five rapid-fire questions (vv. 17-18) express Jesus' astonishment at their dullness after witnessing two miraculous feedings.

Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? (*οὐπώ νοεῖτε οὐδὲ συνίετε, οὐπό noeite oude syniete*)—two verbs emphasizing cognitive and intuitive understanding. They lack both intellectual grasp and spiritual insight. **Have ye your heart yet hardened?** (*πεπωρωμένην ἔχετε τὴν καρδίαν, pepōrōmenēn echete tēn kardian*)—the perfect participle suggests settled condition. Jesus uses 'hardened' (*pōroō*), the same term describing Pharaoh (Romans 9:18) and Israel (Romans 11:7), shocking language equating disciples' dullness with notorious unbelief. Yet Jesus continues teaching them, demonstrating patient grace toward slow learners.

Historical Context

Heart-hardening was serious charge in Jewish thought, recalling Israel's wilderness rebellion (Psalm 95:8; Hebrews 3:8). Deuteronomy 29:4 lamented Israel's failure despite witnessing mighty acts: 'The LORD hath not given you a

heart to perceive.' Jesus' rebuke echoes Moses' frustration, but unlike Moses, Jesus doesn't abandon dull disciples—He persists in teaching them. This patience foreshadows Peter's post-resurrection restoration (John 21:15-19) and demonstrates grace toward stumbling followers.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' diagnosis of 'hardened hearts' challenge you to examine areas of spiritual dullness in your life?
2. What does Jesus' patient questioning (rather than immediate abandonment) reveal about His commitment to slow learners?
3. How might the Spirit be prompting you to move from mere cognitive knowledge to heart-deep understanding of Christ?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	γνοὺς	ό	Ἰησοῦς	λέγει	αὐτοῖς	Τί	διαλογίζεσθε
And	knew	G3588	when Jesus	it he saith	unto them	Why	reason ye
G2532	G1097		G2424	G3004	G846	G5101	G1260

ὅτι	ἄρτους	οὐκ	ἔχετε	οὐπω	νοεῖτε	οὐδὲ	συνίετε
because	bread	no	have ye	not yet	perceive ye	neither	understand
G3754	G740	G3756	G2192	G3768	G3539	G3761	G4920

ἔτι	πεπωρωμένην	ἔχετε	τὴν	καρδίαν	ὑμῶν
yet	hardened	have ye	G3588	heart	your
G2089	G4456	G2192		G2588	G5216

Additional Cross-References

Mark 6:52 (Parallel theme): For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

Mark 3:5 (Parallel theme): And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

Revelation 2:23 (Parallel theme): And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Isaiah 63:17 (Parallel theme): O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

Mark 16:14 (Parallel theme): Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

Mark 2:8 (References Jesus): And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

Matthew 15:17 (Parallel theme): Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?

John 21:17 (References Jesus): He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

John 16:30 (Parallel theme): Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

Luke 24:25 (Parallel theme): Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

