

Title: Failing to understand
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Mark 6:52 AMP

⁵² For they failed to consider or understand [the teaching and meaning of the miracle of] the loaves; [in fact] their hearts had grown callous [had become dull and had lost the power of understanding].

a: Defining a miracle

- Miracle / sign / wonder (Acts 2:22; II Thessalonians 2:9; Hebrews 2:4)
- A special act of God that interrupts the natural course of events. [Norman L. Geisler, *Biblical Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*]
- “A portent (which) is not contrary to nature, but contrary to our knowledge of nature.” [Augustine] [Jack Deere – *Surprised by the power of the Spirit*]

b: Five dimensions of miracles

- Engenders “wonder” – arrests the attention
- Is theological – speaks of God’s reality and orientation
- Is moral – manifests the moral character and nature of God.
- Is doctrinal – serves to confirm proclaimed truth
- Is teleological – accredits message and messenger by providing concrete evidence

Apologetic arguments:

- Ontological – “proof from prayer”
- Moral – moral law > moral Law Giver
- Cosmological – cosmos > creator
- Teleological – design > designer

c: Why miracles fail

1. Sensory overload

- Failure to consider; to seek understanding
- Failure to pursue the celebration cycle

Luke 17:17-19 AMP

¹⁷ Then Jesus asked, Were not [all] ten cleansed? Where are the nine? ¹⁸ Was there no one found to return and to recognize and give thanks and praise to God except this alien? ¹⁹ And He said to him, Get up and go on your way. Your faith (your trust and confidence that spring from your belief in God) has restored you to health.

Romans 1:19-21 AMP

¹⁹ For that which is known about God is evident to them and made plain in their inner consciousness, because God [Himself] has shown it to them. ²⁰ For ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature and attributes, that is, His eternal power and divinity, have been made intelligible and clearly discernible in and through the things that have been made (His handiworks). So [men] are without excuse [altogether without any defense or justification], ²¹ Because when they knew and recognized Him as God, they did not honor and glorify Him as God or give Him thanks. But instead they became futile and godless in their thinking [with vain imaginings, foolish reasoning, and stupid speculations] and their senseless minds were darkened.

2. Failure to “see” Christ

- His desire to demonstrate His love for me
- His desire to place value of me by affirming my significance
- His desire to manifest His vision for my potential and purpose
- His desire to engage my heart and secure my trust

3. Failure to embrace the moral implications

- The burden of a ‘gift’ received, i.e. relationship to the giver
- Representative status
- Occupying dual dimension i.e. time and eternity
- Accepting the burden of stewardship:
 - personal
 - social
 - prophetic

4. Solution – reclaim the ‘new birth inspiration’

- Demonstrate ascendancy in spiritual warfare
- Activate the Holy Spirit gifts
- Overcome real, present danger
- Exercise spiritual authority
- Minister healing

Mark 16:15, 17-18 AMP

¹⁵ And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach and publish openly the good news (the Gospel) to every creature [of the whole human race].

¹⁷ And these attesting signs will accompany those who believe: in My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new languages; ¹⁸ They will pick up serpents; and [even] if they drink anything deadly, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will get well.

Isaiah 6:3 AMP

³ And one cried to another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!