



APRIL 22 - APRIL 28, 2020

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH - - TYLER, TX [WWW.FCCTYLER.ORG](http://WWW.FCCTYLER.ORG)

## JOYS & CONCERNS

**JOYS:** As far as we know, no one in our church family has tested positive for COVID-19. We can also celebrate the growing reach of our online presence on Facebook and YouTube. Our number of views and audience continue to rise. Thanks for participating and sharing our content!

**PRAYERS FOR OUR CHURCH FAMILY:** Eva Denson, Jennifer Diotallevi, Charlotte Halbert, James Hardage, Bob Hunt, Ray Hunt, Aliece Keithly, Michael Lewis, C.R. Ritchey, and Bob Zinzser

**PRAYERS FOR FRIENDS & FAMILY:** Buzz & Georgia Aycock (Kennedy), Abram Drake (Garvin), and Chris & Becca Saunders (Graham)



Stay Connected



LIVE

MONDAYS - REV. BRANDT

WEDNESDAYS - DR. PULLIAM

FRIDAYS @ 2PM - CHURCH CHECK-IN

## ONLINE PROGRAMMING

Join us for weekly programming:

- 1) **Monday Musings:** Airs live Mondays from 9-10am, featuring Rev. Ginger Brandt from her back porch.
- 2) **Wednesday Wonders:** Each Wednesday, Dr. Chris Pulliam will offer a peek into his current study or spirit-forming habit, in brief broadcasts from his house.
- 3) **Church Check-in:** Look for a live video Fridays around 2pm -- sometimes with one or both Rev. Ginger Brandt and Dr. Chris Pulliam.
- 4) **"Connection Class":** Laura Hedrick of Cana Class is providing prompts 5 days of the week, and some storytelling on Saturdays. The week's devotional material will be sent by email (you may also request a mailed print copy). Look for posts on our main Facebook feed -- and find it as a Group on our Facebook page.
- 5) **\*Offline Bonus\* Upper Room:** If interested in a copy of Upper Room, call and request to have one mailed to you.



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“Obtuseness”

Mark 8:14-21

April, 26, 2020

Dr. Chris Pulliam

Our staff meets every week. Most of the time, we are “down to business,” but occasionally, we’ll have a big laugh to lighten the load.

Having Nancy Grant in the room always helps...one can only keep her serious for so long, before something erupts. Nancy provides us with our Joys and Concerns list...and from that list we pray together as a staff.

One week, Nancy was reporting on all the ups and downs of our congregation...I was listening...and reading ahead when I came to the phrase, “Face Transplant!” I broke in, “Face Transplant!...oh my God!”

Everyone looked at me for 10 seconds then started cracking up with laughter.

The sentence read, that so and so “would likely face transplant surgery in the future.” Travis, do we have some canned laughter we can insert here, cause I bet you’re laughing at home.

Suffice it to say, I wasn’t “getting it”... Read the gospels and you’ll see story after story of Jesus’ Disciples not “getting it.”

In fact, in my reading during Holy Week, I realized that while the disciples (proper) struggle to “get it,” nearly everyone else in the story “got it.”

The second tier characters “get it” absolutely. The woman who anointed Jesus with the expensive perfume, Simon of Cyrene (who carried Jesus cross), the Roman soldier at the cross (who said, “Truly, this man was

the son of God”, Joseph of Arimathea (who asked for Jesus’ body), the women at the cross and later at the tomb, even the young man dressed in white sitting in the tomb... they got it! ?Those characters will likely make up a sermon series next year during Lent.

I like to think of myself as someone who usually “gets it” sooner instead of later.

In my time here as your pastor, I’ve parented 4 children thru High School (Carol Ann has one year to go!). At some point in that process, I picked up a Math text book and started flipping thru the pages...see if the “old man” still “has it!”

Geometry was the subject...not my favorite. Sure enough I reviewed the angles. “Right,” “acute” and “obtuse.” Right is 90\*, an acute angle is anything less than 90\* and an obtuse angle is anything more than 90\*.

So, in my reading for today’s message, when I read one commentator who wrote that Jesus, “Upbraided his disciples for their obtuseness,” I was ready.

“Obtuse”- meaning not too sharp. It’s the old saying, “not the sharpest crayon in the box.”

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So, I’m reading in the gospel of Mark, chapter 8...the Feeding of the 4000. Huh. I looked back one page...and there was the Feeding of the 5000. These two stories are nearly identical, why in the world are both stories told and told so close together?

If you’ve been in SS for years, you may have noticed the 2 similar stories. Ever wondered why? I found the answer in our reading for today, Mark 8:14-21.

Okay, you know the two feeding stories, right? Jesus is teaching before huge crowds when everyone realizes they're hungry. The disciples suggest Jesus send them away so they can eat at home or buy something in town. But Jesus says, "You give them something to eat!" The disciples look at him like he is from Mars, but Jesus takes the limited supply of bread and fish they have, blesses the food, then has the disciples pass it out. Miraculously, all are fed. And... miraculously, there's a lot left over.

In the "Feeding of the 5000" it points out that there were 12 baskets of bread left over. Why 12? One for each disciple to see for himself the miracle of what had just happened.

Okay, so 2 massive miraculous feedings within the course of a few days...then this happens. They get back into the boat and,

SLIDE: "**The disciples had forgotten to bring any bread; and they had only one loaf with them in the boat**" (Mark 8:14).

+/-What is this, Southwest Airlines? A three hour flight and all we get is a handful of peanuts!

Jesus' mind is elsewhere...still thinking about the run in he had just had with the Pharisees. So Jesus says separately,

SLIDE: "**Watch out—beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod**" (Mark 8:15).

Huh. A reference to bread, but is Jesus talking about bread? No!

Imagine the irony, they had just fed bread to 4000 people...had baskets full leftover, and now they have no bread. Jesus is still thinking about his interaction

with the Pharisees (who demanded that Jesus show them a sign), while the Disciples are thinking about eating.

This sounds like some of the interactions Lisa and I have. She's thinking deeply about something, and I'm thinking about what's for dinner.

The disciples realize they have no bread. Jesus makes a comment about the yeast of the Pharisees. The Disciples hear that comment as a jab at the lack of bread.

SLIDE: VS 16 "**They said to one another, it is because we have no bread.**"

When Jesus figures out what they're talking about, he blasts them. "I'm not talking about bread!!...I don't care about bread. I can provide us with all the bread we could ever want, that's not what's important right now. What is important is that I'm warning you about the hardened hearts of the Pharisees, but we'll get back to that later.

Jesus continues, "How can you be so dull as to not realize I <Jesus> have the bread thing figured out. 5000, 4000...I got this!!" (Mark 8:17-21 paraphrased...the New Revised Exasperated Version). J

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After witnessing the 5000 & 4000 miracles, one would think the Disciples would have no concern with how many ways they'll have to split the loaf, but no.

Okay, here's where it gets fun. Are you with me? Do you believe me? Let's have some fun...

Like someone said recently, "That's why they're called the DUH-ciples. (Spell).

SLIDE: Jesus cried, "**Do you not yet understand?!**" (Mark 8:21).

How can they not understand? How can they not “get it?” How could they miss this one? Jesus just fed 9000 people with a total of 12 loaves of bread.

I’ll tell you, I just cannot grasp their obtuse-ness...until I look upon my own. (pause).

...and how many times I don’t “get it” with Jesus and what he’s trying to communicate to me.

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“Well”, we might say, “They had the advan- tage of being there with him!” True...but, we have the advantage of seeing how all this has played out! We know how the story ends...the tomb is empty! We’ve read the stories and had them preached to us over and over. We’ve seen God’s faithfulness played out in our lives, in our families and churches and in our world for centuries!

They loved him passionately, but they did not understand him. How about you?

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Bottom Line: 2 weeks ago, I preached about Jairus’ daughter...that Jesus was completely confident in his ability to heal the girl and bring her back to life (remember, Jesus didn’t have to check her pulse or have her say, “Ahhh!” He just knew...he was completely confident...therefore we too can be completely confident in the life Jesus offers.

Today, we are spending more time with Jesus. This time he isn’t healing or bringing people back to life...

SLIDE: Bottom Line: this time Jesus is feeding thousands. And, he is completely confident that he can and will provide for the multitudes...just as he can and will provide for us...our “daily bread”...provide for us all we need.

Jesus’ “bread” is symbolic of much more

than just bread, more than just food. Jesus is saying, “I will provide all you need.”

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How many times have you heard that? And do you believe it? Do you believe it when there’s no toilet paper on the shelves at Wal-Mart? Do you believe it when your take home pay gets cut in half (or altogether!)?

SLIDE: What to do: remember all the times God has provided for you...and trust in God’s provision. KNOW THAT.

You just gotta “KNOW THAT!”

That’s why Jesus was incredulous in the boat that day...“I’m not talking about bread! Do you not yet understand!!?”

Now, I’m not saying life will always be easy... that you’ll always be comfortable...snap your fingers and you’ll have cupcakes and bonbons. There may be suffering involved, though we 21<sup>st</sup> century Americans struggle with that concept.

But we can hang our hats on this, “God is faithful and just and will provide for us all we need. When we put our lives in God’s hands, we are safe...no better place to be.

That’s also why we can afford to give sacrifi- cially...because we are safe in God’s hands.

Now, I want to be sensitive here. I realize it’s easy for me to say, “The Lord will provide” when I have so much. When I don’t have to live by faith. I’m still getting paid.

But I was reminded of sincere faith this week when I spoke with one of our people...she’s in the service business. She said, “Yeah, business is way down, but God is so good. I’m fine. I’m going to be fine.”

She “gets it.”