

I. The Need for Understanding

A. An Apparent Contemporary Cultural Absence of Understanding

1. Things that make me shake my head and say, “I don’t understand.”
 - a. Pandemics
 - b. Politics
 - c. Personal choices
2. Definition of “understanding” -
 - a. an accurate awareness of both the facts AND the knowable implications of the facts
 - b. A person with understanding can answer the question, “What does all this mean?” with insight, confidence, significance.
 - c. **From a biblical point of view, understanding fully accounts for God’s perspective in the events and implications of life.**

B. Jesus expects His disciples to have understanding

1. After the miracle of loaves and walking, they should understand
2. Throughout Mark there is this theme of “understanding”
 - a. **Mark 4:13** *“Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?”*
 - b. **Mark 6:52** *“They were utterly astounded for they did not understand about the loaves . . .”*
 - c. **Mark 7:14** *“Hear me, all of you, and understand . . .”*
 - d. **Mark 8:17** *“Do you no yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?”*

C. The Biblical Expectation of “Understanding”

1. Understanding the Person of God and the Son of God is key to eternal life
 - a. **John 17:3 (ESV)** *And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*
 - b. To know God is not merely to be familiar with some facts, or even to accept some facts.
 - c. To know God is to understand Who God is and what God deserves from us and to give God the worship and love and obedience He deserves because we understand how and why He deserves it.
2. Human understanding proves inadequate for spiritual progress
 - a. **Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)** *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*
 - b. Our understanding of ourselves, our world, and our Creator is limited by physical creation and sin.
 - c. God’s understanding is limited by nothing.
 - (1) He is fully capable of accounting for all variables and contingencies
 - (2) His integrity fully empowers His will to act in accord with

His goodness and glory in our lives

3. Understanding and wisdom, two sides of the same valuable coin, gain blessing for the man with purse full!
 - a. **Proverbs 3:13 (ESV)** *Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding,*
 - b. Wisdom and understanding, not money and fame, are the means to authentic spiritual prosperity.
4. The understanding of God's will is a treasure much to be sought by both the greatest and least of us.
 - a. **Colossians 1:9 (ESV)** *And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,*
 - b. Paul prays that the Colossians may be filled with the knowledge of God's will, both to know it and to do it!
5. Understanding is a gift to be gained through God's redemptive work.
 - a. **Isaiah 29:24 (ESV)** *And those who go astray in spirit will come to understanding, and those who murmur will accept instruction."*
 - b. Speaking of the restoration of Israel, God makes this promise
6. Understanding comes from God by the Spirit.
 - a. **1 Corinthians 2:12 (ESV)** *Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.*
 - b. God gives His Spirit, the Spirit who knows the mind and heart of God, so that we might understand grace, and mercy, and hope, and endurance, and mission, and outcome

II. Two Lessons From Their Lack of Understanding

A. God desires people, especially disciples of Jesus, to understand His heart, His nature, and His ways.

B. God sometimes intends for us to understand more than we think we understand.

1. Pericope background and purpose
 - a. Background
 - (1) Jesus compels them into the boat and away
 - (2) Crowd going to take Jesus by force
 - (a) **John 6:15 (ESV)** *Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.*
 - (b) The people, acting on what they think they know, have jumped to a wrong conclusion about Jesus
 - (3) Jesus removes the disciples from a contagious insurrectionist atmosphere to prevent them taking up a wrong understanding of who He is and why He has come.
 - b. Purpose

- (1) Because every conclusion anyone draws about Jesus before the cross and the resurrection is mere speculation.
 - (2) The resurrection of Jesus certifies every assertion Jesus makes about Himself, His Father, His role in the world, and His coming kingdom
 - (a) What is the greatest witness a Christian can have in a day when the world's attention, effort, and anxiety is focused on death and avoiding death?
 - (b) Is the hope of resurrection and eternal life in Christ THE contribution Christian faith can make to this current dilemma?!
 - (c) We are arguing about viruses and vaccines when we alone have the good news of the inevitable death of all people, vaccinated or not, and the certainty of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ, who died and lives forevermore!
 - (d) The bigger question is not "How do I avoid dying?"
 - i) The bigger question is "How do I prepare for the death I must die?"
 - ii) The bigger question is "How can I gain assurance of eternal life?"
 - a) Friends, if we are not asking that question, we are asking the wrong question!
 - b) We cannot avoid death but we can avoid judgment!
 - 1) Faith in Jesus as Savior
 - 2) Confess & repent
 - 3) Faithful devotion to and reliance on promises by the Spirit
2. The word used for "understanding" points to a mystery God suppresses until the time is right.
 - a. It is possible that God, by hardening the hearts of the disciples, prevented them from drawing early and erroneous conclusions about Jesus prior to His resurrection.
 - b. God hardened Pharaoh's heart in order to manifest His glory
 3. **God sometimes makes His work hard to understand so that we will not settle for a glimmer and miss the glory!**
 - a. **1 John 3:2 (ESV) *Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.***
 - b. **1 Corinthians 13:12 (ESV) *For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.***

III. What do we do in this season of understanding?

A. Verses

1. Be Still
 - a. **Psalm 37:7 (ESV)** *Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!*
 - b. “Be still and know that I am God.”
 - c. Just because you don’t understand does not mean that God is not working His will for His glory and your good.
2. Stand firm
 - a. **Exodus 14:13 (ESV)** *And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again.*
 - b. **2 Chronicles 20:17 (ESV)** *You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.’ Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you.”*
 - c. Take the time to open your spiritual eyes in faith and wonder at what you see of God in your circumstances
3. Wait
 - a. **Isaiah 40:31 (ESV)** *but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*
 - b. Tie your heart, your desires, your expectations, your hope, your commitment, everything about you to Jesus and trust Him to provide what you need as you need it, not in the least degree but in the greatest.

B.