14 And the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them.

After leaving the Pharisees standing on the shore cooling their heels, Jesus and the disciples begin travelling by boat. In the abrupt departure, the disciples had forgotten to take bread with them. In fact, among the thirteen, there was only one loaf—clearly not enough for that many men.

Now, with the loaves and the fishes, Jesus had been trying to teach the disciples that God would provide for their needs, and the same God who provided for their spiritual needs, would provide food for them, when needed. They were probably a little embarrassed!

15 And He was giving orders to them, saying, "Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and the leaven of Herod."

Jesus chose this opportunity to caution his disciples about "the leaven of the Pharisees" because he wanted them to hear his warning while the impact of the encounter with the Pharisees was still fresh in their minds. But the disciples were so distracted and defensive because they were embarrassed, that they took Jesus' words as a reproach for their failure to bring provisions and began quarreling , and pointing fingers about who's responsibility it was to buy bread.

The verse says "Jesus was giving orders to them". It was a series of statements, only summarized here. But, the disciples are so busy arguing that they're not listening for the spiritual truth that Jesus is trying to give them. So He finally says "Watch out"—which, like "Behold", and "Verily Verily, I say unto you" are words that Jesus uses when He's trying to get people's attention, and impress upon them the importance of what He's saying. He had just censured some Pharisees for not paying attention to their duties as the spiritual leaders of Israel, and now the disciples were squabbling about bread. The fact that Jesus includes Herod Antipas makes it pretty clear that appropriate leadership of Israel is in mind here. His disciples need to be alert to the danger in which they all now stand.

Yeast is a leaven that ferments, causing dough to rise, but also corrupting the nutritional value of the bread, to some extent. Only a minute amount is needed to swell a whole loaf. Yeast puffs up by corruption, just as pride does, and so had been a symbol of sin since the beginning of the nation of Israel in the Exodus The feast of unleavened bread at the Exodus 12:18-20 **18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. 19 For seven days there shall be no dough with yeast found in your houses; for whoever eats anything with yeast, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. 20 You shall not eat anything with yeast; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.'"** Now, they would have grown up hearing these warnings every year at Passover, as their family carefully removed all the yeast from their houses during the Jewish Passover observance, which demanded the removal of yeast. So, their association of yeast with sin that must be gotten rid of would have been one that they'd grown up with. In rabbinic literature "yeast" as a metaphor frequently refers to the tendency or intention of the human heart toward corruption, as in hearts being "**deceitful, and desperately wicked"**. "yeast" connotes corruption, unholiness, and danger. And, this carries through to the New Testament. **1 Cor 5:6-6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? 7 Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore let's celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.** This tendency to let fleshly desires, such as pride, and boasting and wanting to be respected leads astray. Sin spreads, and grows puffed up, leading astray and destroying. Now, consider what the disciples are doing—they're blame-gaming and arguing, when they're supposed to be learning about how to be the spiritual leaders of Israel, and ultimately the foundation of the Christian Church. Do you see why Jesus brings it up at this point?

Unbelief is also fermenting among the disciples in the boat. The "yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod" is the putting of position and personal authority at a premium, and unbelief in Jesus' teaching that (Mark 9:35 **'If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.'"** This verse also occurs as the disciples were arguing about who among them was the greatest, or deserved the least blame. Jesus responded by teaching that true greatness in His kingdom is measured by humility and service, not by status, power, or self-promotion which was the opposite of the way that Herod and the Pharisees did things. The reason why the disciples, or anyone else who is beginning to get to know God still strives with ambition is lack of trust, misunderstanding and unbelief. If they truly believed that God would provide all of their needs, whey would they be striving, and pushing down their neighbor-disciples. Why would they be struggling to avoid blame. Why would they be arguing over who is the greatest? And Jesus brings this up by mentioning yeast, which of course makes the disciples think of bread. After the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus had declared (John 6:35) **"I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."** It's about priorities, and the disciples' priorities are wrong. The small amount of fussing and infighting is going to ruin their witness. They can't "**love one another, as I have loved you"** while they are fighting. And, so Jesus is going to teach them a lesson.

16 And they began to discuss with one another the fact that they had no bread.

Because of the poor spiritual condition of their hearts, the disciples heard only a reference about bread, instead of what they should have been understanding from Jesus, if their hearts were right. Jesus' warning about the Pharisees and Herod, which is brushed aside by their more immediate concern.

The disciples quibble about the meaning of "bread" without realizing that they are being infected by a deadly, swelling, sin. Their failure to comprehend can produce a hardness of heart that is due to unbelief, the kind that lead to the opposition of the Pharisees and Herod. The danger is the more deceptive in their case since they are in daily contact with Jesus. But they must grow in understanding, and understanding into faith, or else, like Judas, it will in the end inoculate them to the meaning of his person and work, and they will be lost! That's how serious this is. They weren't paying attention, and were taking their eye off the ball. And, what does a good coach do at that point? Jesus gets their attention!

17 And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet comprehend or understand? Do you still have your heart hardened? 18 Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember,

Jesus' rebuke is expressed in a series of sober questions which focus on the persistent blindness displayed by the twelve apostles. Repeated exposure to Jesus' teaching and mighty works had not led to reflection on their significance but to an insensitivity and dullness, and blindness. Their hardness of heart and blindness are just how Israel is described so often in the prophetic books (Jer. 5:21; Ezek. 12:2; Isa. 6:9, etc.) and they're acting a whole lot more like the crowd of unbelievers than the disciples who should know better! Jesus rebukes them saying "Why are you arguing about bread!!" The question "**Do you not yet comprehend or understand?"** much like the quoting of Is. 6:9-10 with which He rebuked the crowds. 9 And He said, **"Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not understand; And keep on looking, but do not gain knowledge.' 10 Make the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes blind, So that they will not see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed."** And, just as God rebuked Israel so often, Jesus is rebuking them. Jesus charges his disciples with being no better off than the 'outsiders' to whom that text has already been applied. Their privileged insight into the secret of the kingdom of God seems for now to have deserted them.

The metaphor of blindness prepares the way for the next pericope, where the healing of a blind man will be used to symbolize the enlightenment which the disciples so obviously need. Jesus' attempt to provide that enlightenment, set over against the continued obtuseness of the disciples, will be a major

theme going forward. At the same time the metaphor of deafness recalls the recently narrated healing of the deaf man, a miracle which is in many ways closely parallel to that of the blind man at Bethsaida.
19 when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?" They said to Him, "Twelve." 20 "When I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?" And they said to Him, "Seven." 21 And He was saying to them, "Do you not yet understand?"
Jesus leads the disciples back to the two feedings of a multitude. The numbers are precisely given and the types of baskets used on each occasion to collect the fragments are carefully distinguished. The disciples remembered the facts perfectly and responded to Jesus' questions without hesitation. Nevertheless, they failed to understand the significance of what had taken place before their eyes. They were no different from the unseeing crowd!
Jesus had tried to teach them this lesson with the feeding of the 5,000, and they didn't get it. Then they'd improved a little by the feeding of the 4,000, but they still didn't get that God would provide, and that they could trust Him in true faith and belief. But they still didn't get it. Now, their arguing showed that despite seeing those two miracles, they STILL didn't get that God would provide for them, and that unbelief was causing them to doubt this, and that unbelief would eventually ferment and foment into rebellion against Jesus, and rejection of Him—as it ultimately did with Judas, who did not change his ways. They'd recently seen two great miracles, and Jesus was incredulous that they were still worrying again about lack of food as long as they were with Jesus, whose power to provide food from meagre resources has been amply demonstrated—twice, since they'd missed it the first time. They should have known that they would always have a ready supply of food available as long as they were with Jesus, and He expects them by now to understand that His authority as Messiah includes taking care of all of their needs. Jesus held them responsible for remembering.
21 And He was saying to them, "Do you not yet understand?"
The words, "and he was saying to them" are an indication mean that Jesus had a lot more words than these for the errant disciples. Kindly, Mark does not include all of the rebuke and beratement that probably occurred. Jesus had to set the disciples straight and that's what He was going to do. What they, and we should understand from the miracles of the loaves is that Jesus is Messiah and Lord, and as He has taken on the responsibility of bringing us into relationship with God the Father through His sacrifice on the cross, He will also take care of all of our other needs. Jesus is calling them to benefit more SPIRITUALLY from His Word about the Kingdom of God, and not to look to the Blessings, but the One Who Blesses.