

MARCH 1, 2020

Seeing & understanding

By now, the movement of people who were following Jesus and listening to his teaching had grown remarkably. The Pharisees – as the self-declared moral police of Israel – had taken deeper notice and challenged Jesus by demanding a sign of this authority (8:11-13). The disciples themselves were nearsighted enough to begin grumbling about the lack of food on the boat. To both groups, Jesus forced the issue of their understanding. He asked one, “why does this generation ask for a sign?” and the other “do you still not understand?” (vs.12,21) Even with his frustration with their spiritual blindness, Jesus *still* demonstrated the power of heaven to illustrate what God was doing in their very midst.

- How are the disciples (and Pharisees) unable to see the point behind the miracles? What *is* the point? (see 8:11-22)
- Jesus heals the blind man in stages. What might he be demonstrating about our own spiritual blindness by doing so? (vs.23-25)
- Why might Jesus be asking what people are saying about him? What is the significance of his own disciples understanding who he is? (vs.27-30)
- Peter’s admission of his own conclusion goes unanswered by Jesus here. In Matthew’s gospel, Peter gets praised by Jesus (Mt.16:17-19). If we believe Mark retells Peter’s account to the church, why might he omit this praise of Peter? (v.29)
- Jesus instructs his followers *plainly* that he must suffer and die. What is Peter’s response to this? Why does he resist Jesus’s teaching? (v.32)
- How does Jesus *rebuke* Peter? What makes Jesus’s tone seem so severe – and why might he feel this way? (v.33)
- What is the *paradox* that Jesus invites his followers into? (vs.34-35)
- **Apply it.** Who do *you* say Jesus is? (And who does Jesus say *you* are?)

²²And they came to Bethsaida. And they brought a blind man to Jesus and implored Him to touch him. ²³Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, “Do you see anything?” ²⁴And he looked up and said, “I see men, for I see *them* like trees, walking around.” ²⁵Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and *began* to see everything clearly. ²⁶And He sent him to his home, saying, “Do not even enter the village.”

²⁷Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, “Who do people say that I am?” ²⁸They told Him, saying, “John the Baptist; and others *say* Elijah; but others, one of the prophets.” ²⁹And He *continued* by questioning them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.” ³⁰And He warned them to tell no one about Him.

³¹And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. ³³But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”

³⁴And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. ³⁵For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. ³⁶For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? ³⁷For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”