

The Gospel of Mark: Session 8

...the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (1:1)

Seeing the Kingdom Clearly (Mark 8)

Overview: While still in Gentile territory, Jesus once again miraculously feeds thousands of people. This is not welcomed as a sign from heaven by the Pharisees; instead they demand more signs in order to test Him. Even Jesus's disciples continue to fail to understand the significance of Jesus's teachings and works. Jesus heals a blind man in a two-part healing, which visually pictures the lack of understanding by the disciples. Even when Peter makes a true confession of who Christ is, he promptly demonstrates that he still fails to understand. Jesus calls all people to true discipleship.

8:1-10: We have seen the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand back in chapter 6. We noted that Jesus "had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd" (6:34). Jesus's compassion led him to teach the people (spiritual needs) and feed them (physical needs). Now we see Jesus in Gentile territory once again teaching and feeding. What can we learn from this about Jesus's mission toward the Gentiles? Has He come for them too?

8:14-21: Notice the questions Jesus asks those closest to Him, those who have followed Him, heard Him teach, and seen Him work: *Do you not yet perceive or understand? Do you not remember? Do you not yet understand?* What is the answer to these questions? Do the disciples see Jesus clearly for who He is?

8:22-26: In this living parable, Jesus lays His hands on the blind man at Bethsaida before the man sees clearly. How is this man like the disciples and their understanding of who Jesus is?

8:27-8:38: Peter makes the correct confession of Christ in 8:29. Based on 8:32, does Peter see Jesus clearly? Has Peter fully understood the correct confession he has made?

Question for self-reflection: Jesus is blunt about the cost of discipleship in 8:34-38. While these verses may be familiar to you, perhaps familiar to the point of being easily passed over, pause to ponder what Jesus is saying. In light of what Christ says here, what are ways the Spirit might be leading you to follow Jesus more deeply in discipleship?