

Title: The Book of Mark: Part 22, Sight & Kingdom Clarity

Speaker: Corey Brown

Passage: Mark 8:22-33

Big idea: Having Clarity on God's Kingdom demands we see Jesus Clearly.



Let's think through some of these questions before we look into this passage in Mark:

What Kind of Messiah is Jesus? How do we follow Him? What is clear about Jesus in the Bible? What do people who aren't Christians think about Jesus?

I often hear these comments about Jesus:

Jesus was a...

- Great moral teacher
- Prophet
- Revolutionary
- Rebel
- Lunatic
- Liar
- Fictional person

Today, we are going to look at one of the most important, if not THE most important, questions in the Bible. The question Jesus ask's his disciples.

²² And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. ²³ And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" ²⁴ And he looked up and said, "I see people, but they look like trees, walking." ²⁵ Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. ²⁶ And he sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."

²⁷ And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸ And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." ²⁹ And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." ³⁰ And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him. ³¹ And 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. ³² And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

Mark 8:22-33

BIG IDEA

Having **Clarity** on God's Kingdom demands we **see Jesus Clearly**.



Mark 8:22-23, “And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, ‘Do you see anything?’”

They have just seen Jesus feed the 4000 and heard his teachings about the Pharisee and their self-righteous living.

Now, a blind man is brought to Jesus. There is very similar to the story of healing in Mark 2, where Jesus heals the paralytic man brought to Jesus. The friends tear open the roof and lower him in, and Jesus forgives his sins then proves his right to do so with the physical healing of the man.

In this story, Jesus asks the blind man a very bizarre question, “Do you see anything?”

Jesus, who has the ability to heal this man, asks a question that seems a little strange.

Mark 8:24-26, “And he looked up and said, ‘I see people, but they look like trees, walking.’ Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. And he sent him to his home, saying, ‘Do not even enter the village.’”

So, Jesus touches this man, leads him out of the village, out of the public eye, and with the blind man, his friends, and the disciples, he just asked the man if he sees anything.

The interpretation here is important.

A few ways to understand this part of the passage are:

1. Jesus knew that he was able and willing, and going to heal the man, so this “2nd” try has a different purpose than his ability to heal him.
2. The blind man perhaps did not have faith until Jesus started the process, but the friends had faith, for in verse 22, it was the friends that begged Jesus to heal him. Now that he is seeing a little more, he starts to have faith on his own, and Jesus heals him.
3. The reason Mark places this event here is to contrast the sight of the blind man who needed time to see, with the disciples who needed time to understand as well.

Mark 8:27-28, “And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that I am?’ And they told him, ‘John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.’”

Caesarea Philippi was named after Caesar, and Herod Philip, son of Herod the Great, this was mostly a Gentile population. On the way to this Gentile area, Jesus asks the disciples the question of popular opinion regarding His identity.

Who do people say that I am?

John the Baptist - this is a hard sell because people had seen Jesus and John the Baptist together at Jesus’ baptism. Also, John had been recently killed by Herod the Tetrarch who had him killed because of his wife and stepdaughter. So, for Jesus to have been John the Baptist, it meant that Jesus was the re-incarnation of John the Baptist, which was something that the Jews didn’t believe in.

Elijah - this was the prophet spoken of who would come back and prepare the way of God’s messenger. Could Jesus be the Elijah of the promise, coming to prepare the way for God’s messenger, God’s messiah? Or Jesus was just like the old prophets, and there to guide the people.

Instead of directly answering these conceptions from popular opinion, Jesus presents the real question he wants to ask:

Mark 8:29-30, “And he asked them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered him, ‘You are the Christ.’ And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.”

Peter’s response is EVERYTHING to the gospel of Mark so far. 8:29 is the KEY to the entire book.

So much of what Jesus has done, has shown, has taught, has brought, leads to this question - who is this Jesus?

We have seen that the question of identity comes up frequently with Jesus in Mark’s Gospel.

- The Pharisees question in their hearts, who is this who blasphemes calling himself the Son of Man, who can forgive sins, but God Alone? (Mark 2)
- The people who listen to Jesus are floored by his teachings, because he is teaching as one who has his OWN authority.
- The Demons call out Jesus’ identity publicly in front of his disciples, in the events of the demoniac legion and the pigs into the water, and in other ways.
- His own disciples question it, when Jesus heals a leper by touching him and when Jesus claims to be the Son of Man.

Who is this Jesus?

There have been up to this point only 5 statements of Jesus’ true identity, none of them from a human person, 1 is a description of Jesus by the Author of the Gospel account, 1 by God the Father at the Baptism of Jesus, and 3 by Demons.

Mark 8:31, “And 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.”

Notice these four things that are very specific:

- The title, Son of Man, that Jesus uses for himself.
- The rejection from the Elders, Chief Priests, and Scribes.
- Death by the cross and buried in the ground.
- Rising to life on the third day.

Here is the significance of these statements from Jesus about the purpose of his coming. It is only after Peter’s confession of Jesus’ identity that Jesus reveals his purposes in the Gospel of Mark. We will explore this more in the passage next week.

Mark 8:32-33, “And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, ‘Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.’”

Peter takes Jesus aside and rebukes him. This word rebuke is the same word that is used when Jesus rebukes the demons and commands them to release the people they are possessing. It is not simply that Peter did not want these events to happen, this was much firmer than that. Peter is telling Jesus that he is wrong, that this will not happen on his watch, and that Jesus does not know what he is talking about.

Jesus responds not just to Peter, but to all the disciples and explains the importance of this message. Jesus rebukes Peter because Peter is the one that does not understand. Jesus says “Get behind my Satan” not because he thinks Peter is Satan or oppressed by a demon, but because Peter was not setting his mind on God things.

This idea flows from what Jesus has already experienced going on during his ministry.

When he was in the wilderness, tempted by Satan, Satan tries to derail Jesus of his mission by promising him things that Jesus already holds the keys to. Peter thinks the same thing here, that Jesus should have a kingdom because he is the Messiah. As the Messiah, Jesus cannot die because he is supposed to save them from the oppression of the Romans.

I think that Mark 8:27-33 is specifically placed here by Mark and that we need to take note of the specificity of its location.

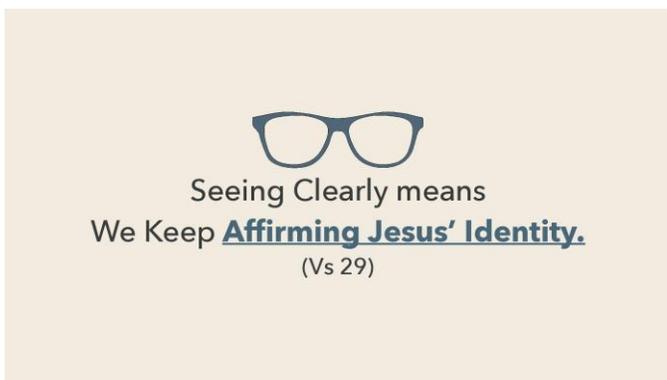
Mark writes sequentially, using a word repeated the most in his gospel. You probably will remember seeing it over the course of this sermon series. The word is, immediately. However, this word is not used in connecting the story of the blind man to Peter's confession of who Jesus is. Most likely this does not fall in sequential order, but Mark intentionally placed it here for greater understanding.

It's the hinge on which all of the rest of Mark is positioned.

It is of course a true event but is used to show the symbolic connection of the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida to the disciple's confession and wrong understanding. The disciples, just like the blind man at Bethsaida, are not seeing Jesus clearly for who he truly is. Peter has just come forward with the great declaration of Jesus' true identity, but it has been veiled to them up until this point.

How do we apply what we have just seen in the text?

There are three points to help us apply what we have read.



When we Affirm Jesus Identity correctly, then we're actually following the Jesus of the Bible.

If we punt on Jesus' identity, if we somehow shift, or change, or take a new approach, or believe a different thread, then we no longer follow the true Jesus, but we follow our own understanding.

There are so many churches in the world today who punt on this or shirk their responsibility. There are too many Christians who like Peter, give the right answer but don't understand it.

If we get Jesus' Identity wrong, who are we becoming like?

We become not just different versions of Jesus, but a false Jesus not worthy of following.

If we get Jesus' Identity wrong, who are leading people to?

We lead people not just to a different focus of Jesus, but a false Messiah who does NOT have the power to save them.

Eternity is at stake for those who do not follow the true Jesus of the Bible.



One of the things that Christians need to re-engage, is not just our beliefs around who Jesus is, but to actually do the things that Jesus did. His way of life looks different:

- It doesn't seek its own honour
- It's the way of love & compassion
- It's the way of self sacrifice
- It's the way of putting others first
- It's the way of being in the mess of life with one another
- It's the way of a heart that is deeply connected to God, his will, his mission, his purpose

Coming to church on Sunday does not make you a disciple of Jesus. It certainly is not LESS than that, but you had better believe it is far MORE than that.



Seeing Clearly means
We Keep **Attention on Kingdom Things.**
(Vs 33)

One of Jesus' main teachings in the Gospels is to seek God and his kingdom and righteousness first.

Matthew 6:19-21 - Store up treasure in Heaven and not on earth.

Matthew 6:33 - Seek his kingdom and righteousness.

Mark 1:15 - Jesus is here to proclaim that the Good News of the Kingdom of God is at hand.

The Kingdom of God is setting our minds and hearts on God's plan and purpose in the world. It is praying, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is being done (right now), in heaven."

Seeing the Kingdom clearly means we keep affirming Jesus' identity, accepting Jesus' way, and focusing our attention on Kingdom things.