

Mark 8 (Part 1) - To See and Understand

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Life Bible Ministry

A couple of weeks ago when we were in the first half of the previous chapter in Mark, we saw how there was a group of scribes that came along and began to criticize the disciples of Jesus because they weren't holding to the traditions of the elders by observing all their ritualistic traditions as it relates to washing their hands and so forth. Let me put this up on the screen. You'll remember this is basically from Mark chapter 7.

And when the disciples asked Jesus about His comment that it wasn't really important how their hands were washed in terms of them being defiled, they came to Him and they said, what exactly do you mean by that?

Mark 7:18 (ESV)

And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding? DO YOU NOT SEE that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him..."

And (Jesus) he said to them, (He said, and I'm paraphrasing here a little bit) "Then are you also without understanding? (Are you guys not getting it either? And you'll notice He said, and I've put this in all caps so just to really emphasize it) DO YOU NOT SEE (that's a really great question, Jesus said to his disciples) that whatever goes into (your mouth, it just courses through your body and it doesn't defile you) a person from outside cannot defile him..." And He went on to say that it's what's in your heart. It's what comes out of your heart that actually defiles.

But I want you to notice in this verse that we have up on the screen here, that Jesus connects the ability to see with the ability to understand. And again, we're not talking about human eyes, at least physical eyes. *"Do you not see..."* He says, do you guys don't have, do you not have understanding? Don't you see? Again, He's not referring to your eyeballs.

So, we're talking here and we're going to continue to talk in the chapter we're in today about this whole issue of connecting spiritual sight, spiritual vision with understanding all right. And as we get into this chapter, we'll see this as a theme throughout really most of the chapter.

As we get into the text, it says in verse 1, *“In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them,* ² *“I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat.” (ESV)*

But stop there for just a moment, if you would. This is interesting because on the surface it sounds like somebody wasn't thinking ahead, doesn't it? Because it's like, wow, you guys have been together for three days and nobody did any meal planning? I mean, usually we have people who are event planners, and they know how to work through some of these issues. It's like, hey Jesus we're going to need some food here along the way because this is the sort of thing where it's pretty tough just to find it. And they'd been with Jesus for 3 days!

Now, it doesn't mean that they'd been fasting that whole time. I assume that people probably either brought some food or whatever and they were probably doing some eating, but whatever the case might have been, the food was gone and now they're in a desolate sort of a place. They don't have fast food, grocery store, jump in, grab what you need, sort of a situation. And so, Jesus says, I have compassion on this crowd, they've been with me all this time and there's nothing here to eat.

And you and I look at this passage and what we don't see and understand as we read these first couple of verses is what it was probably like for these people to spend time with Jesus for three days. We might think of it as something similar, it's like going to church, I suppose, but not hardly. Sitting there, listening to Jesus talk, listening to all that He had to say, watching Him as He touched people's lives, touched their physical bodies, and just seeing everything that goes along with that.

And we're reading this, and we're amazed that nobody had the foresight to think about what you're going to do about food. But Jesus was their food. They were feeding on the Word. And at the moment I think any other food was just unimportant because they found something better. And we forget that. We look at a passage like this and we're just, we're a little incredulous. Really, you guys are out here in the middle of nowhere. Nobody thought about food?

Yeah, cause they're listening to Jesus and it's amazing, and He's feeding their hearts in such a way that feeding their bodies is just a total secondary or tertiary or whatever sort of a thing down the road and it's really interesting that we miss that in the busyness of our lives. But when people are focusing exclusively on Jesus, it's like the cares of the world just go away. People ask questions a lot

about fasting. You know what's fasting all about? Think about fasting as doing what these people were doing out in the wilderness.

They were spending time exclusively with God. And that's what fasting is. It's spending time exclusively with God, and that means I'm not going to spend time focusing on or really doing anything else. I'm going to spend it with Him, and it's about being so focused on meeting with Him that nothing else matters for that time, including meal prep or frankly, just about anything else. And it's about making sure that nothing steals my attention from Him, from His presence, from His Word, from Him ministering to my heart, so I'm going to put everything else aside for a while, and that includes eating.

And I believe that fasting can include putting aside so much more than eating. There's a whole lot of things that we should fast from when we're really wanting to spend time with Jesus and no one else. Like putting the TV or the computer or whatever, all those things away, just to spend time exclusively with Him, and when we do it's the most amazing thing in the world. We find that our feeding comes from Him.

And even though we're a little bit amazed at this passage and thinking wow, nobody thought about food. What was the problem here? Yeah, they were with Him. And see, we don't, we can't relate to that very well. We just have a hard time relating to spending such intimate, close fellowship with the Son of God that just nothing else matters.

Anyway, even after your fasting, there comes a time when you have to break your fast and so Jesus says, verse 3, look with me there in your Bible. He says, listen, *“And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have (actually) come from (quite a distance) far away.”* ⁴ *And his disciples answered him, “How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?”*

Now if by the way, if these words sound familiar like it's like wow, haven't I heard this somewhere before? It's because back in chapter six this thing happened before right? This is the second group of people that is finding themselves out in a desolate place with Jesus teaching them and they suddenly realize, hey, it's time to go home and there's no food and we need to take care of these people. And you'll remember at that time, Jesus also challenged the disciples to do something about it.

Now, this situation is a little bit different. Let me just tell you a couple of quick things about what's different about this particular situation. First of all, the

location is different. Last week we talked about the fact that Jesus had gone to this region of what they called the Decapolis, meaning the area of the ten cities. So, this is a different region. This is a different place. Jesus was in Israel before, now he's in the region of the Decapolis and so, it's a completely different area that had previously told Jesus to leave. This is the place where the man of the tombs was from. Remember we brought this out last week.

This is the place after Jesus released that man from that powerful demonic possession that the people said, please leave. But you remember, again, I want to reiterate the power of one individual who's been set free to share what God has done in their life. The man came to Jesus and said, can I come with you? Jesus said, no, go back and tell these people what God has done for you. And he did. And now there's these crowds of people.

He must have been successful. There's now crowds of people gathering to hear Jesus, and they've spent three days just listening and hearing everything He had to say. Secondly, the situation is different because of the makeup of the crowd. The first group of people that Jesus fed was all Jewish. This is made up of Jews and Gentiles. So, that's significant.

And the third difference in this particular situation is covered in verse 5. Look at verse 5 in your Bible. *"And he asked them, (referring to the disciples) 'How many loaves do you have?' They said, 'Seven.'"*

You guys remember last time when He fed the 5,000? He said, do we have, is there any food among us? And they said, well, there's this kid that's got some food, and so, they actually got it from this little kid. Well, now Jesus is getting the food directly from the disciples, and so, He's going to take their little and turn it into a great abundance.

But then the rest of the story, beginning of verse 6 is pretty similar to what we saw last time. It says, *"And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; (sound familiar?) and they set them before the crowd. ⁷ And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. ⁸ And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. (And it says) ⁹ And there were about four thousand people. And (then after they ate, Jesus finally) he sent them away."*

And we're reading through this. We're going, wow, that's really similar. You think at some point the disciples would have said to one another, it just feels

like we've done this before. I mean, think of all the things. Okay, wilderness, hungry people. Hmm, not much food. So, Jesus tells the people to sit down in groups. Yeah, I think He did that last time too. And then He blesses the food and tells the disciples to pass it out. And the people eat, and they're satisfied. And they go and have to, they pick up all the leftovers.

You'd think one of them is, yeah, I think we've done this before. But they didn't. There's not one record in this passage of the disciples saying, we've done this, we've been here, we've been down this road before, and that's because they didn't connect the dots, which seems amazing to us, since we just read the situation here, not that long ago, just a couple of chapters ago.

But that's what I want to focus on a little bit here, because you see their lack of perception, their lack of understanding, their lack of being able to connect the dots for lack of a better term is what we're dealing with here when we talk about lack of spiritual perception, spiritual seeing, spiritual vision.

And as we get further into the chapter, we're going to hear how Jesus is going to confront His men about their lack of spiritual insight, their lack of seeing in just a little bit. But before He does, He's got another case of blindness He has to deal with and that's coming up next.

Beginning in verse 10. It says, *“And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha. (and it says) ¹¹ The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. ¹² And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.” (And it says) ¹³ And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.”*

And so here we come to another example of spiritual lack of seeing. And this time it's the Pharisees, whose blindness is absolutely incredible. They come to Jesus, and they say, we want to see a sign. A sign from heaven, so that we might know. Now, here's the deal. It's not like these guys hadn't seen a sign before. It's not like they'd never seen a miracle. The Pharisees followed Jesus from time to time. There were other miracles He did in the synagogue with people sitting there and watching. It's not like they hadn't seen a miracle.

They'd seen plenty of them. They'd even heard Him preach too and they're still coming and asking for a sign. And you wonder, what's that all about? But that's why Jesus sighed deeply. It says He sighed in His Spirit. I don't even know how to explain what that is. To sigh in the Spirit. But there's this reaction that we see from the Savior at the blindness of these Pharisees and the reason He's sighing

the way He is because if there was any generation that was privileged, it was this one because of the things that they had seen and the things that they had heard.

Do you guys remember what Jesus said about this in Matthew chapter 13? Let me put this on the screen. Look what Jesus said,

Matthew 13:16-17 (ESV)

But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Now, I want you to notice here in this passage, Jesus speaks of the privilege of what they were able to see and hear. But listen, just because people saw with their human eyes and heard with their human ears doesn't necessarily mean they understood or that they really saw. There's a connection that we're trying to make here to understanding. When we see and when we hear with spiritual eyes and ears, we are given understanding.

When we see only with our human eyes and hear only with our human ears there can always and often be a place where there's a disconnect and we don't connect the dots, and this was especially true of the Pharisees. Here they are asking Jesus for a sign when they had received already so many. So why couldn't they understand? Why was it that the Pharisees? Why didn't they see one miracle and just go, wow, He's here?

The Messiah is here, everything that the prophets told us that He would do, He's doing. Why was it, why was it they kept coming back and saying, show us a sign? In other passages of the scripture, Jesus actually told him, He said, I already have showed you signs, and you didn't believe, I have shown you miracles, you didn't believe those, why would I think that you're going to believe anything now? So, what was the problem?

Well, we get some insight from some other conversations Jesus had with the Pharisees that are written down for us in some other passages. Let me start off from Matthew chapter 21. Check out this passage. Jesus is talking to them. He says,

Matthew 21:32 (ESV)

For John came to you John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him and even when you saw it you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

For John came to you (He's talking about John the Baptist. He says) John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him (and look at) and even when you saw it (and that's physical eyes) you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

Okay? So, what condition does it take to see the work of God, the power of God manifest and to not be changed. What is that condition? Paul talks about it in Ephesians chapter 4. Look at this. He says,

Ephesians 4:18 (ESV)

They are darkened in their understanding. alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

They are darkened in their understanding. alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due (and this is the very important part at the end. Due) to their hardness of heart.

In other words, they don't want to believe. I choose not to believe. I refuse. Listen, the only way you can see Jesus do a miracle and then walk up and look at Him in the face and say, show me a miracle is if you choose not to believe what you've seen. Choose not to understand, choose to just reject it. And that is what Paul is talking about. There is a darkness in an individual's understanding because ultimately there is hardness of heart that is going on. They refuse.

And the biggest reason people refuse to believe is why? Well, just, I have just, I have intellectual problems with these things. No, that's not it. That's what people love to say. I just have intellectual problems with the Bible. And what they're saying to you is, I'm smarter than God. Sorry, I just can't believe these things because I'm more intelligent. Actually, what's really going on is something much more organic. Let me show you this other passage from John chapter 3. John says,

John 3:19 (ESV)

This is the verdict. Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

This is the verdict. Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

Boom. You've got to love John, just laying it out there. So why do people have hardness of heart? Why do people lack understanding? Because they don't want to understand. And why do they not want to understand? Because they're living in a situation where I don't want to change. I like my sin, okay? Get off my case. I like doing what I'm doing. There aren't that many people that will be that honest, but if they were honest, that's what they'd say.

I don't want to change. I've actually had a few honest souls say that to me to my face and I have to say I always appreciate it. I really do. I appreciate honesty whenever I hear it. Don't you? And when somebody looks me in the eye and I'm telling them about Jesus and they go, I'd really, it sounds all good and stuff, but I just don't want to change, I'm having too much fun.

I'm like, thank you. And that's a breath of fresh air to hear it because that's what the Bible told us all along. This is the verdict, right? People like their sin. They don't want to change. They don't want to..., get your Jesus stuff out of my face.

So that's what the case was with the Pharisees. They didn't want to change. And that's why they came back to Jesus and said, show us a sign. And the same is true for anybody else who loves their sin. Have you ever prayed for somebody to just see a miracle?

Because we like to hear those testimonies about people who see miracles. And they're just, and they, then they get up and tell their story. I was doing this, doing that, and then God just, and I just got on my knees. I was like, Jesus, You're real and I love You and I just got saved. And then there are brand new, we love hearing those stories. I love hearing those stories.

But you know what? Don't think that because you hear that somebody saw a miracle that everybody sees a miracle and has the same reaction. Don't think that. And if you're praying for somebody who's unsaved and you're praying that God's going to show them a miracle, so they'll get saved, that is not a guarantee.

What you're hearing in those testimonies is somebody who decided to open their eyes and see and understand with their heart that God was getting their attention. But not everybody does. Some people see miracles and they explain them away. Oh, I'll tell you how He's able to cast out demons. He's in cahoots with the devil.

That's what the Pharisees did, right? That's how that's going on. We know what's happening under the table. You come up with an explanation. You go, well, yeah, whatever. It's not that He, Jesus changed him. He just grew up finally. Decided to become responsible. Good grief. You Christians, you're always blaming it on Jesus. It's just human nature. Everybody's got an explanation. So, miracles are not a guarantee.

Let's go back to Mark chapter 8, see what else that we learn here about spiritual vision. Verse 14. It says, *"Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. ¹⁵ And he cautioned them, saying, 'Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.' ¹⁶ And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread. ¹⁷ And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, 'Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? (What a great question) Do you not yet perceive or understand?"*

Okay, did you catch that last part of that verse? *"Do you not yet perceive or understand?"* In other words, what Jesus is saying, do you not yet see? Not with these eyes, but with those spiritual eyes. *"Are your hearts hardened? (Are you guys hardened too, like the Pharisees?)"*

¹⁸ Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? ¹⁹ When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They said to him, "Twelve." ²⁰ "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven." (And He, I'm making them sound dumb, aren't I? But so) ²¹ And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

Why do you think I'm sitting here talking to you about bread. Bread is not an issue. I've fed two multitudes of people with just a little and literally created a lot. Why is it you're talking about bread? And the reason the disciples missed the point of what was being said here by Jesus, and hear this now. It's because they were so focused on temporal things. They were so focused on temporal things, and because of being focused on the temporal, they missed the eternal.

They missed the spiritual message that Jesus was trying to convey. Okay? He's saying, hey guys, watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees, and the religious leaders, and they're going, oh, we didn't bring enough bread. We should have brought more bread. Jesus is saying, guys, why are you thinking that I'm talking to you about physical things? I'm not talking to you about physical things. I'm talking to you about spiritual things.

Now, granted, planning meals is pretty important to all of us. And for those of you who are meal planners, you have a lot of work to do in order to feed your families, and back in Jesus' day, it was a much bigger deal to plan ahead of time for meals. Because if you didn't plan to eat in a particular day, you wouldn't eat that day.

It's not hard, I guess, to see how these men might have gotten confused when Jesus started talking about leaven, which they would have connected with bread and so forth, but you can see that they were connecting completely on a physical level.

And this is such a powerful reminder to you and I on how our focus becomes so attached to our daily routine and the things that we have to deal with in a given day. And I wonder sometimes if Jesus might be asking the same question of you and I, that He asked to His disciples, and that is, why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Why are you focused on the fact that you only have one loaf of bread? And it's like Jesus saying, hello! Have I not taken care of you? Have I not seen to your needs in these particular areas?

Why are you focused on these things? Why are you worrying about food? Now that was the question He posed to them. But I wonder, I always wonder when I read questions like this what question would Jesus pose to you and I?

If Jesus stood in this place right here right now, and He wanted to talk to you and I about what we're thinking about and what dominates our minds and ideas and our thoughts for the day, what would He say?

Why are you focusing on how much snow you've gotten or something like that, right? Are you not aware, He might say, that there are more important things going on. That there's something more important happening in the kingdom of God.

Or He might say, why are you so concerned about how much money you're earning? Haven't I taken care of you in the past? Why are you so focused on that? Why are you so fixated on those sorts of things?

Or He might ask the question, why are you stressing over your business, or your health, or all the other things that people often stress over. Or what's going on in your family or whatever? There are so many things that potentially steal our attention so that we eventually become like the disciples. We've got all this spiritual activity going on around us and we can't see it because we're fixated on all these other things.

And these are other things that we have to deal with to some degree, but we become so fixated, so focused that we're missing. We're the spiritual realities that are all around us. People, we've become dull. And I'm not talking about boring dull.

I'm talking about, we've lost our spiritual edge to discern, to see. What is God doing? What's oh just get on Facebook. What is everybody focused on in terms of the United States of America? Well the inauguration and how everybody's reacting, whether badly or however, and that's been a huge focus. And God's going, but there's bigger stuff going on here than that. Than how this person is reacting to your post or to somebody else's post or whatever.

There's bigger things happening here, but because you're focused on this thing right here, this little, you're missing out on this. This daily life thing is drawing so much of your time and attention. You guys obviously remember the story of Martha and Mary. Can you imagine having Jesus come and sit in your house and, I mean, sit in your chair, in your living room, and He's just, and you can just ask Him anything you want, and you can just listen to Him talk. Well, you know the story.

Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, and Martha was so focused on what she had to do to get ready for this thing. All the food prep and everything. So, she's busy running around doing and fixing, and cleaning, and got to prepare, and stuff like that. And you remember, she finally gets so frustrated with her sister who's sitting at the feet of Jesus, just soaking it up, just listening. And she's seeing and she's hearing what's really going on in that room, right? Mary is tuned in to what's really happening.

And finally, Martha comes, and she's just had it. And she says, Lord please tell Mary to get off her duff and help me here, right? I paraphrased there a bit, and remember what did Jesus say? Mary, get up and help your sister.

No, He didn't, did He? That's, all the doers who read that passage wanted Him to say that. But actually, what Jesus said is, no, actually Martha, Mary has chosen the better thing, and it will not be taken from her. She's tuned in on what's really important. She's focused in on what's really happening here in this room.

And frankly, all these other things are peripheral, and you've become so fixated on them that you've lost the ability to really receive and understand and connect with me on the level that we really need to be connected on. So, I guess here's my exhortation. Let's choose what's best in life. Oh, so many things to distract.

Can I just tell you that I'm preaching to myself up here? If there was no one in this room right now and none of these cameras were on and there was no recording happening or live broadcast, I need to hear this for myself.

I have noticed, I've noticed in my own heart that I've just gotten my attention away. And even during, it's funny, I don't know when the Lord speaks to you, but things become really clear about three in the morning. And the Lord was just speaking to me while it was still dark and I'm laying in bed, and I've got these Scriptures going through my mind.

And that's the way He usually talks to me as He brings up passages. And right in the midst of feeling very disconnected, the Lord reminded me, Paul, I told you to seek first the kingdom of God and my righteousness, and you have not been seeking first my kingdom and my righteousness.

You've been so focused on what's going on out here that you've lost a spiritual connection with me and I had to, laying right there, I had to just repent. I had to just say Lord, you're absolutely right. Forgive me. I have gotten my focus off you, and I've been just so worried and busy and taking care of this and that and business and administration and things. It happens, doesn't it? To all of us. And the reason that's why I can admit that in front of all of you, I know I'm not alone.

Look at verse 22, it says, *“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.”*

That's weird, but that tells you the guy probably wasn't blind from birth. He'd probably been blinded by an accident or a disease because he knew what trees were supposed to look like, at least. Anyway, he says, yeah, sort of, but not really.

Verse 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.””*

In other words, He wanted to keep it quiet. Anyway, interesting story. Nobody tells this story except Mark. Mark's the only one. And this is the only healing that we have that came in two stages. All right? So, it's an interesting sort of a thing. But we read this, and we go, wow, was Jesus having an off day? I mean

why wasn't the man fully restored in his sight from the get-go? Why did He have to go back and do a little bit of a repeat sort of a thing? And here's the answer.

I really don't know. God didn't tell us. There's nothing in the passage that would suggest why it happened just that way. But we do see a rather interesting correlation here to the theme of what the chapter is all about. And it's about seeing.

This chapter is about seeing. We have the Pharisees who are blind, we have the disciples who struggle to see because they're fixated on earthly things and the issues the tyranny of the now, sort of a thing, and then we have this actual blind man who wants very much to see but needs Jesus to bear with him a little bit until he receives his sight back in full.

And it's sort of an interesting picture, is it not? Of the fact that when some people come to Christ, they seem to just have an incredible insight they see right away. I've got to tell you something. As a pastor there is probably nothing more exciting for me than seeing someone's eyes opened. It's one of the coolest things—like ever. I love sitting down with new believers whose eyes have been opened, and they're changed, and they understand. And they might've read the Bible for years before and just walked away, scratching their head and now they open their Bible and they're like, wow.

And they just can't get enough, and they want to read it constantly, and they like to come and tell you, I was reading this passage, and it was so cool. And they'll tell you about how God applied it to their heart, and it's just, it's amazing because their eyes have been opened, but that doesn't happen like that with everybody. There are some people who have to keep going back to Jesus and saying, yeah, I can see, but not all the way, and I need more.

And one of the things I really like about this simple passage is that this man wasn't afraid to say to Jesus, uh, not quite dialed in here. Let's do this again. And he says I see people walking around, but it looks like trees and stuff. And there are times people just like this, man that we don't see things like we ought, and we know that we're not connected the way that we need to be, and we're not seeing things the way we need to see them. We realize it for whatever reason it might be for me.

Like I told you, it was just last night as I'm meditating on these verses during the middle of the night, the Lord speaks to my heart and says, Paul, you're just, you're not really seeing the way you should, because your eyes have been

covered over with just the needs of today and all the issues that are in front of you. And it's just, it's become a blinding effect. And I've got to be, I've got to be like this man, come back to Jesus and say, I need more. I need to see better.

The final verses that we look, here that we're actually going to cover this morning here at verse 27 is interesting. It says, *"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, (Oh some people think you're) 'John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.'* (He named whatever)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."*

Now you guys know that this, in Mark. This is an abbreviated version of this conversation. Peter made his accurate confession of who Jesus was. You remember, you actually have to read it in Matthew. Let me show you this on the screen from Matthew chapter 16. Actually, Jesus responded to Peter and said to him,

Matthew 16:17 (ESV)

And Jesus answered him, "Blessed. Are you Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my father who is in heaven."

And Jesus answered him, "Blessed. Are you Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my father who is in heaven."

In other words, what is Jesus saying to Peter? You are blessed by my Father, Simon, because your ability to see what you have just communicated came from God, right? Peter didn't always see very well. Sometimes he got rebuked for it.

In fact, we're going to see next week when we finish out this chapter, this same man who Jesus declares a blessed condition in his life because he could see who Jesus is, is going to turn around when Jesus talks about going to Jerusalem and being crucified.

He's going to turn around, he's going to rebuke Jesus, and he's going to say, no, you're not going to Jerusalem, and you are not going to get arrested, and you are not, and Jesus is going to have some pretty strong words for Peter.

But you know why? Because in that case, Peter didn't see why, because his own personal feelings got in the way, and clouded his vision, so that he couldn't see. So, what does this tell you? Sometimes we see, and sometimes we don't, but

when we don't see, it's because other junk gets in the way. Sometimes that junk is me.

Like in Peter's case, we're going to see that next week. I don't want you to do that. Sometimes it's like with God, I don't want you to do this. And I can't see what He's doing because my feelings and my desires have gotten in the way, and my spiritual vision has been cut off.

And that happens a lot, I think, too, to you and I. Speaking of the eyes that we have in our head, they are a marvel, are they not? I mean, good grief. Our ability to see is amazing. But our eyes have one fatal flaw. For all the wonder that they present to us. And this one fatal flaw is this. They can only see physical things.

And yet the Bible tells you and I that there is a spiritual reality all around us that is just as real as the person sitting next to you, the book or device that you're holding in your hand, the chair you're sitting in. That there is a spiritual world that is around you right now, but you can't see it because the eyes that God gave you that are in your head can't see those things.

But that doesn't mean they can't be seen. Just because your physical eyes can't see them doesn't mean they can't be seen. They can be seen. But they're only going to be seen with spiritual eyes that are connected to the spiritual heart that produce together understanding. That's where understanding comes from. Let me close by putting a passage from Colossians on the screen for you. I quoted this out of the NIV. I just like the wording. Paul writes and says,

Colossians 3:1-3 (NIV2011)

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. (In fact he says) Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Isn't that a beautiful passage? What a wonderful reminder. You and I have a calling on our lives to look beyond the physical. To look beyond the everyday, the things that are constantly grasping for our attention, constantly demanding our attention. I mean, good grief, when you can't even get out of your driveway,

that draws your attention, and when you're thinking about your house and thinking, gee, I hope the roof doesn't collapse.

That grabs for your attention and you're talking about it, and everybody else is thinking about it and talking about it, and we're all talking about it and it's just like woo. That's all there is right?

And so here we have the Apostle Paul at a time like that, and he says, set your heart, set your mind, set your spiritual vision on things that are not of this world, but are focused instead on the spiritual realm and that's only going to happen as we come to God and ask Him to do that work in us.

But it starts with repenting. Lord, forgive me for putting all the things that pass in front of my eyes on such a level of importance that I have missed out on so much in your Kingdom, what you're doing what you're really doing in my family.

Here I've been thinking about this relationship going on in my family and I haven't been able to see what's really happening in my family because there's a spiritual dynamic that I haven't even been tuned into. So, what's God really doing? I don't know. The only way we're going to see it is if He opens our eyes.