



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V22 N43 November 8, 2020

## KING JESUS

“I Can See Clearly Now”

Mark 8:22-26

### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Single-mindedness

I focus on God and his priorities for my life.

*“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

**Matthew 6:33**



How well do you see?

In order to “focus on God and his priorities,” disciples have to see clearly who Jesus is and what following Jesus entails. Mark makes it clear; after all the Twelve have heard Jesus *say* and after all they have seen Jesus *do*, they still do not fully comprehend who Jesus is. Jesus at one point asks them point blank:

“Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear?”

He said to them, “Do you still not understand?” (8:17-18, 21).

They have *heard* him authoritatively forgive a man’s sins (2:5), declare now is no time for fasting (2:20) and “the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (2:28), tell parables about the kingdom of God (4:1-34), correct the Pharisaic misunderstanding of defilement (7:1-5, 14-23), and rebuke their abuse of tradition (7:6-13).

They have *seen* him drive out impure spirits (2:25; 5:8; 7:29), heal many (1:31, 34, 41; 2:11; 3:5; 5:29, 34; 7:35; 8:25) – including blind, deaf, lame, and mute people (see Isa 35:5-6) – even raise a dead girl (5:41-42), walk on water (6:48-49), calm storms (4:39; 6:51), and feed more than nine thousand people with a few loaves and fish (6:41-44; 8:6-10). The evidence provided is sufficient to lead any unprejudiced person to Mark’s conclusion that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God (1:1), but *outsiders*, namely, the teachers of the law, the Pharisees and Herodians, even Herod himself, refuse to go where the evidence leads (3:6, 22, 30; 8:15). And the disciples, although *insiders*, run the risk of being infected by their “yeast” (8:15).

One commentator writes: “The Pharisees and Herod seem to have little in common – the one steeped in religious duties, the other sunk in iniquity. But they do share one poisonous fault that can infect others. Jesus does not explicitly identify what that toxic flaw is, but the context points to their obstinate refusal to believe in spite of the evidence. They will not admit the truth, let

alone embrace it, even when it stares them in the face . . . Jesus thus warns the disciples not to fall victim to this same insidious unbelief” (David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark*, 310-11). Disciples today run the same risk of being infected with doubt and inaction as we seek to expand our comprehension of who Jesus is and its implications for our everyday lives.

Once Peter, speaking for the disciples, recognizes that Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (Mt 16:16), the Lord goes on to tell the Twelve that “he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life” (v. 21). Over Peter’s objection, Jesus then explains what discipleship entails. According to Matthew, “Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must *deny themselves* and *take up their cross* and *follow me*. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it” (vv. 24-25). In the words of one commentator, disciple wannabes must do two things.

“Negatively, one **must deny himself** decisively saying no to selfish interests and earthly securities. Self-denial is not to deny one’s personality, to die as a martyr, or to deny ‘things.’ Rather it is the denial of ‘self,’ turning away from the idolatry of self-centeredness and every attempt to orient one’s life by the dictates of self-interest. Positively, one must **take up his cross**, decisively saying yes to God’s will and way . . . Those who follow Him must take up their cross, whatever comes to them in God’s will as a follower of Jesus. This does not mean suffering as He did or being crucified as He was. Nor does it mean stoically bearing life’s troubles. Rather, it is obedience to God’s will as revealed in His Word, accepting the consequences without reservations for Jesus’ sake and the gospel” (John D. Grassmick, “Mark,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 141).

# 1

## EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

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22 They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. 23 He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village.

When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?"

24 He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around."

25 Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. 26 Jesus sent him home, saying "Don't even go into the village."

### READ in another translation

22 They came to Bethsaida, where some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged him to touch him. 23 Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. After spitting on the man's eyes, Jesus placed his hands on him and asked him, "Can you see anything?"

24 The man looked up and said, "Yes, I can see people, but they look like trees walking around."

25 Jesus again placed his hands on the man's eyes. This time the man looked intently, his eyesight returned, and he saw everything clearly. 26 Jesus then sent him home with the order, "Don't go back into the village."

(GNT)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "Bethsaida" in v. 22.
- Bracket "by the hand" and "led him" in v. 23a.
- Bracket "spit on" and "put his hands on" in v. 23b.
- Circle "looked up" in v. 24.
- Box "like" indicating *comparison* in v. 24.
- Box "once more" in v. 25.
- Underline "opened," "restored," and "saw everything clearly" in v. 25.
- Circle "home" in v. 26.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about \_\_\_\_\_."



## DIG DEEPER

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Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. The healing of the blind man in 8:22-26 resembles the healing of the deaf and mute man in 7:31-37. How so?
2. What do you infer about the blind man and the people who brought him to Jesus from verse 22?
3. If Jesus took the blind man “outside the village” *for practical reasons* (cf., 7:33), what might they be?
4. Jesus didn’t spit in the man’s face, did he? Describe what he more likely did (see note on v. 23).
5. Explain what *spitting* and *touching* would mean to the blind man.
6. Explain the *comparison* in verse 24.
7. The word “see” has a *literal* (cf., vv. 23-24) and a *figurative* meaning (cf., vv. 17-18). Describe them.
8. *Figuratively* speaking the disciples resemble the blind man. How so?
9. The blind man’s sight was restored *progressively*. What does that suggest with regard to the disciples?
10. **Discussion:** Given the *figurative* meaning of “see,” talk about whether you are a disciple with 20/20 vision or not.

### Commentary On The Text

While outlines of the book of Mark vary, most agree that a new major section of the Gospel begins in 8:22. One commentator explains: Following the Prologue (1:1-13), “in Part One (1:14-8:21), Mark describes Jesus’ ministry in and around Galilee, emphasizing Jesus’ authority in word and deed.” Prior to the Epilogue (16:1-8), “in Part Two [8:22-15:47], Mark describes Jesus as the suffering Messiah. The first of three main sections describes Jesus’ revelation of his suffering (8:22-10:52). Jesus predicts his suffering, death and resurrection in the context of Peter’s declaration that he is the Messiah, repeating it twice in the context of instruction for his disciples . . . In the second section, Mark describes the confrontation in Jerusalem (11:1-13:37), beginning with Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem and ending with Jesus’ discourse on the destruction of the temple and the signs before his climactic return. In the third section Mark describes Jesus’ suffering and death (14:1-15:47), beginning with the plot to arrest Jesus and Jesus’ betrayal, and ending with Jesus’ crucifixion, death and burial” (Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 189).

The first section of Part Two begins (8:22-26) and ends (10:46-52) with miracles, namely, the healing of two blind men—first, a blind man in Bethsaida and second, blind Bartimaeus in Jericho. The first is similar to the healing of the deaf-mute man in the Decapolis (7:31-37). In both cases, Jesus takes the man involved away from the crowd to heal him; in both cases, Jesus uses touch and spittle in connection with the healing; and in both cases, he tells the man involved to keep what he has done to himself. The second, however, is unique in that the healing takes place in two stages.

Coming from Dalmanutha on the other side of the lake (8:10), Jesus and his disciples land in Bethsaida where they are met by people bringing a blind man to him for healing. Jesus’ reputation has seemingly preceded him, since the people and the blind man appear confident that Jesus can restore the man’s sight. In stage one of the healing, Jesus takes the man by the hand and leads him away from the prying eyes of the villagers—an eyewitness touch—and applies a small amount of spittle to the man’s eyes with his fingers, alerting him to Jesus’ intentions. Then he asks the man a diagnostic question, “Do you see anything?” (v. 23). “For the first time Jesus asks an afflicted person about the success of his healing attempt, the way a physician would do” (David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark*, 312). To which the man replies, “I see people; they look like trees walking around” (v. 24), indicating he has regained his sight, but his vision is blurred. Then in stage two, Jesus touches the man’s eyes a second time, and the man’s vision is completely restored to 20/20 (cf., Isa 35:4-5). He sees perfectly. The man’s complete

healing is never in doubt; it just occurs in two stages.

As far as the significance of the miracle in its historical context is concerned (not to mention, the healing of the deaf-mute man in 7:32-37), it serves as one more proof that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, given its clear allusion to Isaiah 35:5-6: “Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.” But in Mark’s context, it likely has even greater significance, given a number of observations: the figurative use of “see” to mean “understand” in verses 17 and 18; Jesus’ allusion to the disciples’ obtuseness in the same verses; the unique need of the blind man for a “second touch” in order for him to see clearly (v. 25); and its contrast to healing of blind Bartimaeus to end the section (10:46-52). While not all agree with the following interpretation (see Stein, 392-93), Mark’s literary design suggests it is likely the correct one.

One commentator explains: “There can be little doubt, however that this story functioned symbolically in Mark’s Gospel. He has most likely separated it from its traditional setting paired with the healing of the deaf-mute in 7:32-37, rearranged the order of the two stories and strategically located it here in his narrative after a pericope that accented the disciples’ lack of perception, their having eyes without seeing and ears without hearing (8:14-21) . . . Mark clearly uses the first stage of the healing to distinguish the disciples’ myopia from the blindness of the ‘outsiders,’ the ‘Pharisees and Herod,’ and his own hometown and family. Their calling and response (1:16-20; 3:13-19), their special privilege as constant companions and recipients of Jesus’ instruction (4:10-20, 33-34; 7:18-23), and their sharing in Jesus’ ministry (6:7-13, 30; 6:33-34; 8:1-9) demonstrated their having experienced the first touch. But only a fine line separated their myopia from blindness as seen by the warning about the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod which had just preceded . . . The disciples show themselves to be in need of the second touch, and the story bespeaks their experiencing it. A time must come when they see all things distinctly. That time does not, however, come at Caesarea Philippi or by the time of Jesus’ suffering and death in Jerusalem. In fact, it really does not come by the end of Mark’s Gospel (16:8). But Mark’s readers know it came for the disciples at some point after Easter. And it came though God’s gracious healing of their sight” (Robert A. Guelich, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 34A, *Mark 1-8:26*, 433-34).

For contemporary readers, their identification with the disciples invites them to assess their own vision. Is it 20/20, or do they like the Twelve need a second touch? One thing is certain, discipleship (i.e., spiritual formation and sanctification) is a process that doesn’t occur all at once but over a lifetime of following Jesus.

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## Word Studies/Notes

v. 22 *Bethsaida* I.e., the home of Philip, Andrew, and Peter (Jn 1:44; 12:21; cf., Mt 11:21; Lk 10:13). “Earlier Jesus and the disciples had set out unsuccessfully for Bethsaida (6:45); here they finally arrive” (Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 390). “Mark appears to have arranged the itinerary from 7:24-8:21 that has Jesus moving from Gennesaret (6:53) to the territory of Tyre (7:24), then through Sidon across to and down through the middle of the Decapolis (7:31) to the Sea of Galilee which he crosses to Dalmanutha (8:10) from where he crosses back to Bethsaida (8:13-22). The journey covers the area bordering the northeast shore of Galilee, *which was predominantly gentile*” (Robert A. Guelich, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 34A, *Mark 1-8:26*, 431, italics added; contra Stein, 390).

v. 23 *by hand and led him* “Jesus led the man **outside the village**, probably to establish a one-to-one relationship with him (cf. 7:33) and *to avoid publicity* (8:26)” (John D. Grassmick, “Mark,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 138, italics added). “The taking *by the hand* is an eyewitness touch, particularly appropriate in the case of a blind man, as is the leading *out of the village* of the sightless man, bewildered by the noise of the crowd, to a place of quiet, where he can hear and understand Jesus whom he cannot yet see” (R. Alan Cole, *Mark*, TNTC, 199-200). “Jesus similarly removed the deaf-mute from the public eye . . . Indeed, separation from the ‘village’ may be the actual point here (7:33)” (Guelich, 432).

v. 23 *spit on . . . put his hands on* “The English translations permit a rather unpleasant interpretation of what Jesus did, namely, spitting in the man's face and placing His hands on his head or shoulders. The Greek text encourages us to interpret the data differently. Probably Jesus applied a small quantity of His spittle to the man's eyes with His fingers. This action would have made it clear to the blind man that Jesus was restoring his vision. In other words, Jesus used the saliva to aid the man's faith, not as a healing agent” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Mark,” 2020 ed., 174, [planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf](http://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf)). “The saliva applied by Jesus to the man's eyes is unlikely to have been used for its supposed therapeutic effect. It was simply an acted parable, to draw the man's attention to what Jesus was about to do. The laying on of hands by Jesus would have the same effect; touch means more than sound to a blind man, and only by touch could the meaning of Jesus be conveyed” (Cole, 200). “The physical touch of the eyes is particularly meaningful for a blind man” (Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 191).

v. 24 *looked up* Cf., “regaining his sight, he said” (NET). “The man's (*anablepsas*; lit.

‘looking up’) refers not to his ‘looking upward’ as in 6:41; 7:34; 16:4 but to his ‘regaining his sight’ as in 10:51-52 (cf. also Matt. 11:5/Luke 7:22; John 9:11, 15, 18; Acts 9:12, 17, 18; 22:13; E. Johnson 1979:376-78)” (Stein, 391).

v. 25 *once more* “This miracle and its structural parallel (7:31-37) are the only miracles recorded in Mark alone. It is the only recorded two-stage miracle which Jesus performed” (Grassmick, 138). “The Markan context, which portrays Jesus' struggle to get his disciples to see anything, gives this unusual two-stage healing added significance. The blind man's healing occurs between two examples of the disciples' blindness (8:14-21; 8:31-33). This physical healing of blindness serves as a paradigm for the spiritual healing of the disciples' sight, which also comes gradually and with difficulty” (David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark*, 312-13).

v. 25 *opened, restored, saw clearly* “Mark describes the complete healing with three expressions: *his eyes were opened* (*dieblepsen*; lit. ‘he saw through’, here ‘he opened his eyes wide’ or ‘he saw clearly’); *his sight was restored* (*apekatestē*, ‘he was restored’), which may suggest that he used to be able to see; and he saw everything clearly (*eneblepen*, ‘he looked at, gazed on, could see, had a clear view of’)” (Schnabel, 192).

v. 26 *home* “Apparently the man did not live in Bethsaida since Jesus sent him home with the admonition, **Don't go into the village** (i.e., ‘Don't go there first’). This is likely another command for silence in order to safe-guard His planned activity (cf. 1:44-45; 5:43; 7:36)” (Grassmick, 138). “The restoring of sight to a blind person among the mixed population of Bethsaida would have led to the type of false veneration that Jesus constantly avoided (Ch. 1:35-39, 45; 3:7-9; 6:45)” (William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT, 285).

# 4

## APPLY THE TEXT

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### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Disciples are to check their vision from time to time to see how they are progressing on the way to becoming more like Jesus, and to take the appropriate steps should they discover it's not 20/20.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



### 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

Life is heavy. 2020 has been heavy. Are you feeling it? Does it seem like the earthly problems will never come to an end? I have certainly felt this way over the course of my life, but it seems like I have been feeling it specifically over the last few months. There just always seems like something else to handle. My friend always says she just wants a water break from the issues in life, and more and more throughout this year I understand exactly what she means. The thing is, though, that the troubles of this life can so easily remove our focus from the Lord. They are in our face and seem so overwhelming that we take our eyes off of Jesus and put them on the things of this world. This is exactly what the enemy wants from us. The enemy hopes that he can add enough troubles to our path that we forget to trust and hope in our Savior. I want to encourage you to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. His power and authority are over every trouble in your path! My friend, listen to your Savior. Make time to constantly pursue Him, and don't allow the troubles in this life to be greater than the Lord in your eyes.

\* This week's edition of Kids Scrolls is written by Madison Houston, Children's Ministry Intern

What Does The Bible Say?	What Do You Think?	What Do You Do?
<p>Read Mark 8:1-13.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What did the people want from Jesus in verse 22?</li> <li>2. What does the blind man see in verse 25?</li> <li>3. What did Jesus ask of the man after He healed him in verse 26?</li> </ol>	<p>Why do you think Jesus spat in the man's eyes and then touched them? What did he want the man to see?</p>	<p>Spend time in prayer asking the Lord to show you your spiritual need today. Write down what you feel the Lord is leading you to focus on. Be Single-minded as our Core Competency says, and pay attention to what God is telling you is important in your life.</p>

### CORE COMPETENCY: Single-mindedness

I pay attention to what God thinks is important for my life.

### MEMORY VERSE: Jeremiah 30:17

*"But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds," declares the Lord.*

## KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

\_\_\_\_\_ I completed my Bible Study

\_\_\_\_\_ I memorized this week's verse

\_\_\_\_\_ I brought my Bible to church

\_\_\_\_\_ I brought a friend

CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)  
*I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)

*I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.*

**Eternity** (John 14:1-4)

*I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)

*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

**Humanity** (John 3:16)

*I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.*

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)

*I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.*

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)

*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)

*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)

*I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.*

**Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)

*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)

*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

**Joy** (John 15:11)

*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)

*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)

*I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.*

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

*I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others*

**Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)

*I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.*

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)

*I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.*

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)

*I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)

*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)

*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)

*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)

*I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)

*I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.*

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)

*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

**Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)

*I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)

*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)

*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)

*I focus on God and His priorities for my life.*

**Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)

*I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.*

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)

*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.*

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**Stephanie Thomas** (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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