

November 26, 2023

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

————— Pastor Cameron Contrestano // Mark 8:22-38



PREPARE YOUR HEART & MIND

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you can recall, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word, and asking for His Spirit to guide you in your time.



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

27 Jesus 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?" 28 They told Him, saying, "John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets." 29 And He continued by questioning them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ." 30 And He warned 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 was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. 33 But 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." 34 And 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. 35 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? 37 For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 For 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."



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REFLECT/CONNECT

Use these questions for a time of individual reflection or to connect with others in meaningful conversation.

- In what ways were you encouraged by last week's study?

- What are three things you're most thankful for?

These questions are designed as a guide for individual study and to foster spiritual conversation with a group of people.

GROW IN THE WORD

01. A blind man was brought to Jesus, and those who brought him asked Jesus to heal the man. Jesus led the man out of the village and put his hands and saliva on the man's eyes. In two distinct stages, Jesus gradually healed the man's blindness (v. 22-26).

- Why do you think Jesus healed the man gradually rather than instantaneously as in other examples of healing?

- How is this healing related to the immediate context of this section of Mark? Consider the verses immediately before and after this passage.

- What is the symbolic and spiritual significance of Jesus healing the blind? See 1 Corinthians 13:12; Isaiah 35:1-6; Psalm 146:8.

02. Jesus asked the disciples about his identity. The crowds had several misconstrued ideas about who Jesus was, but Peter answered with true understanding, saying "You are the Christ". Jesus explained what would happen to him leading to a rebuke of the disciples, and taught the crowds what it meant to follow him (v. 27-38).

- Why do you think Peter rebuked Jesus, and how does his response exemplify the gap that often exists between human expectations and God's plans? Consider Isaiah 55:8-9.



GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Pray to begin your group time. Remind the group why you are meeting: to connect in meaningful relationships, to grow spiritually, and to engage in the life and work of the church together. Reflect on the values you want to share as a group (i.e. confidentiality, authenticity, grace).

CONNECT (30-40 MIN)

You can use these suggestions to foster connection and build community in your group. You can break your group into smaller parts if needed, pick a question to discuss, and let each member get to know one another.

- Spend a few minutes catching up with one another. Share highlights of the thanksgiving holiday.
- Ask the second question in the Connect section of the passage guide and give each person a chance to respond.

GROW (30-40 MIN)

Gather back as a big group if you broke up earlier and have one person pray over your time discussing God's word. As you discuss, don't worry if there are questions left unanswered or unresolved. Reach out to ministry leaders or pastors for any needed clarification.

- Select one of the "do you think" questions to discuss. Give everyone a chance to discuss and list out the different perspectives.
- Select one of the questions with cross-references to discuss. Read the cross-references together and discuss.

ENGAGE (30-40 MIN)

Reflect on the biblical truth God revealed to you this week and discuss a plan of action to apply what you have learned. Gather in smaller groups of 2-4 again. Discuss your plan of action and pray for one another.

- Discuss the last question of the passage guide. Encourage your group to apply the truth that stuck out most to them or any conviction they felt during individual study and/or group time.
- Close group time by sharing prayer requests and praying for one another.