



Encountering Jesus

MARK 7-8

Contents

Introduction

1. Jesus purifies

Mark 7:1-23

2. Jesus heals

Mark 7:24-37

3. Jesus satisfies

Mark 8:1-10

4. Jesus vs. unbelief

Mark 8:11-21

5. Jesus opens eyes

Mark 8:22-30

6. Jesus worth following

Mark 8:31-9:1

Introduction

The gospel of Mark can roughly be split into two halves: Mark 1:1 - 8:30 and then Mark 8:31-16:8. In the first half Mark seems to be answering the question 'who is Jesus' while in the second half he's answering the question what has he come to do and what are the implications'. This is of course an oversimplification but it helps us make some sense of the overall structure and flow of the book. In this series we're going to be following on from the series we began at the beginning of 2020 which took us up till the end of chapter 6. However, we're going to be moving a little more slowly and only covering 2 chapters (7:1-9:1) over 6 studies.

These chapters continue to deal with the question of who Jesus is and Mark shows us who he is by showing him interact with various individuals and groups of people. Much of this section also occurs in gentile territory instead of within Judea so there's the added layer of who is Jesus to gentiles.

There is an incredible diversity in this sections as Jesus deals with Jewish religious leaders, social outcasts, those with various diseases, the crowds who followed him around as well as his disciples so there's lots to discover in this short section.

You might notice that our last study covers the beginning of the second half of Mark in which we catch a glimpse of the implications for those who would follow him.

It's my hope and prayer that through this short series we'll see who Jesus is afresh and that we'd grow in our love for him and our commitment to live our entire lives for him.

1 Jesus purifies

Mark 7:1-23

Getting started

1. Can you think of a time when someone asked you to do something that would mean ignoring what someone else had told you to do? How did you decide which person to listen to?

Explore

Read Mark 7:1-13

2. What do Jesus' disciples do that the pharisees criticise them for?

3. What's the basis of the Pharisees criticism?

4. How does Jesus respond to them?

5. What example does Jesus give to expose the pharisees' hypocrisy?

What on earth is Corban?

Corban was a tradition where you could devote something to the Lord and once devoted to the Lord no one else could benefit from it. Therefore a son could devote something to the Lord and therefore claim that he couldn't give it to his parents to support them. Yet it didn't mean that he had to give it to the temple nor that he couldn't continue to use the property as he saw fit. So it became a bit of a legal loophole that people used to get out of loving and supporting their parents.

Read Mark 7:14-23

6. What does Jesus go on to explain to the crowds?

7. Why can't food and washing hands defile a person?

8. What is the nature of true defilement?

Apply

9. How do you work out whether your actions are based merely on human tradition or whether you're genuinely obeying God?

10. What defiles you?

11. Where do we go to find true cleansing from this defilement? What does that look like?

Pray

2 Jesus Heals

Mark 7:24-36

Getting started

1. When you ask someone to do something, what's the response you're always hoping to get?

Explore

Read Mark 7:24-37

2. What's the significance of the location to this account?

3. What makes you uncomfortable about this account? Why do you think it makes you uncomfortable?

4. Why do you think Jesus reacts to the women the way he does?

5. What's commendable about the way the women responds?

6. What can we learn about the right way to approach Jesus from this account?

Read Mark 7:31-36

7. Read Isa 35:6-7. With this passage in mind what is Mark trying to convince us of by recording this account?

8. From the previous account we know Jesus can heal someone just by speaking. Why do you think Jesus puts his fingers in the man's ears and touches his tongue?

9. What is Jesus trying to convey with his sigh and looking up to heaven?

Apply

10. What can we learn about Jesus and the right way to approach him from the Syrophoenician women?

11. What can you remind yourself of about Jesus from the second account?

Pray

3 Jesus Satisfies

Mark 8:1-10

Getting Started

1. Can you think of a time you felt completely satisfied, what caused it?

Explore

Read Mark 8:1-10

2. This is the second mass feeding in Mark's gospel. The first occurs in 6:30-44. What's similar and what's different between these two accounts?
3. Why do you think Mark has recorded this second account?
4. What is Mark trying to convince us about Jesus' character?
5. What is the significance of verse 8?

Apply

8. Do you ever feel like Jesus doesn't care about your needs and your situation? What can you remind yourself of from this passage?

9. Do you ever feel like the disciples not knowing what Jesus is doing in a situation? What can this passage help you see about him?

10. It seems a big emphasis of this passage is trying to demonstrate that Jesus is the source of ultimate satisfaction/fullness/contentment. Do you feel like he is for you? If not, how can you grow in your feeling of contentment in Christ?

Pray

4 Jesus vs. unbelief

Mark 8:11-21

Getting Started

1. Can you think of a time when someone had to work really hard to convince you of something? What finally tipped you over the edge?

Explore

Read Mark 8:11-13

2. What do you think the Pharisees are trying to do with their question?

3. What do you think it would've taken for the Pharisees to change their minds about Jesus? Why?

4. Why do you think Jesus sighs and answers them the way he does?

Read Mark 8:14-21

5. Given what's just happened what do you think Jesus is trying to warn his disciples of?

6. What's the reason behind the disciples' failure to grasp Jesus' warning?

7. How does Jesus help them try and understand his warning?

8. What do you think Mark is trying to convince us about Jesus from this section?

Apply

9. It seems the Pharisees weren't satisfied with what they'd already seen Jesus do. Have you ever found yourself wishing for more than what we've got in scripture to prove some aspect of God's character? What's dangerous about that?

10. What specific things that Jesus has already done do you need to remind yourself of to nurture and grow your faith in him?

Pray

5 Jesus opens eyes

Mark 8:22-30

Getting Started

1. Can you think of a time when something finally 'clicked' for you and you finally understood something that had previously been a bit cloudy?

Explore

Read Mark 8:22-26

2. What's the significance of how hands-on Jesus is with this healing?

3. What's different about this healing to many others? Why do you think that is?

In the gospels there are strong conceptual links between physically seeing and understanding. This little account functions as a bit of an acted illustration to highlight what's spiritually happening between the section prior to this and the sections that comes after.

4. How does the partial healing of the sight of the blind man point to the level of the disciples' understanding of Jesus up to this point?

5. Given the conclusion of the miracle what do you anticipate happening with the disciples' understanding in the next section?

6. In this little account what is Mark arguing is necessary for a full understanding of Jesus?

Read Mark 8:27-30

7. Why does Jesus ask who the people say he is? How are their answers inadequate?

8. How does the disciples' answer differ from the people's? What's its significance?

9. Why does Jesus warn them not to tell anyone?

Apply

10. Why is it important to understand who Jesus is rightly?

11. What do you need to remember about what's required to grasp who Jesus is? How does this change your attitude and your actions toward those who don't?

Pray

6 Jesus worth following

Mark 8:31-9:1

Getting Started

1. Have you ever been told something completely opposite to what you were expecting?

Explore

Read Mark 8:31-33

2. In the previous section the disciples have recognised that Jesus is the Messiah. What does Jesus say must happen for him to fulfill his role? Why?

3. Why does Peter react the way he does?

4. Why does Jesus rebuke him so strongly? (c.f. Matt 4:8-10)

Read Mark 8:34-9:1

5. What does Jesus say is involved in being his disciple? What does this mean?

6. How does Jesus show his listeners that it's worth it being his disciple?

7. What are some reasons given in the passage for not following Jesus? What are their consequences?

8. What does Jesus want his disciples to look forward to? What does that mean for us?

Apply

9. In what ways do you feel like Jesus can be a little underwhelming? What do you need to remind yourself in those times?

10. What might it look like for you personally to deny yourself and take up your cross?

11. What makes following Jesus worth it for you?

Pray

