

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. ***Enjoy discovering more about Him!***

"FROM BLURRY TO CLEAR" | MARK 8: 1-30 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

How often do you struggle with your vision? What's it like?

"Jesus Feeds 4000" Mark 8: 1-10

Jesus miraculously feeds 4000+ people out of compassion with only 7 loaves and few fish after being together for 3 days. **Why is it impactful to experience power with compassion? What are ways people experience Jesus' power compassionately today?**

"Pharisees Demand A Sign and Jesus Warns of Yeast of Pharisees and Herod" Mark 8: 11-21

Jesus leaves the Pharisees after they demand signs from heaven. He then warns disciples against being spiritually blind like others. **How can skepticism hinder spiritual growth? What are ways people focus on the temporary and miss deeper spiritual lessons?**

"Healing of the Blind Man" Mark 8: 22-26

In Bethsaida Jesus heals a blind man in stages. **Why might Jesus heal in stages instead of at once? How does God gradually clear up someone's spiritual vision?**

"Peter's Confession of the Messiah" Mark 8: 27-30

Jesus asks the disciples who do people say He is, and Peter declares Jesus to be Christ. **How would you describe Jesus? How does that belief impact how you live?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Jesus uses many miracles and lessons to gradually reveal He is Lord and Savior. It takes time for people to move out of spiritual blindness, but He is compassionate in this process. **Have you been guilty of demanding more proof from God when He's already shown His faithfulness? Have you been focusing on wrong things and missing what Jesus wants to show you? Ask God to forgive you, to give you clarity on His will for your life, and to live with Jesus as King.**

Jesus Journal: Write down at least one thing about Jesus that impressed you in the passage and message.

From Blurry to Clear:
seeing Jesus for who He really is

I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those **watching online**.
- B. **Slide1-3 Kelly: REAL Women's Event. Baptism.** Movie.
- C. **Slide4 Me: Prepare to go 1 day class - Pstr Larry** is hosting his 1 day class (only 2 1/2 hours). It's a great opportunity to come & learn about *our philosophy of missions*, **if** you are interested in joining one of *our cross-cultural trips*, **if** you want to know what we do on trips **and** what is required, **or if** have any other *mission related questions*, this class is for you! Please register on our app/web under events.
- D. **Slide5 Missions Prayer** (next Sun, May 25, 1:30-2:30pm). **Agape rm.**

II. Slide6,7_{auto} Intro:

- A. **Theme:** From Blurry to Clear: *Seeing Jesus for Who He Truly Is*.
 - 1. We'll watch the journey **from spiritual blindness towards clarity**—**both** in the **disciples and in us**.
- B. Mark 8:1-30 contains **5 interconnected stories** that reveal key aspects of **Jesus' identity and mission**. ***Slide8 See Map.**
- C. **How many of you have worn glasses? contacts? Had LASIKs/or eye surgery?**
 - 1. When I was in my 20s, my eyesight was pretty bad—everything was blurry. **Glasses** helped, but they were a hassle, always searching for them, remembering to bring them everywhere. **Then** I moved to **contacts**. They worked better, but what a hassle taking them out at night, putting them back in in the morning. **Eventually**, I was able to get **LASIK** surgery. Suddenly, for the first time in years, I could wake up and **see clearly**. It was incredible! **But** I was told after 5 years I'd prob need **reading glasses** for seeing up close (doc was spot on). Even now, I still need **my readers and also daily re-wetting drops** to keep things **clear**. Without them, my eyes get **dry**.

- a) Looking back—my journey with **my eyesight** is a lot like my spiritual journey in understanding **who Jesus is**.

D. Prayer:

III. Slide9a **JESUS FEEDS 4000 PEOPLE (1-10)** READ

A. DOUBTING THE BREAD OF LIFE

B. Slide9b Repeat? 5000 now 4000? Nope, 2 different events.

1. Feeding 5000 took place on the mid/**Western** shore of Galilee; [4000 on the North **Eastern** shore]. Also, 5000 men; [4000 people]
2. 5000 involved predominantly **Jews**; [4000 involved mostly **Gentiles**]
3. 5000 involved **5 loaves & 2 fish**; [4000 involved **7 loaves, a few small fish**.]
4. 5000 the people had been w/Him **1 day**; [4000 the people had **3 days**]
5. 5000 had **12 little baskets** of fragments left over; [4000 had **7 large**]
6. 5000 Jesus prayed **1 time**; [4000 Jesus prayed **2 times** over bread & fish] [Lastly, Jesus says it was 2 different events!!! (8:19,20)]

C. We see **Jesus'** miraculous provision showing once again, **His power and compassion** always meets and exceeds the demand.

1. They ate and were satisfied once again - Our souls, so to speak, are **elastic**. The more we eat (sp) the more they **expand**. The more they **expand**, the more we are **able to eat**. [stretchy pants/Nacho - stretchy souls!]

D. Application: When we feel spiritually empty or overwhelmed, Jesus not only **sees our need** but **is capable of meeting it**. (not that he's just our divine need-meet'r)

1. Paul Trip summarizes the math of Mark's gospel well:
Jesus' compassion + His power = everything we need.

E. Reflection Question: What areas of your life need the compassionate touch of Jesus today?

IV. Slide10a **PHARISEES DEMAND A SIGN (11-13)** READ

A. BLIND BY UNBELIEF

B. Story: The Pharisees demand a sign, revealing their hardness of heart.

1. Faith doesn't ask for signs.

C. **Slide10b Key Point:** Even in the presence of miracles, *their unbelief blinds them*.

1. Jesus did so many miracles—*would they believe if they saw 1 more?*

2. **What was Jesus reaction?** – He sighed deeply. (single strong word in Gk; found only here in the NT). The *willful unbelief* of the religious leaders *disturbed Christ to the depths of His spirit*.

3. **And He left them** - it was an act of judgment, refusing the Pharisees.

D. **Application:** Are we ever guilty of *demanding more proof from God* when He's already shown His faithfulness?

E. **Reflection Question:** How does skepticism hinder our spiritual growth? [skeptical vs. skepticism]

V. **Slide11a YEAST OF THE PHARISEES & HEROD (14-21) READ**

A. **MISSING THE SPIRITUAL TRUTHS**

B. **Story:** Jesus warns about the *yeast/leaven* of the Pharisees and Herod, *but* the disciples think He's talking about *bread*.

1. **Slide11b Boys—He fed 1000's of folks w/bread.** Why worry/argue over 1 loaf, when *the Bread of Life* is in your boat?

a) Their **minds** were dull; their **hearts** were hard; their **spiritual eyes** were blind; and their **spiritual ears** were deaf. - *And* so often are mine :(

b) Or it's been said, *It wasn't so much that they forgot the bread, as much as they missed the loaf.*

2. **The real lesson wasn't only about bread—but** about *leaven/yeast*. **Evil**, like *leaven*, is small & hidden, *but* it spreads quickly, & soon infects the whole.

3. **Watch out** - (Jesus only said when it was of the *utmost importance* - 5x's).

a) **Legalism** was the Pharisees teaching to watch for. **Worldliness** was Herod's teaching to watch for. **Liberalism** was the Sadducees teachings to watch for. *And* you and I would be wise to watch for these 3 today!

- C. (17) Here Jesus drills them with **8 rapid fire questions**. [up to this point the disciples asked the Rabbi question—**NOW** the Rabbi starts grilling/interrogating them]
1. I'm sure when He got done with the 8th question—all you could hear was the oars dragging in the water.
 2. Oh they knew the **answers**, but didn't understand the **meaning**.
- D. (21) **Do you not yet understand?** – I think in this last question it **wasn't a continuation of a rebuke**, but as *a searching appeal* to the disciples. Like, *Now, do you still not understand I am the Bread of Life for the whole world?*
- E. **Slide11c Application:** Sometimes we get caught up in *the physical* and miss *the deeper spiritual lesson*.
- F. **Reflection Question:** What bread are we focusing on when we should be listening for Jesus' deeper teaching?

VI. Slide12a **HEALING OF THE BLIND MAN (22-26)** *READ* key passage

A. GRADUAL SIGHT

- B. **Story:** Jesus heals the blind man in 2 stages—partial sight, then full clarity.
1. This **miracle**/story is **only found here**. **Actually also** the **miracle**/story of feeding the 4000 is only inserted here by Mark. *There must be a purpose. Yes*, sandwiched in-between *Jesus teaches on unbelief*.
 2. **Slide12b** And this is the **only miracle** that took place *in stages*. And the only time Jesus asked *how they're doing*. If the miracle worked—*Can you see?* (usually He commanded something).
 3. **Picture for a moment these two walking hand-in-hand**. One completely blind, and the other with *perfect spiritual vision*.
 - a) Maybe because Bethsaida was *under judgment*. So Jesus *took the man out of there* and told him *not to go back* (26). [he wasn't from there]
- C. **Slide12c Key Point:** Spiritual vision is often a process—sometimes God brings clarity gradually. > **9 verbs** were used in these 5 vs, for *vision*.
- D. **Application:** Be **patient** with **yourself** and **others** in the **process** of *spiritual growth*.

E. Reflection Question: Where is God gradually clearing up your spiritual vision?

VII.Slide13a **PETER'S CONFESSION OF THE MESSIAH (27-30)** READ 25mi. N.

A. CLEARER VISION

- B. **Story:** Jesus asks, *Who do you say I am?* (am I still just a fuzzy walking tree to you???) and Peter responds, *You are the Messiah.*
- C. **Key Point:** *Yet* despite his confession, Peter's understanding is still incomplete—proof that **seeing Jesus clearly**—takes time.
- D. **Application:** Confessing Jesus as Lord is *the beginning*, **not** the end of our spiritual journey.
- E. Slide13b Reflection Question: Who do u say Jesus is, & how is that impacting yur life?
- F. The confession of Jesus as the Messiah marks **the midpoint** of this gospel **and the turning point in Jesus ministry.**
- Slide13c **Book break:** Servant/Sacrifice. **OK** now you guys understand **the Who** ... now you need to understand **the What**/*the Son of man must suffer many things.*

VIII.GOING DEEPER: Moving from Blurry to Clear

- A. **Challenge:** Let's jump across the age to us, *How is your sp.sight? How is your sp.hearing? How is your heart?* - **Reflect on** any areas of spiritual blindness **or** partial understanding. **Pray for** clearer spiritual vision.
- B. *Praise God in another account it says, ***I can see clearly now the rain is gone. I can see all obstacles in my way. Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind. It's gonna be a bright (bright), bright (bright). Sun-shiny day.*** Johnny Nash—1972.
- C. Looking back, my journey with **my eyesight** is a lot like **my spiritual journey** in understanding **who Jesus is.** - Blurry beginnings. A little clearer. Clear vision. A little foggy again. Daily Maintenance. [process. progress. steps. journey]
- D. **Prayer:** Lord, we admit, we need a 2nd touch. **So many things are sill unclear.** Open our eyes to see You more clearly. Help us move from blurry faith **to** clear

conviction, as You gradually reveal more of Yourself to us. (Give us Ears to hear. Eyes to see. Hearts to understand. The Will to make right decisions/choices).

E. Keywords: sight, vision,