



What would it be like to see yourself the way others see you—to hear their quiet whispers and unspoken thoughts? No doubt for some people, it would be completely unnerving and for others deeply reassuring—perhaps, for most of us, a mixture of the two.

What would it be like to see yourself the way God sees you? It would be, at the same time, completely unnerving and deeply reassuring. The gospel reminds us that our sin is far greater than we ever dared to dream and that God's love for us in Christ is greater still.

What would it be like to see everything as God sees it? Nothing short of life transforming! If we saw things as he sees them, we would love what he loves, hate what he hates, value what he values, embrace him more intensely and follow him more completely.

The greatest obstacle we face in our walk with Christ is “Spiritual Blindness.”

THE GOOD NEWS IN THREE ACTS (An Overview of Mark)

Mark's gospel comes to us in three acts: In Act One (Mark 1:1-8:21), Jesus reveals himself to the crowds through a ministry of teaching and healing. In Act Two (Mark 8:22-10:52), Jesus prepares the disciples for his impending death and shows them what it means for them to take up their own cross and follow him. In Act Three (Mark 11:1-16:8) Jesus enters Jerusalem as her rightful King, is rejected by Israel, nailed to the cross, and vindicated by God when he rises on the third day.

ACT TWO: A TALE OF TWO BLIND MEN (Mark 8:22-10:52)

Act Two is bracketed by two healing stories. While Mark could have chosen many healing miracles, he deliberately draws our attention to two blind men (Mark 8:22-26 and Mark 10:46-52). In between these two instances of physical blindness, Mark highlights a number of instances of spiritual blindness.

1. How does spiritual blindness show up in each of the following encounters with Jesus:
 - a. Shortly after confessing Jesus is the Messiah, Peter pulls Jesus aside and rebukes him for talking about the cross. Jesus then warns his disciples that in order to follow him they must deny themselves and take up a cross of their own (8:27-38).

- b. Shortly after seeing Jesus transfigured, Peter suggests that he, James and John build three shelters and bask in the glory of the moment as long as possible. This time God rebukes Peter and tells him to listen to Jesus rather than making things up as he goes (Mark 9:2-13).
- c. The disciples assume that because they have been granted the power to heal and drive out unclean spirits, they can perform the miraculous at will. Jesus tells them they failed to drive out an unclean spirit because of their prayerlessness (9:14-29).
- d. James and John put a stop to a man who is casting out demons in Jesus' name, because he is not “one of us.” Jesus rebukes them for a cliquish attitude toward the things of God (9:38-41).
- e. The Pharisees try to entangle Jesus in a technical discussion of divorce. While they are hung up on minutia, Jesus points them to God's original vision for marriage (10:1-12).
- f. A wealthy young man comes to Jesus asking how he can inherit eternal life. Jesus challenges him to sell everything he has, give the proceeds to the poor, and to follow him. The young man walks away sad because he has great wealth (10:17-31).
- g. James and John ask Jesus to grant him the highest places of honor when Jesus comes into his kingdom, and Jesus tells them true greatness comes through serving (10:32-45)

2. Which of these hits closest to home? Why?

LESSONS LEARNED ON THE WAY (Mark 10:46-52)

1. What is unique about how this man approaches Jesus?
2. What is unique about how Jesus responds to Him?
3. How does this man model what it means to follow Jesus?
 - a. How is he different from Peter?
 - b. How is he different from the Pharisees?
 - c. How is he different from the Rich Young Ruler?
 - d. How is he different than James and John?
4. What are some lessons we can learn from this passage about the causes and cure for spiritual blindness?
5. Which is easier to cure—physical or spiritual blindness? Why?