

Mark 8_10-26 Final
The Gospel of Mark
Sunday Morning

7.29.18

INTRO

Some of us in this room “**struggle**” with asking for directions...the rest of you shake your heads at that struggle.

When we first moved to Phoenix I was 16 (**before the age of the cell phone**) and I wasn't used to everything looking the same. I was driving from Ahwatukee to ASU and tried to make my way back. I thought, “This looks familiar...” **everything looks familiar.**

I saw signs for the I-17 and Phoenix but I figured that we were close because of course I could handle it, I could get us there because of course I could navigate the way.

It wasn't until we were truly **desperate** and needy that we asked for directions. And I still remember the response from the gas station dude was **astonished** that we were so far away from where we needed to go.

You have stories like this too. And we **look back and laugh** at these things because finding ourselves in need of directions is often funny (**maybe**).

Church, you and I are **remarkably needy people**, desperate at many turns to have Jesus working in us and through us. But the problem is that we live in the **east valley** of Phoenix and chances are we **don't often feel our need**. We aren't too often aware of our need to be changed by him.

Some of you feel it this morning, you're aware of **how desperate** and needy you are, others of us are **pretty comfortable**.

Doing well, **distracted with life**, maybe trying to **muscle through** because in this world of **Instagram perfection** and **Facebook joys** it's hard to be the person who's wondering where the **keys** are again.

We can think, “**I got this.**” and we don't see that even today we are desperately dependent on **Jesus and needy** for him to work **in us and through us**.

Church, if you only get one thing this morning get this: **Jesus is eager to change the lives of anyone needy enough to ask.**

As we'll see **this morning**, Jesus **goes to the needy**, he **rejects the self-sufficient**. He shows compassion to those who come to him in desperation. It's okay to be needy for him, to **recognize** it, to accept it, to live in it.

He is eager to change the lives of needy people just like you and me.

We're going to see this in **three interactions** this morning that Jesus has with the **Pharisees**, the **disciples**, and a **blind man**. What we're going to see is that they are all **blind** in their own ways but the God who said, "Let there be light" gravitates to the neediest and weakest of the bunch.

So, let's read from Mark 8:10 this morning.

[10] And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

[11] The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. [12] And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." [13] And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

[14] Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. [15] And he cautioned them, saying, "Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." [16] And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread. [17] And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? [18] Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? [19] When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They said to him, "Twelve." [20] "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven." [21] And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

[22] And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. [23] And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" [24] And he looked up and said, "I see people, but they look like trees, walking." [25] Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. [26] And he sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."

If you'll remember, we left Jesus last week feeding the 4,000. And right after that in verse 10 he gets into a boat (**Decapolis**) and goes across the sea to the district of Dalmanutha (MAPS – picture first, then overhead of the cities).

THREE INTERACTIONS:

THE PHARISEES (10-13)

Now, it's here (west side of the Sea of Galilee) that **Pharisees come** to argue with him. It's never a great idea to **argue with Jesus** especially when you're trying to **test him**.

They are seeking a **sign** to prove that his miracles are actually from God and not demons. Jesus are you for us here, or for Satan?

And perhaps you could make the **argument** that this **seems reasonable**. If they are **honestly confused** and ready to **change their minds** about him and just asking to be sure that God is behind it, perhaps that might be okay.

But they aren't, they aren't asking him to prove something so that their hearts will be changed. They are **trying to catch him**, assuming he can't **prove anything**. They want to **discredit him in the eyes** of the people.

And Jesus, the God of the Exodus, has seen this before and hates it.

We see that he leaves them in verse 13. One **commentator says** that this marks the moment where **Jesus abandons the Pharisees**. And not just the Pharisees, but after our verses today he will **abandon his ministry in Galilee** only to return once more to **Capernaum** as a stop on his way to **Jerusalem to be crucified**.

The abandonment here isn't because the Pharisees were way off doctrinally. In fact, they likely lined up pretty close to Jesus in what they believed about God and the Scriptures. Their issue was that they were **blinded by their religiosity** and failed to even try to see Jesus for who he was.

They didn't see how **needy they actually were**. How desperate their **situation was**.

It's **dangerous** to become so fixated on the **particulars of religion** that we miss Jesus. They were blind but they thought they saw everything clearly. They **didn't see their need for Him**, they didn't ask him to help, they tried to discredit him at every turn.

What they **needed most was Him** and He was right there in their **midst and they missed** him.

We can be this way too, doing all the religious things **right but not recognizing** that what we need the **most is him** and he is right in front of us.

He is eager to help those in need if only they would have asked.

But they didn't and he abandons the Pharisees and gets into the boat and heads to Bethsaida. And here is our second interaction, it's with **the disciples**.

THE DISCIPLES (14-21)

Increasingly throughout Mark we've seen that Jesus has questioned why the disciples aren't understanding yet. And this comes to a **head here**.

While the encounter with the Pharisees is **still fresh in** everyone's minds Jesus wants to warn these guys about the danger of the **movement to discredit him**. He is concerned

about this because it will only get worse. And so he warns them and this warning is strong, , **“Watch out! Beware!”**

And he wants them to watch out for the **leaven of the Pharisees and Herod Antipas** who both tried **to minimize** him and **discredit** his ministry. **Leaven, like yeast**, helps to raise bread into a loaf by beginning small and growing and finding it's way into the whole loaf of bread.

And he says **watch out**, this is dangerous and able to **permeate everyone's** thinking, including their own.

Jesus is saying: *“Be alert, be on guard guys, your faith depends on it.”*

And the disciples hear Jesus say **leaven** and get distracted. They realize(14) that they have forgotten to bring bread with them. Someone was responsible for it and they forgot it.

Jesus: “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees...”

“Hmm, leaven...Andrew did you bring the bread?”

“No, John was supposed to grab it.”

“No, Peter was...”

“Well that's just great guys. What are we supposed to eat?”

Jesus is trying to **help them** understand something of **eternal significance** and they are **arguing about bread**.

This is **just like us**, how many times do we sit down to read our **Bibles**, or sit in church to **listen to the word**, or try to **pray** or **sing** and we are thinking about **lunch** or **fantasy football**, or an argument we had.

We can always find ourselves in the disciples.

They are discussing that they **have no bread**...right after Jesus **fed the 4,000** and the **5,000**.

They are **blind in their own way**. Distracted with life and circumstance. These guys are with Jesus, but they don't really see how much they needed him in the moment. They didn't really how blind they actually were.

He Jesus points this out by asking a series of 8 questions that function to show them their blindness:

1. Why are you discussing we have no bread?
2. Do you not yet understand?
3. Are your hearts hardened?
4. Are you blind?
5. Are you deaf?
6. Do you not remember what I did with the bread before?
7. How many baskets full of bread did we pick up?
8. Do you not yet understand?

They were blinded, distracted, unaware of how needy they really were.

And you think, "What does this have **to do with me**? I have to have a hard **conversation this afternoon**...I have **work tomorrow**...my marriage is falling apart this afternoon. **What does this have to do with me?**"

It have everything to do with you. Because the disciples are distracted with life just like you, they don't see their need as clearly as they should yet, but Jesus doesn't abandon them, he is **patient** with them. And he's **patient** with us.

He is eager to meet you in your **hard conversation**, in your **workplace**, in your **failing marriage** to radically change you and perhaps your circumstance...just come and ask. Don't be so distracted that you forget how needy your really are.

He is patient with the disciples all the way to the **cross and resurrection** and beyond. And we **live in that**. He'll get us **there eventually**, but it would save us a lot of **heartache** to just see how **needy we are now**.

He helps us to get to the point where we feel our **need and run to him**. He is eager to help those who are **needy enough to ask**. The disciples will get there, but the man we meet next is already in that spot and Jesus' **response to him is unforgettable**.

This is the last interaction, the blind man.

THE BLIND MAN (22-26)

The arrive at Bethsaida on the north coast and Jesus enters the town and a **group of people lead a man** to him who is blind and this man and his friends are radically different than the **Pharisees** and the **disciples**.

This group is begging Jesus to help them. They are **needy**, they are **desperate (and they know it)**, they have nowhere else to go. Perhaps they've heard of this man who works wonders. They aren't asking for **proof to test him**, they aren't **distracted by anything else**, they simply need Jesus to change this man's life.

They don't care about **semantics**, their **theology is probably messed** up at points, they just know that Jesus can do **something** to help them and they are begging him to do it.

This man is so **needy that he can't even find** Jesus by **himself**. He is being **shuffled along**, led **by the hand**, carried **perhaps in haste**...to get to him.

They are **begging** Jesus to make this **blind man see**...to **change** his life. To radically **transform everything** about his circumstances.

In some ways this **blind man sees the clearest** even before Jesus heals him because he see what Jesus can do for him, how he can work in him, how he can change his life.

And I don't want you to miss this, the **God of the Universe**, hears the cry for help and like a father with a child reaches out to **this helpless** and desperate man, **holds his hand** and **leads out to change** him. "I got this from here guys..."

This is what we long for isn't it? To have Jesus lead us like this, a personal touch from the Lord to the **desperate, needy, lowly**.

And he leads this man out of the city to **avoid a crowd** and he **spits on his eyes** and **lays his hand** on the man and asks if he sees anything.

And it seems like the **miracle** didn't work because the guy can see but **it's not right yet**. People look like trees.

And then he **lays his hands on the man's eyes** again and it works, the man can see clearly.

This is a **picture of compassion** and **grace**. This is who God is to us. When we come in **desperation** and **need** Jesus isn't slow to meet us and do something in us. He changes lives if only we'd come.

And we may ask, why the two healing? Listen, Mark wants us to understand that the first healing is where the disciples are. This man is a picture of all that has just been said in our text. He is first blind like the Pharisees, then he sees in part like the disciples in process, and finally after Jesus touches his eyes again the man opens them and he saw clearly.

Church, we are needy. Way more needy than we often feel. Run to Jesus and ask him to see how needy you really are. **He loves needy people**.

Christian, if you doubt that, let me remind you that he already **met your greatest** and most **desperate need on the cross**. Once dead in sin, he took our sin to the cross and in grace bought our lives for himself.

And as the disciples saw clearly at the **resurrection, so should we**. We don't come to Jesus now because he is dead, but because he is alive and is just as eager to meet all our **needs now as he was with** the blind man.

If you're not a Christian, it's not too late for you. Listen, we live in a cynical and distracting world where put your hope on this Jesus isn't popular. Many people roll their eyes today at this but you don't have to. Jesus wants to meet your greatest need, to change your life, to grab your hand and take all the wrongs you have done in life and wipe them out so you don't have to carry them with you any more.

Church, **Jesus is eager to change the lives of anyone needy enough to ask.**

Pray

BENEDICTION:

Psalm 73:23–26 (words of Asaph)

[23] Nevertheless, I am continually with you;
you hold my right hand.

[24] You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will receive me to glory.

[25] Whom have I in heaven but you?
And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.

[26] My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.