

Presentation 8

Mk 8.22-10.52

The 'Catechism' on Discipleship: Healing Blindness



Sunset on the Sea of Galilee

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1. *Preparation for Listening to Mk 6.7-8.26*

- In the last presentation, Jesus continues to show deeds of power and healing. This happens with the deepening blindness of the disciples and the growing conflict with religious officialdom.
- As we come to the centre of Mark's story, Jesus is more misunderstood and controversial; an unbridgeable rift has developed between himself and the religious officials; membership in his missionary household has been expanded to include the impure and foreign.

2. *Literary Design of Mk 6.7-8.26*

Healing of a Blind Person: *Household Mission* (8:22-26)

1. *Jesus Teaches about his Passion* (8:27-9:1)

- Misunderstanding by Peter
- *Instruction about Household Discipleship*

The Transfiguration (9:2-13)

Healing of a Boy (9:14-29)

2. *Jesus Teaches about his Passion* (9:30-37)

- Misunderstanding of Teaching by Disciples
- *Instruction about Household Discipleship*

Implications for Household (9:38-10:31)

3. *Jesus Teaches about his Passion* (10:32-45)

- Misunderstanding of Teaching by Disciples
- *Instruction about Household Discipleship*

Healing of Blind Bartimaeus: ***Household Instruction*** (10:46-52)



Looking from the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee towards the north-west, towards the area of Capernaum, with the Golan Heights in the background.

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Summary of Mk 8.22-10.52

Podcast Section Mk 8.22-9.29

- *Mk 8.22-26*: The healing of one who is blind: echo of an issue to confront the disciples in this section of Mark's Gospel.
- *Mk 8.27-9.1*: Jesus poses the key question in the Gospel: 'Who do you say that I am?' Peter response is partly correct, but will need further correction, as we shall see. Jesus presents his first teaching about what awaits him Jerusalem, about the suffering that awaits, his death and resurrection Peter 'rebukes' Jesus for this. Jesus 'rebukes' Peter. The key issue concerns discipleship: following Jesus in suffering and letting go of one's life and security. Theme is repeated in 9.1.
- *Mk 9.2-13*: Jesus is transfigured on the mountain in the presence of the leaders of the Twelve with the appearance of Moses and Elijah—representatives of the Torah and prophetic tradition. Jesus is in communion with the Old Testament tradition and his identity is reaffirmed by God: 'This is my beloved son; listen to him' (9.7), and echo of Jesus' baptismal experience. And what does it mean, to rise from the dead (9.10)? The listener will eventually find out in the Gospel's final story.
- *Mk 9.14-29*: An experience of demonic possession is released through prayer (v. 28).

Podcast Section Mk 9.30-10.31

- *Mk 9.30-31*: Jesus' second teaching about forthcoming passion and impending death. The disciples argue about who is the greatest? The child/little one—the social symbol of anyone who is a nobody, expendable, or a social or religious reject. The household of disciples must embrace such people. The divorced, victims of a socially ordained system of rejection, are also part of this household. Finally, Jesus teaches about wealth. Material possession are no guarantee of divine blessings—a teaching that shocks the disciples who thought differently. Jesus reaffirms the life that will emerge from the disciples' commitment to his household.



Looking east from the top of the traditional Mt of Transfiguration on to the plain of Megiddo.

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Podcast Section Mk 10.32-52

- *Mk 10.32-45*: Jesus third and final prediction of his forthcoming passion, death and resurrection that await him in Jerusalem, graphically described. The disciples are frightened. The response of misunderstanding by James and John, the first called by Jesus as disciples, follows. They request power in Jesus' kingdom. The response from the other ten disciples indicates a spirit of jealousy over status and prestige. Jesus' teaching reminds them of the attitude of service and humility. These are the essential qualities of discipleship and leadership in service for others. This has implications for Mark's household in the 70s.
- *Mk 10.46-52*: Healing of the blind Bartimaeus, seeking to become (or return to being) a follower of Jesus on 'the way'. Bartimaeus is considered possessed with an evil spirit. Those who surround him have the power to keep him 'on the side of the way' or release him. Jesus asks them to call Bartimaeus, who asks to 'see *again*'. Perhaps he is a representative (or an actual historical character) of those betrayers of the household of Jesus' disciples in Rome? The conversion happens in the community of the disciples. It has the power to rehabilitate fallen disciples.



Remnants of the Temple of Pan, Caesarea Philippi.
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An Overview Summary of Mk 8.26-10.52

- In this section Jesus speaks openly about his imminent suffering and death, which is rejected by the disciples: Peter argues with him about his dying (Mk 8:32-33); the Twelve contest who is the greatest (Mk 9:33-37); they rail against James and John who seek leadership privilege in Jesus' household (Mk 10:35-45).
- There is rivalry among the disciples. They have moved far from Jesus' original vision. This has implications for Mark's Greco-Roman household and is evident by the frequency of reference to the "house" (9:28, 33; 10:10, 29, 30) as the preferred place in which Jesus instructs his disciples.
- In Mk 10:29-45, Jesus identifies the primary characteristics of Mark's Greco-Roman household gathering: its welcome of the 'child' or 'little ones' (including those who have been victimised by divorce).
- Finally, the healing of Bartimaeus sight (Mk 10.46-52) restores him to the path of discipleship through the conversion of those who have kept him on the 'side of the way.' They have the power to welcome back those who have wronged the Gospel community.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION & CONVERSATION

- When you think of our church and the world in which we live, where do we need light? What do we need to ‘see’ deeply? What insights or truths do we need to reclaim?
- What do you think helps people come to a deeper insight into what’s going on around and within them?



The southern outline from the Sea of Galilee into the Jordan River, flowing south towards the Dead Sea.

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IN PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT PRESENTATION

- For the next presentation, read Mk 11.1-13.37.

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