

A Four-Fold Focus

“Case For Christ” Series, (A Study of Mark’s Gospel, part 26)
Insights from Mark 7:31-36 and Mark 8:1-10
May 15th, 2022, Pastor Bob Johnson, GPC

Insights from Mark 7:31-36

(Mark 5:19-20)

Focus more on ...

- a **R**_____ than a **R**_____
(Isaiah 42:16)
- **S**_____ and **S**_____
(Colossians 4:6)

Insights from Mark 8:1-10

Focus more on ...

- **W**_____ than **W**_____
(Mark 8:4-6, 1 Thess. 5:16-19, 2 Chronicles 20:12)
- **Being a S**_____ **not a S**_____
(2 Corinthians 5:17-20, Mark 6:43, Ecclesiastes 11:6)

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This Week's Discussion Guide

Welcome to our third week of our nine week study and discussion based on our current Sunday series at GPC called, "Case For Christ".

In this series, we are slowly unpacking the Gospel of Mark. Each week we will read and reflect on a passage from Mark's gospel and discuss ways we can apply what we reflect on to our daily lives.

It is our prayer at GPC for our Sundays and small groups to provide the encouragement we all need to support each other as we desire to grow closer to God and build friendships as part of our vision at GPC to raise up committed Christ followers in a healthy church community.

Getting Started:

Each week, we typically start out with a few lighter questions to get us warmed up :).

In Mark 7:31-37, Jesus healed a guy who couldn't hear and had difficulty speaking.

To get us started, what is one of the loudest experiences you can remember? Would you want to attend it or do it again? And ... we all know the important of clear communication.

What are some lessons you have learned that have helped you be a better communicator?

In Mark 8:1-10, we heard another story about Jesus feeding thousands of people in a place where food was scarce. Though the disciples had recently witnessed Jesus feeding the 5,000 (Mark 6), they still asked him where anyone could get enough bread to feed the crowd.

What are some reasons you can think of for why the disciples asked this question in Mark 8:4, after everything they had already seen Jesus do?

Can you think of any times in your life when you've had a similar response to something Jesus was asking you to do?

One last 'getting started question' :) ... the last of the four 'focus statements' from Sunday had to do with being a generous seed sower.

Speaking of sowing seeds, what is something you have grown or tried to grow just for fun? If it grew or didn't grow, what did you learn from the experience?

Reviewing and Reflecting on the Passage:

Let's read the two key passages from last Sunday. (Mark 7:31-36 and Mark 8:1-10)

After reading these passages and looking back on our notes from Sunday, was there a particular thought, verse or comment that caught your attention, challenged you or raised a question for you? What are some takeaways from these stories in regards to our faith?

Digging Deeper:

1. Last Sunday we were reminded of the importance of not turning our relationship with God into a recipe. The following passages paint a picture of the kind of person Jesus is and what he promises to provide for all those who seek him. Let's discuss what stands out to us from each passage and how it relates to what it means to seek Him.

Matthew 11:28-30, John 11:25-26, John 14:1-4, John 14:15-27

2. If we focus on a 'recipe from God' rather than a developing 'relationship with God', we will be tempted to assume God will bless and respond to our requests just like we see God providing and responding to others who are seeking Him.

God is gracious to all but doesn't direct or provide for all the same way.

Let's read two passages that both reveal a tendency (back then and today) to focus on what God should do for us based on what He does for others.

In John 21, right after Jesus recommissions Peter for ministry and to 'feed His sheep', Jesus shares how Peter will not live as long as some others. In this passage, he describes how Peter will die sooner than he would have wanted to. Let's read John 21:18-23.

What insights stand out from Peter's response to Jesus and Jesus' response to Peter?

How can we focus less on the path God has for others and more on being faithful to our path?

Let's also read Matthew 20:1-16. What insights stand out from the expectations, questions and frustrations from those who worked the entire day?

What are the truths Jesus is trying to share regarding the Kingdom of God?

3. Nehemiah was a person in the O.T. who sought God and had a relationship with Him that had quality and depth. Let's read Nehemiah 1:1-11 and discuss what insights we see from Nehemiah's relationship and communication with God.

From the passage, is there anything you would want to add, change or that you are glad you are putting into action in how you are seeking God?

Wrapping Up:

What is an application from what we read or discussed together that you would like to practice in the coming days? Is there anything that came up from this week's sermon or discussion that you would like prayer for? Is there anything else on your heart that you would like to express prayer for?