

# **DISCUSSION NOTES**

**MARCH 19, 2017**

Pray and ask God to teach you, help you trust Him more deeply, & strengthen you to live what you learn.

## **GETTING STARTED**

1. Does anyone in the group wear glasses or contacts? If so, what is it like to see without them—how big of a difference do they make? Do you remember what it was like the first time you tried them on?

## **DIGGING IN**

2. Read Mark 7:31-37 and Mark 8:22-26. Make 5-7 quick observations about each passage. How are they similar? How are they different? What actions take place? What is the tone of the interaction? What is the mood at the end?
3. What is surprising about the way Jesus heals the deaf and mute man and heals the blind man? What do we learn about Jesus' character from these two interactions?
4. Read Mark 8:11-13. What do the Pharisees ask Jesus to do? Why do you think that Jesus refuses their request? Do you think they were sincerely seeking the truth about Jesus?
5. Read Mark 8:14-21. What warning does Jesus give his disciples? How is this warning connected to his rejection of the Pharisees? What do you think is the common root of their problem?
6. In Mark 8:16-21, what is Jesus' criticism of his disciples? Are any of the words which Jesus uses easily connected to the healing of the deaf man and the blind man?
7. Many Bible scholars see the sections in Mark 7:31-8:26 as a united, larger teaching unit. Why do you think Mark placed his teaching about the spiritual obtuseness of the Pharisees and the disciples in between the two episodes of healing? What is the larger lesson Mark wants us to understand?

## **LIVING IT OUT**

8. Does it seem offensive to say that we are spiritually blind and deaf, we cannot help ourselves, and we all need the gracious intervention of God? Why or why not?
9. Is it hard for you to surrender control of your life to Christ, to allow him to lead you, and to ask him to heal you? How can we be encouraged by the compassion that Jesus shows to the two men that he heals in these passages?
10. What might we learn from the fact that the disciples were around Jesus so frequently yet still seemed to struggle with doubt and unbelief? Can you relate to their experience? Why or why not?
11. What things about Jesus cause you to be "astonished beyond measure, saying, 'He has done all things well'" (Mark 7:37)? To say it another way, what is one thing you have personally experienced in Jesus that gives you joy and causes you to worship him? If you cannot think of anything, why do you think that is the case?
12. If God's grace is capable of opening the blind eyes and deaf ears of anyone at all, how boldly should we be inviting others to come and experience the grace of Jesus? Who do you know that needs to see and hear Jesus?

## TIME OF PRAYER

Would you spend some time praying for our church in light of all we've talked about? Here is a list of suggested items for your time in prayer. Save this list to pray through as a group, as a family, as friends, or individually. Thanks so much for partnering with us in praying for our church and our mission.

- Pray that we would worship Jesus, our Servant-King, in increasing measure all our lives.
- Pray that we would trust Jesus to provide for all our needs in every circumstance.
- Pray that we would serve and give so that others may live.
- Pray that we would be servant-hearted people.
- Pray that all of our ministry serve teams opportunities would be filled.
- Pray that would we see an inflow of new people to serve and new servant-leaders to direct ministries.
- Pray that we would be generous-hearted people.
- Pray that God would provide for all our needs and further his mission through our generosity.
- Pray for those who need jobs and those who face debts or financial hardships.
- Pray for an inflow of new attenders to become giving partners who support our ministry.
- Pray for our church to have a heart for our community and a passion to reach the lost.
- Pray for our city and all those that need to be reached with the gospel to come to faith in Jesus.
- Pray that we would love our neighbors, befriend them, seek their good, share Jesus with them, and invite them to be a part of our church family.
- Pray "by name" for those that you personally feel called to reach. Pray specifically for the people whose names you wrote on the "So That Others May Live" wall at our church gathering.
- Pray for the things that God brings to your heart and mind related to Christ's mission through Redemption Church and/or in our city.
- Pray for the nations, for people who have no one to tell them about Jesus, for those who have no Bible and no pastor and no gospel witness. Ask God to send people to unreached peoples.
- Pray for our church plants:
  - Claude Atcho, Redeemer Church, Boston
  - Justin Burkholder, Iglesia Reforma, Guatemala City
  - Watson Jones, Restoration Church, Philadelphia
  - Steven Lee, Redeemer City Church, Washington DC
  - Bryan Padgett, Redeemer Church, Stillwater, OK
- Pray for our pastors and ministry leaders and they serve our family and equip us for ministry.
- Ask God for help in any area where you feel weak, confused, tired, or bored and need to be renewed by God so that you can be used in his mission.