



**Growth Group Questions**  
**February 22, 2026**  
**“Shadowlands”**

**CONTEXT**

A group of people bring a blind man to Jesus for healing, yet Jesus leads the blind man away from the crowd because oftentimes in the gospel of Mark the “crowd” gets in the way of the work Jesus is seeking to do. The issue of “sight” is brought up numerous times in the first section of this text. The blind man being able to “see” is a part of this miracle, but it is also true of the disciples’ faith. Though the disciples have been traveling with Jesus, they have yet to fully “see” and understand who Jesus is.



*Shadows From the Past* by Diane Dammeyer  
Brahmaputra River, India Feb. 15, 2017

This healing happens in stages. This is the only time in the gospels that a miracle occurs in stages. The man can see, but it’s blurry. He sees people that look like trees walking around. Jesus touches the man again and this time he can see fully.

Jesus then asks two questions. He wonders who people say that he is, and he wonders who the disciples think that he is. Some of the people said he was Elijah who in the afterlife was believed to oversee the deeds of mortals and to comfort the needy and faithful. It was believed he would return one day because he had not died but had been taken up to heaven. Others said Jesus was the reincarnation of John the Baptist. Others said a prophet like Moses had talked about in Deuteronomy 18.

Peter answers for the disciples. Jesus is the Messiah. Peter gets the answer right, but even Peter did not see clearly. He did not understand what the Messiah was going to have to do. Mark is signaling to the reader the reality that even the disciples were “blind” to the true mission of Jesus. Just like the blind man’s faith was restored in stages, their faith and understanding would come in stages.

Jesus rebukes Peter not because Peter is evil but because his words threaten to pull Jesus away from his mission. The Messiah must face rejection and suffering and death. That is the only way for salvation to come for humanity.



## SCRIPTURE

### **Mark 8:22-33**

<sup>22</sup> They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. <sup>23</sup> He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?"<sup>24</sup> He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." <sup>25</sup> Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. <sup>26</sup> Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't even go into<sup>[a]</sup> the village."

<sup>27</sup> Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" <sup>28</sup> They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." <sup>29</sup> "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah." <sup>30</sup> Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

<sup>31</sup> He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup> But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

### **Matthew 13:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. <sup>17</sup> For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

### **John 3:1-3**

<sup>1</sup> Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him." <sup>3</sup> Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.<sup>[a]</sup>"

### **John 7:50-52**

<sup>50</sup> Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, <sup>51</sup> "Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?" <sup>52</sup> They replied, "Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee."

### **John 19:38-42**

<sup>38</sup> Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. <sup>39</sup> He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>40</sup> Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. <sup>41</sup> At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. <sup>42</sup> Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.



## **1 Corinthians 13:12**

<sup>12</sup>For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. The title of this week's sermon is "Shadowlands," and Pastor Paul began his sermon by saying that sometimes we feel like we are living in the shadows. What does that mean to you?
2. Pastor Paul spoke on Sunday about our "faith journey." If asked, how would you explain this metaphor?
3. Why is it helpful to think about the ways in which our faith develops as a "journey."
4. Pastor Paul said that just as the healing of the blind man in Mark 8:22-33 happened in stages, our faith and understanding of God happens in stages. How would you describe the stages of your own faith journey?
5. Carefully reread 1 Corinthians 13:12. Now, paraphrase this verse in your own words.
6. How does your understanding of 1 Corinthians 13:12 help you deal with present-day shadows or difficulties in your life?
7. What spiritual disciplines (prayer, Scripture reading, meditation, etc.) have helped you to see things with greater clarity as you progress on your faith journey?
8. What lessons did you learn from Mark 8:22-33?

### **PASTOR PAUL'S SERMON QUESTIONS**

1. Who would you say Jesus is?
2. Do you need to ask Jesus to help you see something more clearly?

