

### ***Recap of 8/27/23 message by Pastor Chris (Mark 8:14-31):***

- Disciples need to watch out for influences that harm their faith. Jesus and His disciples gather in a boat to cross the sea of Galilee again. This time after yet another miracle where Jesus feeds 4000 people with only 7 loafs of bread and is met by the Pharisees demanding to see a sign from heaven. Jesus tells His disciples to watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees. Yeast generally is used in a negative connotation throughout scripture often as a metaphor for evil human inclinations. In Matthew 13 Jesus uses yeast as a parable for the kingdom of Heaven, “which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened.” Here the yeast shows how it spreads from something so small to penetrate the whole. In the context of the Pharisees and their continual looking for a sign the yeast here refers to a “recalcitrant denial of the truth and a hardened unbelief in Jesus, which is reflected in the Pharisees’ response to Him throughout the gospel of Mark to this point.” This denial of truth and unbelief can invade, spread, and permeate people, and this is what Jesus is warning against. There are many influences today that we must watch for that can be seemingly small but move us toward unbelief and spread. Every believer must take a spiritual inventory regularly and consider the ways in which they are being influenced away from Jesus vs closer to Him. Especially concerning are the influences that give you a false sense of spirituality or inaccurate teaching that may be subtle but leads one toward heretical beliefs that can destroy a person’s faith. We must always evaluate what we are taught according to the scriptures, through prayer and living in biblical community.
- Spiritual sight may come gradually and with difficulty. Mark moves quickly from the staccato of questions from Jesus to another miracle. This time Jesus heals the sight of a blindman, but it is a partial healing at first that needs a second act from Jesus. This ends up serving as a paradigm for the disciples’ journey. This passage serves as a hinge point in the book of Mark. Up until this point the question that Mark is getting the reader to ask is “who is this man?” The answer comes when Peter answers “You are the Christ” (Mark 8:29). The disciples demonstrate that they are starting to understand, they are beginning to see Jesus, but not yet quite clearly. The next section Mark causes us to ask the question, “what does it mean that Jesus is the Christ?” The disciples are beginning to see, but as Jesus begins to explain what it means that He is the Messiah, that He must suffer, sacrifice, and die, the disciples demonstrate their partial sight when they try to stop Him.
- Just as the disciples continually grow in faith and understanding, so must we. We must never feel as though we’ve arrived. There is always more to learn. Let this quote encourage us to watch out for influences that move us further from Jesus including the influence of a stagnant, indifferent spiritual life: “People do not drift toward holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, and obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord. We drift toward compromise and call it tolerance; we drift toward disobedience and call it freedom; we drift toward superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated” -DA Carson, For the Love of God Volume II