

The Greatness of humility'

The pivotal point in Mark's gospel is when Jesus asked his disciples the question, "*Who do you say that I am?*". Peter responded to this question by declaring that Jesus is God's Messiah or Christ. Ironically, from this point Mark's moves away from presenting Jesus as a powerful wonder worker and begins to present him as a humble servant who must suffer greatly. Based on Jesus' rebuke to Peter immediately following this great confession, it's obvious that Peter and the other disciples were struggling to make this radical shift concerning Jesus (8:27 – 32).

Immediately before these critical dialogues between Jesus and his disciples, Mark records an incident in which Jesus healed a blind man in two stages. After Jesus touched the blind man's eyes the first time he was able to see, but not clearly. But after Jesus' second touch the man saw clearly (8:22 – 26). It's interesting that some of the stories that occur after Peter's proclamation about Jesus make it clear that the disciples had come to see Jesus as 'The Christ'. But based on their constant bickering about which of them was the greatest, they obviously hadn't *clearly* understood what Christ had come to do.

1. Read Mark 9:33 – 37 and 10:13 - 16. What truth is Jesus trying to convey about God's kingdom through these little children?
2. Read Mark 12:41 – 44. What was it that the poor widow had in abundance that the rich lacked? (Also see Mark 10:17 – 31)
3. In Mark 10:35 - 40 brothers James and John came to Jesus with the request that he place them at the right and left of his throne in God's Kingdom. Seeing the jealous indignation that this request provoked among the disciples, Jesus asked James and John if they could endure Christ's kingly coronation ceremony. For a chilling insight into Christ's cryptic question, compare Mark 10:35 - 40 with 15:16 – 28. What connections do you see between these two passages?
4. In Mark 8:34 & 10:45 Jesus said, "*Those who would come after me must take up their crosses and follow me... For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*" In light of these teachings of Jesus, what does it mean to walk humbly with God; and how can we do so in practical ways (See Micah 6:8).