



Scotts Hill Baptist Church

JESUS EDITION - TOUGH QUESTIONS • DO YOU NOT YET UNDERSTAND? •

MARK 8:11-26 • 7/13/2025

MAIN POINT

We can all struggle with spiritual blindness but the story of the Pharisees, the disciples, and the blind man gives us hope that if Jesus has started to heal our blindness, He will certainly finish his work.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When you take a long road trip, what things do you take to help with the journey? What type of snacks do you like to have on hand for a long ride?

What things do you keep in the car for a road trip that might seem unique or unusual to others?

Many of us simply stop and buy snacks as we get hungry during a trip. Others will pack an entire pantry for every potential mood or craving! But we all share this in common: we will get hungry on a long trip, and we will eat! Taking food on trips is nothing new. In Mark 8, the disciples realized they forgot food, but Jesus directed them to consider a greater need—and a greater solution.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 8:11-12.

What do the Pharisees' questions reveal about the motivations of their hearts toward Jesus?

How does Jesus' refusal to give them a sign speak to the necessity of faith and sight?

At first glance, this seems like an innocent request. There are lots of examples of authenticating signs in Scripture. When Moses went before Pharaoh, God gave him signs like his staff turning into a snake. "This is so that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has appeared to you," God said (Exodus 4:5).

Here, though, Jesus reacts very strongly to their request. He sighs, tells them that they won't be getting any authenticating signs, and then takes off and leaves them. This is because Jesus knows the truth about what is in their hearts and what they were actually seeking.

How can we discern between genuine seeking of God and a desire for miraculous signs to prove His existence?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 8:13-21.

How did the disciples misunderstand Jesus' warning? Why should it comfort us that even the disciples missed the point sometimes?

When have you ever misunderstood what the Bible said about a certain topic or idea?

The disciples were concerned about a lack of physical bread, but Jesus wanted them to be concerned about the "spiritual bread" that came from the religious leaders and Herod. Yeast or leaven in the New Testament symbolized evil, and in this context, the evil of both the Pharisees and Herod was the lack of faith and evil or unbelief connected to Jesus' miracles. The disciples, then, were not to feed on the same evil, unbelief, and lack of eyes to see with faith that characterized others.

If Jesus had been speaking directly to us, what negative example might He have warned us from following?

Why couldn't the disciples understand what Jesus said?

What would have enabled the disciples to understand Jesus better?

Jesus rebuked the disciples for missing the point. It was not their conversation that Jesus rebuked, but their attitude with which they discussed the situation. Their hearts were still not open to receive Jesus' teaching. Jesus wanted them to see the danger of the wrong kind of spiritual bread, but the disciples were "thick-headed," confusing His words about spiritual food with physical food.

How can you be more sensitive to God's will for your life? When have you missed something that was glaringly obvious to you later?

Why did Jesus remind the disciples about the miracles of feeding the crowds?

How did Jesus try to get through to His disciples? How do you find that Jesus tries to get through to you?

Jesus had miraculously fed large crowds twice. Now His disciples needed bread, but they were in danger of the leaven of the Pharisees—the evil of unbelief—because they didn't look to Him to provide as He had provided for others. The disciples had no need to be concerned about physical or spiritual food. They could look to Jesus to provide both.

What does it mean to have eyes but not see or ears but not hear?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 8:22-26.

What is significant about the gradual healing process?

What does this healing teach us about spiritual blindness and the process of spiritual growth?

Hallelujah that the scripture doesn't end in verse 21. Instead we see Jesus demonstrates that the blind can gain their sight. Not just physically but spiritually as well! The passage ends with a picture of someone who is blind seeing. It may be slow, and it may come in stages, but some who are blind now will one day see clearly.

How can we help others who are struggling with spiritual blindness or doubt?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What can you do to recognize and then steer clear of the evil and unbelief in your workplace, community, or home life?

What is one step you can take to soften your heart toward God and trust Him this week?

How can we help each other see the truth of Jesus that is right in front of us?

PRAYER

Thank God for all the ways He has provided—and continues to provide—for you. Ask God to make us aware of the moments when we're drifting toward unbelief. Express your desire to trust Him fully.

COMMENTARY

| MARK 8:11-26

8:11-12. In the mind of the Pharisees, this was not a request for another miracle of the type Jesus had already done. They asked for a dramatic sign from the sky, something similar to Elijah's fire from heaven (1 Kings 18:38). This attack and the unbelief it showed distressed Jesus. He was amazed at the unbelief and audacity of these religious leaders. This demand for a "special" sign was an extreme example of the arrogance and pride of the Pharisees towards Jesus.

Jesus refused because His miracles are not done with the intention of convincing hardened unbelievers. Instead, Jesus did miracles to show the power of God in the context of mercy. Those who believe that if people see enough signs they will come to faith presume to know more than Jesus did. He condemned the generation who sought a sign.

8:14. In their hurry to get away, the disciples forgot to bring food. One loaf of bread would not be enough to feed all thirteen of them.

8:15. Yeast is generally spoken of in the Bible in a negative way. When used in cooking, a small amount of yeast permeates the dough. Once in the dough, it cannot be removed. Jesus was warning the disciples not to adopt the teachings of the Pharisees or their stubborn hard-heartedness. Without this warning from Jesus, the disciples might have looked up to the Pharisees as very spiritual and pious role models. Perhaps Jesus also

wanted to tell them not to accept the prejudiced attitudes of the Pharisees, since they considered themselves superior to unclean sinners and Gentiles.

8:16. The disciples must have felt guilty about leaving their food behind. As soon as Jesus mentioned “leaven,” they assumed he was blaming them for their lack of bread.

8:17-18. For Jesus, however, the physical bread was irrelevant. He then asked the disciples a series of questions meant to stir their understanding. When Jesus asked them if their hearts were hard, he was not implying they were as rebellious and stubborn as the Pharisees. The Pharisees were willfully rebellious, while the disciples were simply slow to understand.

8:19-20. Jesus reminded the disciples of the two miraculous feedings of the crowds. He questioned them about what happened, and they responded correctly.

8:21. Jesus wanted his disciples to draw a conclusion from the feedings. How could they worry about not having enough to eat when they had witnessed so many miraculous events? If Jesus can feed over nine thousand people, they must have thought, surely he can supply our basic needs.

8:22-26. This is the only “gradual” or “progressive” healing described in the ministry of Jesus. It is another example of the variety of healing methods Jesus used. Jesus probably choose this method at this time as an illustration to His disciples, showing them then that their spiritual blindness — shown in the previous passage — will be healed, but only gradually.