



Further Reflection: How can we be faithful disciples today?

Paula Gooder writes: "How are we meant to be faithful disciples at times like this? In exactly the same way as people have always done – we try and fail and try again. And as we try and try again we learn more about ourselves, and, crucially, more about the one we follow. One of the most important features of Mark's gospel is that Jesus, himself, doesn't appear to criticise the disciples. No matter how much they get it wrong, they are still disciples. The key is not, apparently, being perfect disciples or even good disciples – the key thing is carrying on so that generations to come can hear more of the good news of Jesus Christ, son of God. (*study guide page 21)

Prayer of Thanks for the Bible

Thank you for your mercy and grace which is so clear in the life of your son, Jesus. Thank you that I can read your story today. **Amen**

Prayers of Intercession

Almighty Father, on this Father's Day I give thanks for all those who seek to parent with your love and compassion. Thank you for those who have shown me care throughout my life and for those you have given me to care for. Thank you for all who care for others today whether in family, work or volunteering. **Amen**

I pray for those who find themselves excluded due to visual impairment. I pray for places where there is limited access to medical support, where cataract procedures could transform lives, or where prescription spectacles would enable people to work.

Open my eyes to your priorities. Where do I need to see differently? How can I reflect your love to others?

As I pause, I listen for your still small voice in me.

Our Father, who art in heaven...

Closing Hymn: StF 327 **Jesus is King and I will extol him**

*Acknowledgements: Inspiration for this service was taken from the Bible Month study guide * <https://www.preachweb.org/biblemonth> .*

Worship at Home Darlington District

Bible Month week 3 – On the Way

Hymn: StF 333 **Majesty, worship his majesty; unto Jesus be glory, honour and praise.**

He asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Messiah.' Mark 8: 29

We join together in prayer

Jesus you are the Messiah, the Lamb of God, the Light of the World. You came to earth fully God and fully man. I lift my voice to praise you, to honour your name and give you the glory

In your light I am aware of my own weaknesses and failings. I confess the things I have done which did not give you glory, and the things not done which have failed to show your compassion. **Forgive and cleanse me.**

Jesus came to reconcile us to the Father. In God's grace we are forgiven. ([Ephesians 1: 7](#))

Thank you God for your forgiveness and grace. **Amen**

We read or sing the words of StF 29 as we prepare to read the gospel passages today:

**Jesus lead us to the Father
by your Spirit, help us to draw near**

Reading: [Mark 8: 21 – 10: 52](#)

Reflection

We have reached a turning point in Mark's account of the ministry of Jesus. Caesarea Philippi (8: 27) is the most northern point visited by Jesus and from there he moves deliberately towards Jerusalem.

Open our eyes Lord:

Accounts of sight restored begin and end the reading this week, and we need to notice them in the context of what is happening to the central characters in the wider story. In [8: 18 and 21](#) Jesus recognises that the disciples are still struggling to see who he is. This is reflected in the healing of the unnamed man in [8: 22-26](#). When Jesus first touches him he can see a blurred image. Touched again by Jesus, his sight becomes crystal clear. The disciples have gained some insight, but they are still unclear about what they really understand from Jesus. Jesus has more to teach them as they journey from Caesarea Philippi to Jericho.

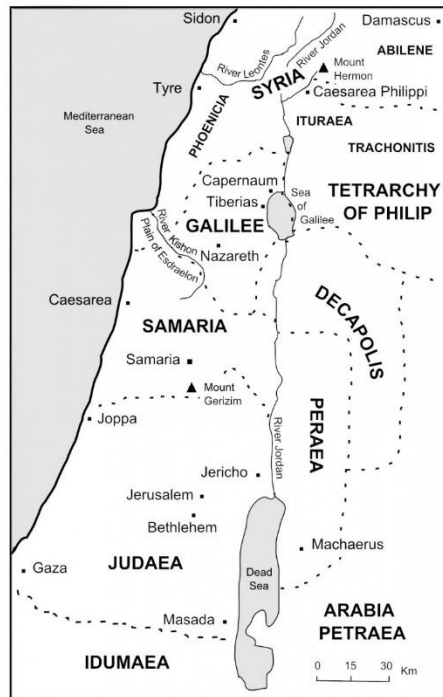
Pause for thought:

Where are we on this journey towards seeing Jesus clearly?

For the disciples the first stage in seeing who Jesus really is comes in chapter [8: 29](#) when Peter acknowledges: 'you are the Messiah'. The disciples have finally named who he is, but they still don't understand what it means, ([verses 31-34](#)). Jesus has to explain repeatedly ([Mark 9: 31](#), [Mark 10 33-34](#)).

Pause for thought:

What does Mark want us to learn from his portrayal of the disciples?



Lessons on the Way

As they head south in chapter 9 there is a lot for the disciples (and us) to take in as they try to make sense of who Jesus is.

Three of the disciples witness the transfiguration of Jesus ([9: 2-8](#)) they see Moses and Elijah and hear the affirmation of who Jesus is: 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' (9: 7) Unsurprisingly, the disciples are terrified. Compare Mark 9: 7 with [1: 11](#). The first voice was for Jesus. Now it is for the disciples – affirmation of who Jesus is, with a hint of warning, Jesus is the Messiah in God's pattern not a human model, they must listen and learn.

Jesus has become more explicit about his suffering and death. With the three disciples ([11-12](#)) and later in verses [31-32](#), Jesus tells the disciples that he will suffer, be betrayed, die and rise again. This is mind-boggling stuff for the disciples who are found bickering about their own greatness (9: 34)

Pause for thought:

The disciples are challenged. What challenges does Jesus place before us today?

Jesus turns things upside down:

When they reach Capernaum and on the journey to Jericho, Jesus teaches them more about the counter-worldly priorities of God's Kingdom. Here children will be welcomed, the rich will need to be generous and compassionate, the beggar will join the procession.

In the later verses of [chapter 10](#) Jesus twice asks 'what do you want me to do for you?' The sons of Zebedee want status in the Kingdom – even more shocking because this follows straight after Jesus' teaching about his appalling torture and death. Bartimaeus wants to see. The disciples request cannot be promised, but Bartimaeus has his sight restored and he follows Jesus. He is a living parable of what it means to understand who Jesus is and what he offers.

Pause for thought:

What do you want Jesus to do for you?