

# THE GREATEST

## DON'T JUST SEE

You've heard athletes discuss the game "slowing down." Obviously, life isn't a movie where the final play stretches into minutes of screen-time as the QB looks left, then right, then left, then breaks the fourth wall, then sweats a little, then looks again and throws. Instead, when an athlete says "the game slows down," they mean that they no longer just seeing, they're understanding. They no longer perceive *everything* happening around them. They understand what matters—what demands their focus.

In Mark 8:22–26, Jesus did a two-stage miracle. First, he healed a blind man and allowed him to see. Jesus asked what he saw and the man said, "*I see people, but they look like trees, walking.*" That's a pretty good description for someone who has never seen either people or trees. Jesus again laid his hands on the man and *he saw everything clearly.*

There's a massive difference between seeing and understanding. The two following stories illustrate this truth well. It's not enough just to see the truth, we must understand.

### MARK 8:27B–38

<sup>27</sup> ... "Who do people say that I am?" <sup>28</sup> And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." <sup>29</sup> And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." <sup>30</sup> And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

<sup>31</sup> And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup> But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

<sup>34</sup> And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. <sup>36</sup> For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? <sup>37</sup> For what can a man give in return for his soul? <sup>38</sup> For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*"Follow me down this road, I got to see. Sacrifice that got me free, pay for my hypocrisy. All that's sick inside of me, He ain't charge a dollar fee, huh? In reality, what win is better than this immortality? At the cross, Where I left my flaw and my goal. Lose my whole and I gave up all control, left it at the cross."*

Living for eternity will cost you in this life. Scan the QR-code to be reminded that it's worth it!



## DISCUSSION

What are some "things of this world" that most easily distract you?

1. Who was Jesus according to...

-The people? (28)

-Peter? (29)

2. What did Jesus plainly predict? (31)

3. What does Jesus require of his followers? (34-35)

4. How does a person's view of the Jesus as Messiah shape what it means to follow him?

5. How does this passage challenge you to invest in eternity compared to investing in this world?

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Satan, the Adversary, doesn't need to get you to live in active rebellion. He just needs to distract you. Set your mind on things of God. If you need help, talk to your Coach today!

# THE GREATEST

## STUDY NOTES

### ROI

*“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”* This quote hits hard on its own. It hits even harder when you realize the man to whom it is attributed died as a martyr. Jim Elliot was murdered at the end of a spear by those he wanted to reach with the Gospel. The missionary team had a handgun they planned to use to scare off the natives. They shot the gun into the air rather than defending themselves because they knew their eternal destiny—they also knew the destiny of their killers apart from the Gospel. They chose to die instead of condemning those men to Hell.

Health, money, smarts, career, and everything else will come to an end one day. That doesn't mean you shouldn't work hard as a steward of those things. However, it does mean that investing in things that aren't eternal, the investment dies with you. So what is a good ROI (return on investment) eternally speaking?

In today's passage, Jesus addresses this question. Mark skillfully weaves two of Peter's responses to set up Jesus' teachable moment. The first response is one of the greatest highlights in Peter's apostleship career... right before one of his greatest blunders.

### JESUS IS GREATER THAN ANYONE

Jesus questioned the disciples, *“Who do people say that I am?”* And they told him, *“John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.”* And he asked them, *“But who do you say that I am?”* Peter answered him, *“You are the Christ.”*

As stated, this was a highlight reel moment for Peter. He knocked it out of the park. It may come as a surprise for some readers but “Christ” isn't Jesus' last name. It means “Anointed One.” John the Baptist and Elijah were huge biblical figures. They were great, but they weren't the greatest. Peter acknowledged Jesus as the coming Messiah.

Matthew also recorded this moment in his gospel adding Jesus' response to Peter's confession, *“on this rock I will build my church”* (Matthew 16:18). In other words, the truth Peter proclaimed is so important, it's literally the foundation for the world-wide Church for the last 2,000+ years.

In the introduction, we shared about Jesus' two stage miracle. Peter's confession, like the first stage of the miracle, shows that he had “sight.” What he lacked was understanding.

Jesus **began to teach** in no uncertain terms that he **must suffer many things and be rejected... and be killed, and after three days rise again**. Mark notes that **he said this plainly**. No parables, no riddles, no mystery here—just the plain truth of what was going to happen.

**Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.** Peter believed that Jesus was the Messiah. What he failed to grasp was Jesus' purpose on earth. He could see, but it was only *“walking trees.”* Everyone expected the Messiah to rule and reign—to establish a world-wide empire with Israel at the center. That *will* happen, but *not yet*. We're still waiting on that today!

This conversation didn't quite go as Peter expected. Jesus **rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan!”** Yikes! Peter's great highlight had sunk pretty low if he's now compared to the great Adversary, the Enemy. Jesus went on, **“For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”** Had Jesus come the first time in power and glory to establish his throne, every person ever would be justly consigned to an eternity in Hell. It's what we deserve. Instead, he came to crush sin on the Cross.

### JESUS IS GREATER THAN WE KNOW

After this encounter, Jesus dropped some hard truth, **“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.”** The cross is among the most shameful, public, painful forms of execution ever. The price tag for following Jesus isn't just believing he exists. It's surrendering your life to the Gospel. This isn't a cute metaphor to say “surrender a lot.” We're talking about every aspect of your life laid down at the throne of Jesus.

Jesus rightly asked, **“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”**

Why invest in the things of this world that don't last when your investment in eternity will last forever? Leading your friend to Christ will have an eternal impact! Don't be ashamed in front of people whose eternity isn't what you want. Instead, trust that Jesus is greater than we know. Let us both see and understand, “He is the Christ” and all that means for our lives and eternity.