

Series: Explore God Chicago; Sermon: **Can I Know God Personally?**
Delivered by **Dr. Josh Moody**, senior pastor; Date: February 24, 2019

Bible text explored: Mark 8:22–9:1

²²And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. ²³And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, “Do you see anything?” ²⁴And he looked up and said, “I see people, but they look like trees, walking.” ²⁵Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. ²⁶And he sent him to his home, saying, “Do not even enter the village.”

²⁷And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” ²⁸And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” ²⁹And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” ³⁰And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

³¹And 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. ³²And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But 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.”

³⁴And 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. ³⁵For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. ³⁶For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ³⁷For what can a man give in return for his soul? ³⁸For 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.”

⁹And he said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”
[ESV]

Review and application:

1. Can I know God personally? Pastor Moody noted that the answer to this question posed by the Explore God Chicago initiative, is far from obvious to most people. What obstacles to a personal relationship are suggested by . . .
. . . the vast scope of the universe and extraordinary power of its Creator?
(See *Psalms* 8:4-3.)
. . . our instinctive sense of the tremendous gap between God’s massive holiness and our own failings? (See *Luke* 5:8.)
2. How (vv. 22-26) did the blind man’s partial perception, after Jesus’ first touch, fall short of clear vision?
How (vv. 27-30) was Peter’s initial response to Jesus question about his identity, while essential and correct, only partial?
3. Why is maintaining that you are a good person only half seeing?
(See *Rom.* 3:10-12.)
Why is saying that you grew up as a Christian also a half-seeing response?
(See *Rom.* 10:9-10.)

4. What “second touch” did Jesus provide his disciples (vv. 31-32a), as he explicitly revealed what they had until then not grasped?
Why did Peter’s initial opposition to the cross (vv. 32b-33) rise to the level of satanic temptation?
5. Why was the price that Jesus’ death on the cross paid for our sin (vv. 34-38) the only way for us to qualify for a personal relationship with God?
What does it mean for *us* to take up *our* cross, in terms of who is in charge of our lives and what we are willing to suffer?
6. How (9:1) was Jesus’ prediction of some of his disciples seeing the coming of God’s kingdom promptly fulfilled? (See *Mark 9:2-9*.)