

Theme: The two-stage healing of the blind man is a living parable for how spiritual blindness was being healed in the disciples - and is healed in people through the ages.

## I. The Importance of Careful Reading

- A. Great works of literature require careful reading
- B. Mark requires us to read carefully in three ways:
  1. Parables (bread, children, dogs)
  2. Not including clarifying statements (woman's faith)
  3. Literary structure (table from last week)

Mark 6-7 text	Topic	Mark 8 text
6:31-44	Feeding the Crowd	8:1-9
6:45-56	Crossing the Sea	8:10
7:1-23	Conflict with Pharisees	8:11-13
7:24-30	Parable About Bread	8:14-21
7:31-36	Healing	8:22-26
7:37	Confession of Faith	8:27-30

- C. The healing of the deaf and the blind are to be read together - and there are other literary keys to this passage as well.

## II. A Very Unusual Healing

- A. Remember the Gospel - Jesus Christ  
They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. <sup>23</sup> He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" Mark 8:22-23

1. A blind man brought to Jesus - no surprise
2. But then everything is unusual
  - a. Jesus takes him off in private (like the deaf man)
  - b. Jesus uses spit - only here and the deaf man
  - c. Jesus asks if the healing worked! What? Why?
  - d. Mark wants us to back up and read carefully

### B. Parallel healings of the deaf man and blind man

1. There are several links between the two healings
  - a. Both had verifiable maladies that no one could heal
  - b. Both were brought to Jesus by friends
  - c. Both were taken away from the crowd into private by Jesus
  - d. Jesus used spit in both healings - and nowhere else
  - e. Jesus tells both of them to not tell anyone
  - f. Only Mark records these two healings!

2. The Messiah was to heal both the deaf & the blind  
Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Isaiah 35:5

In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see. Isaiah 29:18

- a. Mark 7:31-36 has a clear allusion to Isaiah 35:5 (the only use of *μογιάλων* in all of Scripture)
- b. Isaiah 29 also linked healing the deaf and the blind with the Messiah's restoration of the people to God.
3. Jesus had said the disciples were spiritually deaf and blind

Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? Mark 8:18

- a. The disciples had still failed to understand Who Jesus is even though they had heard His teaching and seen His miracles and sinless perfection.
- b. They were spiritually deaf and blind - and needed healing that only Jesus could provide!

### III. Growing Sight

#### A. A two-stage healing?

He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." <sup>25</sup> Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. <sup>26</sup> Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't go into the village." Mark 8:24-26

1. The man's sight is only partially restored at first!
2. He can see, but not clearly!
3. His sight then is fully restored and he sees clearly
4. This is not a model for how healing works in our lives - it is meant to teach us something else!
5. Jesus did not have a hard time healing the man, nor was He confused as to what was happening - this healing was a living parable for the disciples!

#### B. A key difference between the stories of the two healings

Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. <sup>37</sup> People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." Mark 7:36-37

Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't go into the village." Mark 8:26

1. Both were told to not tell others
  - a. Implied in the 2<sup>nd</sup> story - don't go to the village
  - b. Interestingly many manuscripts have the command
2. The first healing produced praise and a confession - He does all things well!
3. Where is the confession of faith in this story?

### IV. Growing (Spiritual) Sight

#### A. Growing spiritual sight

Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" <sup>28</sup> They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." Mark 8:27-28

1. On a journey, Jesus asks who others say He is
2. "John, Elijah, one of the prophets" - same as Mark 6:14ff
3. The people can "see" that Jesus is something special - but this is partial sight at best!
4. Jesus is not John - He is the One for Whom John prepared the way!
5. He is not Elijah - He is the Prophet for Whom Israel was to look and wait.
6. He is not a prophet - He is the God of the Prophets!
7. In the end, to compare Jesus with John, Elijah, or one of the other prophets is not to honor Jesus but to degrade Him, for He is in a class all by Himself!

B. True sight - You are the Christ!

“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.”<sup>30</sup> Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. Mark 8:29-30

1. Jesus presses further - What do you think?
2. Peter - “You are the Christ” - full sight!
3. Mark had told us Jesus is the Christ, but this is the first time anyone in the Gospel has seen and understood - a key moment for the whole Gospel!

The beginning of the gospel about Jesus **Christ**, the Son of God. Mark 1:1

“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the **Christ**.” Mark 8:29

- a. This is the first time the word “Christ” has appeared since Mark 1:1!
- b. It will occur 6 times from Mark 8:29 forward!
4. This is true sight - Jesus is the Christ, the King!
5. This is the point to which the whole Gospel has been driving - Jesus is the King.

C. The healing of the blind man is parallel to this section!

Healing of the Blind Man	Topic	Who Is Jesus?
8:22	Journey	8:27
8:23-24	Partial Sight	8:27-28
8:25	Sight	8:29
8:26	Command to not tell others yet	8:30

1. This is a clue from Mark that we are to read the stories together.

2. This helps us understand why Jesus healed the man in stages.
3. All other understandings of Jesus have only been partial sight - He is not a great man; He is the Christ, the Son of God, the King!
4. And as we will see in a future teaching - it also lets us understand why Peter’s confession is followed by proof that he still only sees partially!

V. Applying the Word

A. Have I truly seen Who Jesus is?

1. Many see Jesus as just a great teacher or example
2. This was the critical mistake of many in Jesus’ day
3. Many rank Jesus with Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius, or among the spirits of Hinduism - but this is a fatal mistake and lie!
4. We think this is an honor to Jesus but it is dishonor, for He is in a class by Himself!
5. We do not just need a great teacher or example - we need a Savior!
6. We need One Who can fulfill God’s Law, bear our sin, satisfy God’s righteous wrath against sin, and conquer sin and death!
7. Do I see and know that Jesus is the Christ, the King Who rules over all, and Who is the only One Who can save me from sin and death?
8. A true understanding of this only comes from God

Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. Matthew 16:17

- a. Matthew tells us Jesus said this to Peter
- b. Mark does not include it; he wants us to meditate
- c. Peter could no more heal his own spiritual blindness than the blind man could heal his physical blindness!

- 9. Cry out for God to open your eyes to see Jesus!
- 10. Cry out for others to have God open their eyes to see Jesus! Pray constantly for family, friends, coworkers!
- 11. People are blind - but Jesus can give full sight!

## B. The Table of Revelation

- 1. The Apostles Creed - a True Confession of Jesus
- 2. As believers, we need to freshly “see” Jesus!
- 3. We are prone to develop spiritual cataracts!
- 4. Here our eyes are opened and Christ is freshly revealed to us

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.

<sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. Luke 24:30-31

- 5. Do not come out of habit or ritual - ask for your eyes to be opened!
- 6. Come and recognize Jesus anew!

Teaching keywords: Miraculous gifts and signs; healing; Christology; revelation; Jesus; biblical characters

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, <sup>18</sup> so that you may know him better having the eyes of your heart enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and his incomparably great power for us who believe. Ephes. 1:17-19

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## Growing Sight

Mark 8:22-30  
 October 8, 2023  
 Communion  
 Ephesians 1:17-19