

Jesus Heals the Blind Man

Mark 8:22-26

June 23, 2013

Introduction

Last week, we looked at Jesus responding to the Pharisees' and Sadducees' attack. He warns the disciples to beware their yeast...their evil influences. They do not understand what Jesus had meant by "yeast" because they are preoccupied with lunch. They only have one loaf between all of them, and they are wondering what will they do and think that Jesus is berating them for forgetting their lunch. They are caught off guard.

Because of this, Jesus lets them know that they have ears, but they are not hearing what He is saying. They have eyes, but they are not seeing who He is. They have forgotten that He has the ability to create food from nothing and that He will take care of them. He wants them to understand that the spiritual matters are infinitely more important than the physical matters. This is the main reason for His teaching the disciples—they have much ignorance that needs to be taken care of. They need an awful lot of help! He is teaching the disciples and teaching them plainly.

Jesus often explains to the disciples who He is and His purpose for coming into this world. The trouble is that they did not understand what He is talking about. Shortly after healing the blind man, Jesus begins to tell the disciples that He has come to suffer and die in the hands of sinners, so the world will be saved, as it is written in Scripture.

Mark 8:32 *He spoke plainly about this*

He teaches them clearly and plainly, so they would have no confusion of His purposes and plans. He did this regularly and often...I believe He tells them every day that He is dying and what His death and resurrection means for the world. However, the disciples did not understand.

Mark 9:31-32 *For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day." ³²But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.*

Why are they afraid to ask Him? This is because Jesus slams Peter, calls him Satan, and tells him to get behind Him when Peter tries to stop Jesus from talking about this. That will shut anybody up quickly!

Another such instance of the disciples not understanding is when James and John ask to sit on the right hand of His kingdom. This is right after Jesus talks about His death and resurrection. They change the issue. They do not want to talk about His death but their own prestige and power. Even at His death, the disciples have no idea about what His death means. The disciples on the way to Emmaus are extremely sad that He has died. Jesus rebukes them for their lack of understanding and explains to them why He must die through Scripture.

At this point of the Marcan narrative when Jesus heals the blind man, we are almost at the pinnacle. Mark records these things to show that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and very soon, Peter declares that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. This is the first time in Mark that anyone has stated that Jesus is the Son of God. Before this incident, the disciples were only getting bits and pieces of who Jesus is, but then the light shines on them, and at last they understand! Mark is inspired by the Holy Spirit to record this incident because Jesus is teaching the disciples an important lesson! The healing

of the blind man is one of two miracles that Mark records that the other gospel writers did not record. (The other is the healing of the deaf man (**Mark 7:31-37**).)

Chronologically, this is the last recorded miracle of Jesus in Galilee. This is the end of His ministry to the people of Galilee, and from this point on, He teaches only to the disciples and only a few miracles for the benefit of the disciples. No more signs are given to the Galileans as we will learn in a bit.

22 *Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him.*

- Bethsaida—house of fishing
 - Near where 5,000 were fed
 - Almost Galilean—part of Philip’s area (Herod Antipas’ half-brother)—becoming a Roman town
 - Peter, Andrew, and Philip’s hometown
- Blind man
 - At this point of history—diseases were rampant; many blind from
 - Birth, accident, diseases, unsanitary practices
 - No cures—usually use rooster blood mixed with honey as an eye salve
 - Jews believed that blindness is a curse from God

John 9:1-2 *Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. ²And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"*

- Blind people were considered untouchable
- Begged Him to touch Him
 - Jesus has not advertised that He was in town
 - Many miracles were done in Bethsaida before
 - Recognized Jesus in town
 - He responds to their plea

23 *So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything.*

- There are similarities between this account and the Deaf-mute account in **Mark 7:31-37**
 - Physical touch
 - Private healing, away from crowds
 - Use of spit
 - Why? The text does not say
 - Perhaps demonstration of His power
 - There are Jewish writings that say spit has healing properties
- Jesus was not afraid of touching the “untouchables”!
- Jesus asked if the man saw anything
 - Only miracle in gospel that Jesus asks the question related to healing
 - This is the only two part miracle recorded

24 *And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking."*

- He looked up
 - Better translated—regained sight
 - He could now see something
- I see men like trees

- Out of focus—distorted
- Cannot distinguish people from objects
- Does this mean that Jesus was struggling to heal this man?
 - No—Jesus does this on purpose
 - Mark has a reason for putting this here

25 *Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly.*

- He was restored
 - Perfect vision—20/20
- His eyes saw clearly
 - Emphasis on seeing far.

26 *Then He sent him away to his house, saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town."*

- Again Jesus' miracle was not to be announced to everyone
- His focus is on the cross
 - Mark mentions 4 times that Jesus teaches the disciples that He will face death on the cross and the third day live again (**8:31; 10:9-10, 31-32; 10:32-34**)
 - This is what Jesus means by not giving the Pharisees and the Jews another sign (**8:12**)
 - The only sign that Jesus will give that God has validated His claim as Messiah is the resurrection

Application

- Display of His Deity
 - Soon after healing the blind man, Jesus asks

Mark 8:27-29 *Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say that I am?"²⁸ So they answered, "John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets."²⁹ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ."*

- First confession from people about Jesus as the Son of God
 - Demons first announced it, but Jesus silenced them
- This is important because from this point on, Jesus reveals the purpose of His coming to the disciples—which is to suffer and die on the cross
- Confirmation of judgment
 - Bethsaida has seen many miracles of Jesus
 - The town ended up rejecting Jesus—(They wanted to take Him by force to be king) (**John 6:15**)
 - This miracle is the last miracle that they experienced—but only one person experienced it—was not widely known
 - Jesus kept His promise to the Pharisees (and to the Jews)

Mark 8:12 *But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation."*

- As a result—condemnation

Matthew 11:21 *Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.*

- Spiritual sight

- Why did Jesus heal the man in two stages?
 - The text does not say
 - From its close proximity to

Mark 8:17-18 *But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? ¹⁸Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?"*

- We can conclude that Jesus is illustrating to us the spiritual sight
- We start off blind—then we receive sight
- However, it is dim at first and murky
- When we live in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ
- Our sight becomes sharper—we understand better