

BLIND MAN BETHSAIDA

Date: April 2, 2020

Scripture: Mark 8:22-25

Good morning! My name is Ryan Britt and this Lent season we are working through some of the miracles of Jesus's life that are showed to us across the gospel accounts in the New Testament. We are looking at how each of these miracles points us to the greatest of all miracles, which is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The miracle we are focused on today is found in Mark 8:22-25 and it says this:

²² And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. ²³ And 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?" ²⁴ And he looked up and said, "I see people, but they look like trees, walking." ²⁵ Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

Mark 8:22-25

Here in this community of Bethsaida, we find Jesus performing this miracle at what would have been the height of His popularity in this region. Jesus is a local rock star right now. Just fed four thousand people. Has done some really radical miracles up until this point in the book of Mark.

Pharisees and disciples that have been following Jesus around as He has been practicing and performing these miracles, they are both having some pretty serious vision issues in their hearts. They are both, in their own way, missing Jesus as the Messiah. The Pharisees see Jesus as a problem to their comfort in their preferred way of life, the way they'd always been doing things and the disciples see Jesus as a

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miracle-working Rabbi, but no one is yet seeing Jesus as the King of Kings, the Son of God, The Christ!

It's here in this context where we see this miracle take place, in verse 23 it says,
²³ And 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?"

The first thing is this, that He took him by the hand. What we see here is the compassion of Jesus at work. Imagine this blind mans experience on this day. He has almost certainly been blind for the majority of his life. He's been an outcast; felt like a burden to others, he has been consistently frustrated with his circumstances. He's living this day, like every other day of his life and it's the monotony of living, it's inside of his struggle where some friends or some people from his community come to him and say, "He's here, the Rabbi, Jesus, He's here in Bethsaida." And almost certainly that man would have had a rush of emotions. Excitement, could today be the day? He, like everyone else, has heard of the miracle worker, could it possibly be his time?

Nervousness, what if I don't get to Him, what if He doesn't want to help me? This rush of emotions, it is through these feelings and through the crowds that his friends lead him. And there, standing in front of the Healer, the crowd quiets as Jesus looks at the man, the man can hear the deep breath of his friends around him and then, he feels it; a touch, a hand from another grabbing onto his hand. This touch, the man chooses to trust, he doesn't pull away, he doesn't give way to all the unknown he is experiencing. He receives the touch of Jesus.

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Jesus leads him out of the village, away from the crowds. He was leading this man away from his friends and caretakers. Leading him away from what he knew, from where he was comfortable. Jesus was putting this man in a position that required more and more trust.

This is what Jesus does. He takes us where He wants us to go before He shows us what He wants us to see. This is following in the way of Jesus. Jesus always takes us where He wants us to go, before He shows us what He wants us to see. Following Christ is a faith journey, not a sight journey.

Then when Jesus has the man right where He wants him. He spits in his face. You heard that right. Jesus, the Messiah, the Deliverer, the Holy One of Israel, the Lion of Judah who was and is and is to come, He straight spits on a brother.

I love this, you can't make this stuff up. Jesus, He doesn't do superficial. Jesus does personal. He spit in his face. Its invasive, it's offensive. There is no way to have a life altering encounter with Jesus Christ and grow more comfortable in the ways of this world. There is no way to meet Jesus and to not be changed. He changes stuff; it's just what He does.

Jesus spits on this man. He invades his personal space, gets all up in his business and then He looks at the man and asked him a question and He says, "Do you see anything?" And the man looked up and said, "I see people, but they look like trees walking."

What happened? Jesus takes action and the man says, "I see people, but they look like trees, walking around." Did Jesus make a mistake? Did Jesus half-heal the guy?

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Did Jesus sneeze mid-healing and throw off the juju somehow? Did Jesus make a mistake? Well, no. Jesus doesn't make mistakes, He doesn't get distracted.

Some commentators make an argument that this man could see at one point in his life because how else would he know what trees look like? There are certainly things at work in this miracle beyond our capacity to fully grasp; however, there is a significant take away we need not miss and this is it: No matter where you are in the healing process, Jesus isn't done with you yet.

Immediately, in this miracle, we hear whispers of the resurrection that is to come. In the most invasive way possible, Jesus invaded sinful humanity and a broken world to bear the burdens of sin and to cosmically heal God's church. This healing is experienced by us, progressively, just like this man, but the fullness of our healing is sure.

The miracle in Bethsaida ends by Jesus laying His hands on the mans eyes again and then the man opens his eyes and his sight is fully restored and he saw everything clearly. And so will we as Jesus's Church. As the man cracked his eyes open to a new light, so will we. The brightest light of God's glory and the fullest weight of Christ's victory over death and hell we will see.

Even though now we see through a mirror dimly as the apostle Paul tells us, one day we will see face to face, what we now know in part we will at the appointed time know fully, even as we have been fully known.

Let's pray.

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God, we thank You that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ You have opened our eyes. You have given us life. You have pulled us from the darkness and into light, that our sins have been forgiven, that our purpose has been revealed. We thank You for what Jesus accomplished in our place and on our behalf. We thank You for the victory that He holds and we pray that today You would help us to walk in it with confidence with hope and with boldness. We pray that You would help us carry the peace of Your kingdom as we walk into this world that desperately needs to hear Your gospel. Would You empower us, would You give us confidence and faith. We love You more than anything in this world. It's in Jesus name we pray. Amen.

