

[add all senses] I'm sitting at this black table with this middle-aged woman. She has really big hair and a big personality. She just left the doctor's chair for her eye exam. One of the associates had dispensed her new glasses, and I had to ask her to take a seat because she was walking around the store like this here [high step around the stage]. Ma'am please take a seat! [See] This was would what typically happen when someone got bifocal lenses for the first time. It's those lenses with double correction, the top of the lenses help you see better at a distance while the bottom of the lenses help you see better up close. And this woman was given her glasses without the proper training and expectations. So, as we're sitting at this table, I'm walking her eyes down this vision card where the letters are larger at the top and smaller the bottom. I'm showing her how to use the lenses to see clearer. But I'm also preparing her for the journey ahead with these glasses. I'm warning her about walking with them, driving with them, reading with them, looking at the computer screen, and everything in between. I'm giving her generic timelines when she can expect her eyes to adapt.

[You see] in the optical business, you learn that people who are not properly prepared for the path ahead with their new glasses, they seem to really struggle with them.

Have you ever been on a path in life that you were not prepared for? You may not need bifocals or contacts, but all of us are on a path, and if you know Jesus, it's a path with Jesus. It's a journey that's leading us to know him deeply, to love him passionately, to see him clearly. It's a process of seeing Jesus' person for who he truly is. But what is this process like? This process of seeing Him... because seeing Jesus more clearly is essential as we follow him.

If you've been with us for the past couple of months, we have been following 12 men who have been following Jesus on this trip of discipleship, through the book of Mark. These men have been on a path for which they weren't exactly prepared. In fact, we were better than they were. In the very first chapter and verse of this book, Mark tells us that Jesus is the Son of God. And then we see in Chapter 4:41 we see that these guys still don't know this. They say, "who is this man?" But today is a turning point, today they will see Jesus for who he truly is.

We're going to look at a passage that will show us four crucial insights about this journey that they were one, a journey similar to the one that we are on, as Jesus helps us to see him more clearly.

Turn with me to Mark 8:22. We're going to pick up this story right where Gary left off last week. Jesus has just scolded these men back in verse 18 says, "18 Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? And he follows it up with verse 21 21 And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?" It's pretty clear that these guys are struggling to understand what's going on as they follow Jesus. They are struggling to see him. And that leads to the very first thing we learn about this process of seeing him.

And that is that...

The Process is Gradual. It takes time. It happens in stages. And Jesus is the one who is patient with us. It is gra-du-al.

Mark 8:22 reads, 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.

Here Jesus and his entourage arrive to Bethsaida, a place where Jesus would perform several miracles (5k feeding, walking on water, healing the blind), a place where the gospels portray the townspeople as fickle and narcissistic. And while they would witness his miracles and received his blessings, most of the people in Bethsaida did not believe in him. And it's in this place that a group brings a blind man to Jesus and they beg him to touch him. The fact that this blind man is unnamed – he's simply a blind man – shows us that Mark's focal point here is Jesus not the blind man.

We see that Jesus performs a miracle that is unique at this stage in the story. It's not just unique because it's the first time he's healing a blind man. No, it's unique because of how he heals the blind man. He does it in stages. If we remember so far, Jesus in chapter 1, casted out an unclear spirit (23-28), he also heals peter's mother-in-law (29-34). In chapter 2 he heals a paralyzed man (1-12); in chapter 3, he heals a man with a withered hand (1-6); in chapter 4 he calms a storm (35-41); chapter 5 he resurrects Jairus' daughter (21-24, 35-43); chapter 6 he feeds five thousand (30-44) and walks on the sea (45-52); last chapter he heals a deaf mute (7:31-37). And guess what all these have in common? They all happen instantly. But not this time. This time he does it in stages.

Mark wants to show us something here. He wants us to notice the parallels between this man's physical healing and his disciples spiritual healing in verse 29, which we will see in just a few moments. Mark wants us to draw similar conclusions about Jesus and his methods of healing blind people, whether it's physical or spiritual. He wants us to see that it's gradual. It takes time. It happens in stages.

And it's an important insight for us to note because in our world, we expect almost everything to happen instantly. If we could have it, we would prefer our amazon order to be delivered the same day, we love self-checkout because it's very little wait, we insta-cart our groceries. If you're a part of my generation or younger, you've been conditioned to expect your talent to reach new heights over night, thanks to American Idol, the Voice, America's Got Talent, Youtube, Instagram. We don't want everything now, no no, we want it right now. And here we learn that seeing Jesus more clearly takes a little time.

It's similar to learning a new language. If you've ever learned a new language, you have an idea of what this process is like. I'm currently learning Hebrew and Greek, and it is

taking me a some time to grab onto them. If you were to ask my wife, she will tell you it's taking Chris some time. If you've learned English as a second language, I got to imagine it didn't happen overnight. Our 5-year-old Madison, she's learning English as a first language. She walks up to me a couple of nights ago, and asks, "Daddy, how do you say this word?" We sound it out and we celebrate. Learning a language is a gradual process it takes time and patience.

Just like the process of seeing Jesus more clearly, it's gradual, it takes time and patience. But not only is the process gradual...

The Process is Personal. It's custom fit for you/me/us as a church. Jesus is the one who takes us by the hand.

Let's look again at verse 23 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 here is using **repetition** to show us something. He wants us to know that Jesus personally touches this man. In four verses Mark makes a touching/hand reference four times. We see it in verses 22 ("touch him"), 23 ("took him... by the hand") and ("laid his hands on him"), 25 ("Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again"). It's similar to how Jesus heals Jairus' daughter and Peter's mother-in-law, he takes them by the hand. Mark wants us to see that this process is personal.

Not only does Jesus touch the man, he also leads him **away from the village**, away from the people. Which does a couple things. One, it shows that Jesus probably did not want publicity at this point of his ministry. We see this in verse 26 when he tells the man, "Do not even enter the village." But secondly, by leading him away from the village, he's establishing a personal connection with the man. Another element at this stage of the story that was not Jesus' usual procedure. This was not the rule it was the exception. Usually, he would heal people in the presence of the crowds, for the public to see. And here he does it privately, he makes it personal.

But the question remains, why **touch the man's eyes**? Why not simply speak the miracle? Or say open your eyes? It could have that he wanted the man to feel his touch; to know that something was happening to his eyes.

You may be here today and no one knows what you've had to go through the past few months. And you're still going through it. Maybe it's a relationship that's challenging, maybe it's an illness that's exhausting, maybe it's a church decision that's confusing, a job that is frustrating, maybe it's something, yet you sense that something else is happening to you. Jesus is revealing himself to you. He is showing you who he is, he's taken you by the hand and he's personally tending to your needs.

And when it seems like no one else cares about you, or no one will touch you, know that he will. The process is personal.

So, the process is gradual, the process is personal. Thirdly...

The Process is Countercultural. Many in popular culture will reject Jesus. They will not be able to see him for who he is.

Verse 27 reads, ²⁷ And 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?" ²⁸ And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets."

Here Jesus decides to have an important conversation on the way to the villages of Caesarea Philippi, a place about 25 miles north of Bethsaida. It's like from here to McKinney. It's a place known for its pagan worship to false gods. In ancient times there was a shrine built in honor of the god Pan by Herod the Great. It would later be named in honor of Caesar, who would be affirmed as lord. It was a site where the god Baal was formerly worshipped. And it's here where Jesus asks his disciples of the common answers people are saying about him.

Some thought he was the reappearance of the John the Baptist. Very similar to what we saw a few weeks ago in chapter 6 where King Herod who beheaded John thought the same thing. Others thought he was the reappearance of Elijah; and others say he was the reappearance one of the ordinary prophets in the history of Israel. Essentially people are saying that Jesus is nothing in himself, he's only an ordinary messenger of God that's been here before. The culture was unable to see Jesus for who he was.

And increasingly, our culture is going in that same different.

According to Pew Research¹, the religious composition has changed significantly in America. In the early 1990's about 90% of U.S. adults identified as Christians, while only 5% were unaffiliated. Just last year, that percentage of adults who identify as Christians had fallen to 63% while the religiously unaffiliated has grown to 29%. As we can see more people are beginning to classify themselves as "nones." Not "n.u.n," but "n.o.n.e." And this momentum is being driven by people under the age of 30.

We can see that while people may see Jesus as a spiritual figure, increasingly many in the younger generations are wanting nothing to do with him. While many people may see Jesus as a good man, they don't see him as the God-Man. And that's where this conversation between Jesus and his disciples is going. And we need to be aware of the same fact, as we follow Jesus, many people will not be able to see him as God. The culture will reject Him.

So, in seeing Jesus more clearly, we've learned that the process is gradual, the process is personal, it's countercultural, and lastly...

¹ [How U.S. religious composition has changed in recent decades | Pew Research Center](#)

The Process is Supernatural. Seeing Jesus clearly has *nothing* to do with our abilities (X2). The process is supernatural. Jesus (alone) is the one who heals our blindness.

The very next verse, 29 reads, ²⁹ And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” ³⁰ And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

Here in front of the backdrop of what the pagan world is saying about Jesus, Peter who now functions as a spokesperson for the disciples, he makes a confession. He answered, “You are the Christ.” And finally, the disciples declare what we were told at the beginning of the first half of this book, that Jesus is the son of God. He is the Messiah, the one anointed by God. He is the Christ. And this is significant because it indicates that the spiritually blinded eyes of the disciples had now been healed. And it was completely supernatural.

How do we know this? Well Mark is mirroring these two accounts to make this point. In the first account, Jesus goes to Bethsaida, here he goes to the villages of Ceasarea Philippi. Both were places people generally did not believe in him.

There he took the blind man by the hand, here he went on with his disciples. In the first part he asks if the blind man can see anything. The blind man could not see well. He likened people to trees. Here Jesus asks his disciples who do people say that I am? They couldn't see Jesus either.

And then he touched the blind man a second time and restores his sight where he saw everything clearly. And here Jesus asks his disciples, “But who do you say that I am?” And they say you are the Christ. In both instances, the physically blinded and the spiritually blinded were healed Jesus himself.

And lastly, he dismisses both of them as to not tell anyone about this. And we're going to see why in the next few weeks so keep coming.

Can you see what Mark is doing here? He's showing us the process through which Jesus heals our blinded eyes, as we walk with him.

It's gradual, it's personal, it's countercultural, and it's supernatural.

I'm sitting in this chair beside my wife, Deana and I'm starring at this screen, stunned because I had never seen anything like it in my life. My wife is on the examination table, and the ultrasound technician has this wand on her belly that uses high frequency sound waves to create pictures called sonograms of what's inside her belly. And I'm starring at this screen, not because it's our first child because we've had a child before, no it's because I've never seen a sonogram like this before. You see, we were able to see the fetus, but [but] there was no detection of a heartbeat. And as the technician gently delivered the news that somewhere in the process the heartbeat stopped, it felt like my heartbeat stopped. I look over my right shoulder at Deana and she has silent

tears falling down the side of the face. And I felt even more sadness for her. It's an image, branded in my mind to this day.

As we left the hospital room, we walked silently to the elevator door, standing there waiting, my wife was overcome with grief. I clinched her in my arms. Because we realized that we weren't having a baby.

We experienced several emotions and eventually took the conversation to God. "What's going on?" We really had to activate what we knew about God to navigate this. We remembered that God... and he himself lost his only son, and ... [list truths about God]

And then we decided to share our experience with others. And from that we learned that there were other people we knew who had similar experiences that had never shared. And it kind of helped them with not feeling alone like they had community. Situations like this you sort feel like you're the only one.

Deana and I were not prepared for what happened that day. But we do see Jesus more clearly as a result of that day.

And through this experience we were actually able to see Jesus more clearly. We learned a lot, and that although we thought we knew him, we didn't know him like we do now. He was with us, and while He wasn't the cause of the miscarriage, we no longer take the gift of life for granted. Babies are a miracle. So much has to work out for babies and moms to come through pregnancy, we are much more sensitive to the process.

You see just because we know Jesus doesn't mean that life will be without trouble and heartbreak. But it does mean that life won't be without Jesus. And through our journey with Him he will use our experiences, he will step into our experiences and reveal himself more and more to us. It won't be instant, but it will be personal. It won't look like the world projects Jesus, but we can trust that he can be trusted to show us himself every day, through every phase of our life.

Now we are currently expecting a baby girl this year, we're about 16 weeks along and everything is going well. But I want you to hear me, I'm not sharing this story to reveal this. Because we have no clue what's around the corner in our family's life. We hold everything loosely. And I realize this is a sensitive subject, not everyone in this room will have the same experience. My reason for sharing this story is because we are followers of Jesus. And on our life's path, Jesus has consistently opened our blinded eyes to who he truly is. He has been present in our life and he's been God to us. And we are learning everyday to trust him to show himself more clearly.

We can Trust Jesus with the process! Because seeing Jesus Clearly is a process.

So, now that we know that Jesus is the one leading the process and he's the one who will see it through, we can **Trust Jesus with the process!** We can know that he will make himself clearer to us as we walk with him.

You may be sitting here today and you don't know Jesus, or maybe you just met him recently, or maybe you've walked with Jesus for a while. Wherever you are on life's path, know that Jesus is personally improving your vision of him.

You may even think life has caused me to think about God all of a sudden. But your awareness of him is supernatural. God is drawing you to him. It's supernatural.

- a. Jesus is the healer of the man's blindness (physical)
- b. Jesus is the healer of his followers' blindness (spiritual)
- c. Drive toward the confession that he is the Christ. He is the long anticipated messiah for the world.
Gary touched on this a little bit, I just want to refresh our mind. As I recap the section, we can go back to the reveals from 1-8 on how he is the christ. All the old testament references of his healing the sick and the blind.
- d. You may say we know flesh and blood didn't reveal this to Peter from _____. But I want to teach you proper biblical theology – how to understand the theology of a particular biblical author. You don't have to go to another part of the bible to get the biblical author's point, that's unless the biblical author references another passage or if it helps us understand the author himself. But you can discover within the book the thrust of the book, the point the author makes. And we know the point from verse 25. It's here that we learn that we learn it's not by human might that Peter comes to this truth.
- e. Human ability vs God's sovereignty: This is accomplished with human might (v.18,21). Flies in the face of those who say you need to have more faith. What did he have the blind man do to see clearly? Did he say look harder, try harder, spend more time with me, ... NO! He simply touched him. All it takes to see Jesus is a touch from Jesus.
- f. I've been praying that you would supernaturally be centered on christ, and your love for.
- g. MTR: **Empasis: whatever happens has nothing to do with us.** We need to be okay with knowing there's nothing we can do to accelerate change. **Be okay with not having control.** Jesus is in control. The blind man was simply blind. All he could bring to Jesus was his blindness. Jesus was the only one who could heal his blindness. Jesus is the only one was can and will hill ours. So stop trying harder, stop pulling tighter _____, Simply allow Jesus to gradually take you by the hand, and supernaturally give you sight. You will see him for the first time over and again. And It's Jesus' touch. The man can purchase visine eyedrops, he can eat carrots, he go to the ophtholomogists – none of this will help with spiritual blindness.

Jesus: The Trusted Ophthalmologist
Mark 8:22-30

Jesus has to heal him from spiritual blindness, and he has to heal us. And he will heal us.

- I. Make sure to stick around the for the next part of this series because Jesus has a purpose for strictly charging them to tell no one about him.

FOLLOW

JESUS THROUGH THE BOOK OF MARK

PART 1: FOLLOW THE PERSON OF JESUS



Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember?

MARK 8:18

And he said to them, “Do you not yet understand?”

MARK 8:21

THE PROCESS IS GRADUAL.

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

THE PROCESS IS PERSONAL.

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 8:23-25

THE PROCESS IS COUNTERCULTURAL.

27 And 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?” 28 And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.”

MARK 8:27-28

THE PROCESS IS SUPERNATURAL

29 And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." 30 And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

MARK 8:29-30