

Jesus Heals a Blind Man: Men Walking as Trees
Dr. Michael A. Cox
Original: 3-3-24

Text: Mark 8:22-26

Gospel of Mark: [Bibliography](#) or [Manuscripts and Greek Exegesis](#)

UBS 4th Edition Paragraph Topic: The Healing of a Blind Man at Bethsaida

Central Idea of Message: Jesus works both as he wills and in his own timing, and sometimes he chooses to work or heal gradually rather than instantly or according to any formula, and sometimes quite differently from how he chose to work with or heal someone else.

Introduction: Episode 39. This particular miracle is recorded only in Mark. The gradual restoration of sight to the blind man is thought by some scholars to be an illustration paralleling the gradual progression of the spiritual sight of the twelve disciples (cf. Grassmick 2:138; Hughes 432; Turlington 333; Wessel 691). Whether that be the case or not, we cannot be sure. But what we do know is that Jesus healed a blind man and there are some insights we can gain from this story.

I. The First Touch by Jesus (vv. 22-24)

- A. A blind man is brought to Jesus in Bethsaida (v. 22)
 - 1. Bethsaida of Galilee, which was on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee and served as the capital of the district of Gaulanitis (cf. Lane 284)
 - 2. Jesus and the Twelve
 - 3. Some unnamed people brought a blind man to Jesus
 - a) They did not ask Jesus to heal him, but simply to touch him
 - b) Similar to the request for the deaf man in Mark 7:32
 - c) They were asking for a blessing
- B. Jesus took the blind man by the hand (v. 23)
 - 1. Doing this fulfilled the simple request of the man's friends who had brought him
 - 2. They had only requested that Jesus touch him

3. But Jesus had more in mind, for he took the blind man by the hand and led him outside of the village, probably to avoid an impending stampede
4. Interestingly, the man never questioned Jesus about where he was being taken, he simply let Jesus lead him
5. Jesus then spit on the man's eyes and laid his hands upon him
 - a) Ancient people often thought of saliva as a healing agent
 - b) Jesus intended more than simply taking him by one hand and leading him along
6. Perhaps all of this was done by Jesus to help the man's faith (cf. Burdick 1005; Henry 5:502; Robertson 1:333)
7. Jesus then asked the man, "Do you see anything?"
- C. The response of the blind man (v. 24)
 1. It seems almost cruel to ask a blind person if he or she can see anything
 2. But Jesus had done something, and the man answered and said, "I see men, for I am seeing them like trees, walking about"
 - a) The fact that the man compared what he was seeing to trees indicates that he had not been born blind, but had once been able to see, because he knew what trees looked like
 - b) Perhaps his sight was lost through accident, malicious injury, sinful stupidity, or disease
 - c) To say that he saw men "like trees, walking about" is to suggest that his vision was gradually being restored in that instant and what he was seeing was somewhat blurry
 - d) Only case of a gradual healing by Jesus

II. **The Second Touch by Jesus (vv. 25-26)**

- A. Jesus again laid his hands on the man (v. 25)
 1. We can all rejoice that Jesus did not leave the man in this partially restored, "half-healed" status (Cole 964)
 2. Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes
 3. Jesus looked intently at the man and the blind man's sight was fully restored in that moment
 - a) The fact that Mark uses the word "restored" confirms what we had deduced above, that the man had not been born blind

- b) He had lost his sight and now Jesus was restoring his vision
 - c) Mark says that the man began to see everything clearly, which word means "Far-shining"
 - d) He could see things far away quite clearly!
 - (1) 20/10 vision!
 - (2) The eyesight of a Major League Baseball player or a fighter pilot!
- B. Jesus sent the man to his home (v. 26)
- 1. Jesus had intentionally led the man outside of the village of Bethsaida
 - 2. Likely to have some privacy and avoid the public eye in order to avert sensationalism
 - 3. Again, we see Jesus avoiding, not seeking, public attention
 - 4. Jesus commanded the man not to enter the village
 - a) Presumably not until Jesus had moved on to the next village
 - b) Temporary restraining order
 - c) But Jesus did not command the man not to tell anyone about his restored sight, which would have been rather impossible to conceal!
 - d) **Sending the healed man home and warning him not to go back into the village of Bethsaida right then is another reminder that, as commentator R. Alan Cole says, "There is always a danger where healing miracles take place in the preaching of the gospel that people will come to Christ for the wrong reasons" (Cole 964)**

Conclusion: Principles.

(1) Friends take people to Jesus. Where are your friends taking you?

(2) Friends take people to Jesus. Where are you taking your friends?

(3) We should follow Jesus wherever he might lead, especially when he has taken us by the hand to lead us.

(4) Jesus works both as he wills and in his own timing, and sometimes he chooses to work or heal gradually rather than instantly or according to any formula, and sometimes quite differently from how he chose to work with or heal someone else.

(5) Many of the truths God wants to show us only emerge gradually from the blurriness of life's disappointments.

(6) Walking with Jesus brings a gradual unfolding of reality which allows us to see life and its experiences far more clearly, so that we no longer need to live in the dark or try to escape into a fabricated Twilight Zone of unreality.