

SPIRITUAL VISION

Key passage: Mark 8:22-26

INTRODUCTION

There are a number of unusual facts about this miracle -

- 1) It is recorded only in Mark's gospel.
- 2) It is the only time Jesus healed someone in stages.
- 3) It is a two-stage miracle. After the first stage, the man could see but his vision is very blurry.

We know that everything Jesus did, he did for a purpose.

I. WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT?

If you go back to the beginning of Mark 8, you have the miracle of the feeding of the 4000 (vv. 1-10).

Immediately afterwards the Pharisees came to argue with him (vv. 11-12).

After Jesus and the disciples got into a boat, he warned them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees (v. 15).

Leaven is another word for the yeast necessary for baking bread, but in this case it refers to the false teaching of the Pharisees. But the disciples thought he was talking about literal bread.

Jesus then rebuked the disciples by saying, "*Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember?*" (v18)

Or we could paraphrase it this way:

"How can you be so blind after having been with me so long? Don't you understand anything I'm saying?"

Jesus had to leave the people behind and take this blind man aside to get him away from all of the unbelief and sin.

This required a separation from those who only stood by to see what would happen and had no real concern. Sometimes there are those around who are not worthy to be witnesses of such a cure because God knows their heart of unbelief and strife.

This man, when he first received his sight, had a very imperfect view of things.

The newly converted soul has a very limited view of things, particularly of Christ and of

the glory and fullness of his person, what his blood does for us, of his righteousness, of his power to save.

II. WHY DID HE HEAL THIS MAN IN STAGES?

It was not because of any lack in Jesus, not because he didn't have the power to heal him all at once.

It was not because this man's blindness was a particularly hard case.

It was not because Jesus tried and failed the first time.

We still don't have the answer, but we know that these other reasons can't be right.

III. WHAT IS JESUS TEACHING US IN THIS STORY?

You can't separate this miracle from its context because the miracle is like a parable of the disciples' spiritual confusion.

It is possible to have eyes and yet not see very clearly.

And that's precisely what Jesus was saying to his disciples. "Do you have eyes and yet not see what I am saying?" "Do you have eyes and yet not see clearly who I am?"

There were two kinds of blindness in this story.

One is this blind man, physically unable to see with his eyes.

But there is also another kind of blindness – those of the crowd - who though physically able to see, was spiritually blind to the identity of the One standing before them.

There are several levels of *vision impairments* ranging from low vision to blindness.

One of the greatest creations God made is the eye. The ability to see and to differentiate and distinguish between colors, and shapes and sizes and faces and places and all of the wonder of God's creations is an absolute miracle.

There is sight and then there is vision. And sight and vision can be two completely different things.

The fact is that while vision costs, no vision costs even more because where there is no vision the people perish.

Many people have sight that does not have vision. It is also possible to have absolutely no sight but to be a person of great vision.

Sight is the ability to see what is in front of us.

Vision, is the ability to look at the situation and see what is not there but what can and will be.

Sight will make you see what is happening, but vision will make you see what is going to happen.

Sight sees the predicament, but vision sees the potential.

Sight sees the present, but vision, sees the promise of God.

The assistant to Elisha the prophet...2 King 6.12-17

Elisha was aware of some resources that the ordinary eye could not see.

Vision makes us aware of resources that the ordinary eye cannot see.

God has provided some resources for us that we cannot see, but they are real and they are present and they are ready to be accessed.

If you are willing to accept the vision that God gives you, God will open your eyes and enable you see beyond what is in front of you.

All things are possible to those who believe. In the 11th chapter of Hebrews, the writer reminds us that without faith it is impossible to please God.

When you have sight you can only see what is in front of you, but when you have vision you can see the big picture.

They could see the big picture because they were up in the air, and when we allow God to give us vision it will carry us to high places that give us a better outlook on our possibilities

Many of God's children have lost a measure of clarity and may not even know it, even though it is what is causing them headaches.

One of the most significant problems we have as Christians is that we often lose sight of who Jesus is and what Christ really did for us.

Cloudy spiritual vision afflicts every Christian to some degree.

None of us sees as clearly as we would like for now we see through a glass darkly.

No one sees life with perfect clarity. All of us have spiritual nearsightedness to one degree or another.

We need to keep our eyes on Jesus

Hebrews 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Our life of faith began as we looked upon Him as Savior, the Lamb of God, and it is He who will lead us through life if we will look to Him as our Shepherd – the author and finisher of our faith - providing all that we need!

But he that lack these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 2 Pet 1:9

CONCLUSION

Lessons we learn from this miracle:

1. He doesn't treat us all the same way.

This is evident from a study of the miracles of Christ.

He has the power to heal instantly or in stages.

He is not limited by anything or anyone, yet he does not treat us all the same.

He heals one with a touch, another with a word, another with a glance, and yet another at a great distance.

He touches one and never sees the other, and yet both are healed.

Acts 12 - James is killed and Peter is delivered.

He's God. He can deal with us the way he wants.

Our God is infinitely creative in the way he deals with us as he brings us to spiritual maturity. There are bright days and dark nights, and both are from the Lord.

2. He deals us with us according to our need.

Even though his friends brought him to Christ, our Lord is not trying to meet the expectations of the crowd. And he dealt with this man by touching him not once but twice.

3. We don't get better at the same rate or in the same way.

Some people come to Christ and grow quickly, becoming strong disciples in a short period of time.

Others take years to learn the Word and become strong in the faith.

Many will struggle with blurry vision for a long time.

4. Our own spiritual perception is often clouded and imperfect that we need a second touch.

He had been healed, but his healing was not yet complete. He was "on the way" but he wasn't finished yet.

It was true then and it is true now that spiritual growth is *growth*. It is not instant development. That's bad news for a generation of impatient believers.

We are like the man who prayed, "Lord, give me patience and give it to me right now!"

We want quick answers, five steps, six keys, seven promises, and eight principles that will lead us to the "victorious Christian life." *But God rarely works like that.*

We are born as little children, babes in Christ, who must go through all the stages of life, learning and growing as we go along.

And how do we learn to walk? By trying and falling, trying and falling, and then trying and falling some more..

What are we to do about this?

a. Don't give up when you are not quickly transformed.

b. Go to God in complete honesty. It is a great advance spiritually when we can say, "Lord, I am blind. Help me to see."

c. Remember that God intends to bring something good out of this. He intends to use your imperfect vision to bring you to a place of deeper trust in him. Nothing is wasted with the Lord, not even those times when you feel as if you can't see clearly.

5. Saved By His Honesty

What finally saved this poor man was his honesty.

He didn't lie to Jesus. That's a crucial insight.

He could have said, "Lord, I see all things clearly."

If he had said that, he would never have gotten better. His honesty gave him the sight he did not have. Oh, how hard it is to be honest with God.

But Christ didn't ask this man, "Can you see anything?" in order to get information he didn't have.

Jesus knew the answer to the question. *He wanted the man to be honest about his true condition.*

But this is what God wants for all of us. It won't come easily or quickly or in the same

way to all of us, but when we admit our need, then we become excellent candidates for some divine eye surgery.

When Christ is the center of your focus, all else will come into proper perspective.

As we begin to focus upon God, the things of the Spirit will take shape before our inner eyes. A. W. Tozer
