

What is Blurry will become Clear

9.9.18

Mark Series

Message 35

Mark 8:22–26 (NIV)

Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida

²² They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. ²³ He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?"

²⁴ He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around."

²⁵ Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. ²⁶ Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't even go into the village."

1. To read your Bible properly, we have to be aware of context.

A. The meaning of a passage is not determined by you.

1. The meaning of the passage is what the Holy Spirit meant through the man He had to write it.

2. One of the reasons why we are working through the Book of Mark in order is to help us understand each pericope (section) in the context with which Mark wrote it.

B. Today's passage has a context.

1. Jesus has recently done an amazing miracle by feeding 4,000 people with just a few loaves of bread.

2. This is met by unbelief by the Pharisees and then by the disciples.

C. Last week I mentioned that our spiritual life is a journey.

1. A journey with moments of brilliance as well as moments of abject failure.
2. These disciples are coming off a moment when Jesus questioned their faith.
3. The next message in this pericope, Peter has one of the greatest spiritual insights of his life.

D. Sandwiched between brilliance and failure is this miracle.

1. A miracle where Jesus does something He had never done:
2. He heals a person in two parts.
3. This is the only time in Scripture Jesus did not instantly heal the person He intended to heal.
4. Responsible readers of the Bible should be asking, "Why?"
5. The answer has nothing to do with the question of instant or progressive healing.
6. The answer has to do with our journey of faith.
7. "What is Blurry will become clear."

As we look at this passage, we first notice that a group of people brought the blind man to Jesus.

2. **We cannot overestimate the value of having faith-filled friends.**

A. The blind man had people in his life who were willing to intercede on his behalf.

1. There will be times in our lives when we need the ministry of other people praying for us and pleading with God on our behalf.
2. If you don't have close friends in your life who are willing to pray with you and for you, get some.
3. There will be days when you need their prayers.

B. This isn't the only time a group of friends brought someone to Jesus.

1. At the end of Mark 7, a group of friends brought a man who was deaf and mute to Jesus.
2. They believed that if they could just get him to Jesus, then Jesus would do a miracle in his life.
3. That was the time that Jesus took the man, put his fingers in his ears, then put spittle upon the man's tongue and healed him.
4. Notice the similarities in this story today?

C. Each story features a man in need of healing.

1. Each story has a group of friends bringing their friend to Jesus.
2. Each story involves Jesus taking the person to be healed away from the crowd.
3. Each story involves Jesus using spit in the healing act.

D. Clearly, Mark wants us to see the two of these stories together.

1. Each story is making the point that Jesus was the promised Messiah who had come to save the lost and to bring blessing to God's people.
2. They are also stories of great faith by ordinary people.
3. And the reluctance of faith by the disciples who followed Jesus daily.

E. Remember Jesus' warning, "Beware the yeast of the Pharisees?"

1. Still in the background is Jesus' teaching that faith and unbelief are contagious.
2. The disciples had a choice to make: To believe or not to believe in Jesus.

3. Jesus led the blind man outside the village.

A. Usually, miracles happened among groups and crowds.

1. Healing takes place in community.
2. But on rare occasion, Jesus would lead a person away from the crowds.
3. Maybe there was a lot of unbelief in the village.

B. This time, Jesus takes the blind man outside of the village.

1. At this moment, Jesus is establishing a relationship with this man.
2. It had taken a group of people to get the man to Jesus.
3. But once there, the healing became personal.
4. Jesus wanted the man to trust in Him and to express faith in Him.

C. We can introduce people to Jesus, but we can't believe for them.

1. This healing encounter is about more than causing a blind man to see.
2. It was a demonstration of Jesus' power to save the lost and to make new what had been broken.
3. What Jesus was getting ready to do was pointing to Jesus' power to save the lost.

4. What good is physical healing if the soul remains lost?

D. Another reason Jesus took the blind man outside of the village is that Healing a blind person was one of 2 signs reserved for the Messiah.

1. In all of Biblical history, two miracles were reserved only for the coming Messiah:

- a. Healing of the deaf,
- b. Healing the blind.

2. Because Jesus, Mark, and all of the disciples were Jewish, they KNEW what was recorded in Isaiah 35:4-5:

Isaiah 35:4-5 (NIV)

⁴ say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you." ⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped."

3. When these friends brought the blind man to Jesus, they were proclaiming something the disciples had not yet been willing to admit: That Jesus was the MESSIAH!!!!

4. Jesus then uses the healing of this man as an enacted parable.

A. After Jesus leads the blind man out, with his disciples in tow, Jesus begins to heal the man.

1. The first thing Jesus does is he spits.
2. In our sermon on Mark 7, we admit that this gross act had a reason behind it.
3. The ancients believed that spit had healing properties.
4. Although it is extremely gross to us, it wasn't an outrageous thing in Jesus' day.

B. As Jesus puts spit on the man's eyes, Jesus asks "what do you see?"

1. And for the only time ever recorded, the man doesn't shout "I'm completely healed!!!"
2. The man says, "I can see men walking like trees".
 - a. Did Jesus just make a mistake?
 - b. Was Jesus not feeling well that day and miss it?
3. Was it the man's faith that was weak at that moment, causing Jesus to only heal him halfway?
4. The answer to both of these questions is, NO.

- a. Jesus was not off his mark that day.
- b. And the blind man's faith is not to blame.

C. So why does Jesus take two times to completely heal this man?

1. I believe it has to do with the atmosphere of unbelief that Jesus had been dealing with in the life of the Disciples.

- a. They had SEEN Jesus feed thousands.
- b. They had SEEN Jesus heal the deaf, raise the dead, and other miracles.
- c. But they couldn't yet SEE that Jesus was more than a Rabbi and more than a teacher.
- d. They couldn't yet clearly SEE that JESUS was the Son of God.

2. BUT, what they couldn't yet see clearly, they would soon.

3. The next passage, which we will deal with when I get back from vacation, tells us about the day that Peter finally sees Jesus clearly!

Mark 8:27-30 (NIV)

²⁷ Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

²⁸ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

²⁹ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."

³⁰ Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

D. On the day that Jesus was healing a blind man, and doing what the Messiah had promised to do, the disciples still had not decided if Jesus was the Messiah or not.

1. They had not yet declared, "Jesus is the Son of God".

2. Therefore, Jesus used this opportunity to teach His disciples that though their view of Him was currently blurry, someday they would see Him clearly.

5. The faith life of the disciples was a lot like ours.

A. Moments of brilliance followed by moments of abject failure.

1. Jesus knew His disciples were not yet fully convinced.
2. Jesus knew that one of them would never believe and would betray Him.
3. Jesus knew that all of them, except John, would flee when Jesus needed them most.
4. Jesus knew all of this.

B. Very soon, Jesus would announce for the first time that He had come not to set up an earthly Kingdom but would die upon a Roman Cross.

1. Therefore, on this day, Jesus demonstrated the disciple's incomplete faith by doing an "incomplete" or "delayed" miracle.
2. But what started out blurry didn't stay that way very long.

C. The blind man left, fully healed.

1. And soon the disciples would each proclaim clearly that Jesus is the Son of God.
2. What started out blurry became completely clear.

Closing: How would you describe your picture of Jesus?

A. Some of you demonstrate incredible faith in Jesus each and every day.

1. If that is you, here is what I ask of you.
2. For the next few minutes, would you begin to pray right where you are at so that those around you, whose faith is not clear yet, may experience Christ and believe today?

B. For the rest of us, whose Christian walk is characterized by moments of brilliance followed by failure, today may be your day to see Jesus clearly for the first time.

1. Maybe you are here and you see nothing.

- a. No good, no God, no hope.
- b. If that is you, you don't have to stay that way.
- c. Today you can ask God to change your life and He will.

2. Maybe your spiritual vision is blurry.

- a. Like the early disciples, you aren't fully convinced that Jesus is who He says He is.
- b. Maybe you believe just enough that if Jesus is real, then you won't go to hell, but not enough to allow Him to change your life.
- c. Maybe you are tired of being blinded and blurred by all of the junk in your world and you are ready to let God heal and change you completely.

3. Wherever you may be in your spiritual journey, today is the day to see Jesus clearly.

- a. The world doesn't need a church with a blurry vision of Jesus.
- b. The Last Days needs a Jesus who proclaims Jesus with clarity and brilliance.
- c. May our eyes be open to who Jesus is and what He is doing in us and through us.