

The Miracles of Jesus

Miracle # 22

“Jesus Heals the Blind Man”

Mark 8:22-26

The story we have before us now is only recorded in Mark’s gospel account. Typically, the healings that Jesus has performed have always been instantaneous and they have occurred as the result of a **verbal** command. In this miracle we have the only instance recorded in the Bible where Jesus healed someone **gradually**. It also unusual in that Jesus touched this man not once, but **twice**.

“Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. (23) So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. (24) And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking." (25) Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. (26) Then He sent him away to his house, saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town."

The Background of the Miracle (vv. 22-23a)

“Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. (23) So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town.”

In Bethsaida, a fishing village on the edge of the Sea of Galilee, a blind man was brought to Jesus for healing. We do not know much about this man; other than he is presumably a **Gentile** (this is Gentile country) and there is no indication that he comes as a result of his own faith in Jesus’ ability to heal him.

But the friends who bring him have expectations that Jesus will heal him for they **“beg Jesus to touch him.”** People have all kinds of expectations about God. Some relate to the **person** of God. Some see God as an impersonal **force** at work in the world. Some relate to how God works. The plight of the blind man is easy to understand, he only had one thing going for him; he had friends who believed that Christ could heal him. Their belief was not merely theoretical it was also **practical**. They brought their friend to Jesus and begged him to heal him. Where they went wrong was that

they not only believed that Jesus could heal him, they were sure that they knew how Jesus should and would heal their friend.

We must be careful never to box God in, because that results in limiting our usefulness. If we think God can only work along the lines of our experiential or cultural perspective, we unconsciously **resist** Him when He chooses to work in some way that we did not anticipate. The story of this miracle communicates to us that God deals with each of us on the basis of need.

What we notice about the way that Jesus dealt with this man was his **tender-ness** for the text says, "he took him by the hand" (v. 23). There is no way to exaggerate the value of touch. Holding someone's hand is a very personal thing, especially if it is done for any length of time.

The first thing that Jesus does is take the blind man by the hand and lead him **away** from the village. Why did he do this? We can only speculate of course, but it may have been that he wanted this to happen in private so there is no change of a blurred testimony to the nation or because Jesus was sensitive to fact that the proceedings might be embarrassing to the blind man.

At any rate, as Jesus led this man away from the crowd, we must have note that this was not to be a "hurry up" job. This miracle of healing was not done before and "ooing and ahing" crowd. A quiet miracle was first being performed in this man's heart. This should remind us that Jesus is willing to take time with us as individuals, just as he took time with this blind man.

This was no mere man that was leading him by the hand. It was God in the flesh that he was walking hand in hand with. What an inspiring thought, to have such an intimate connection with the greatest power in the universe.

The Effect of the Miracle (vv. 23b-24)

"And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. (24) And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking."

The first stage of the miracle was the application of moisture from the Lord's mouth to the eyes of the blind man. You may find the treatment described is not at all what you expected. And you may even find it repulsive as glazed, diseased, encrusted eyes are sprayed with spittle and then a carpenter's rough, callused hands pressed upon them. But the actions of Jesus now had this blind man's complete attention.

Do you see Anything?

As the Lord's fingers pressed firmly on the man's eyes surely his heart was pounding in expectation. Hope and faith are kindled in his heart, as Jesus asked him what he saw. Jesus purposefully performed only a **partial** healing at this point. But just the little that he saw, caused the faith that had been developing to soar.

God is interested in faith. God is excited by faith. God acts on the basis of faith. God is far more interested in **developing** faith in us than He is in our just our physical healing.

He Put His hands on His Eyes Again. (v. 25)

"Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly."

There are a couple of things that we should note about this second touch.

First as John Calvin, suggests that, "He did so most probably for the purpose of proving, in the case of this man, he had full liberty to his method of proceeding, and was not resisted to a fixed rule." [As quoted by Larry Richards in Every Miracle of the Bible. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1998) p. 219]

In fact Jesus healed at least three blind men in different ways. In the first case, he touched the blind man and he was healed immediately (Mark 10:46-52, Matt. 20:29-34, Lk. 18:35-43). In the second, he spit on the ground and made mud and put the mud on the blind man's eyes and he was healed (John 9). In this case, he spit directly into the blind man's eyes and he was healed. The fact that Jesus varied the method of his healing only proves that He was not bound to any one **method**.

"Now suppose the three blind men met on the street one day and began to compare notes. If they were like some Christian's, their sharing would degenerate into an argument over the proper method of being healed from blindness. And because each had experienced a different method, they would probably be polarized into three distinct sects. As a result of this meeting there would be "touchities," the "mudities," and the "spittities." But they would miss the point wouldn't they?" [J. David Hoke, The Second Touch. pp. 5-6. - www.horizonsnet.org/sermons/mark26.html]

The same thing can happen to us today when we try to limit the working of God to the boundaries of our **experience** or **cultural** perspective.

The second thing is that we often desire and expect the **instantaneous** response of God to our prayers. But we need to be ready to submit to God however He chooses to work in your life, whether it is instantly or over a period of time. In Ephesians 2:10, Paul says that we are God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." When it says that we are God's workmanship it literally means that we are God's

master-pieces. We are individual works of art and the process that God uses to create us into what we are is unique to each person. We must submit to his touch.

His vision is restored

Verse twenty-five says that his vision is "restored" (***apokatestathe***) which is word that means "restored to ***former*** condition of health." This taken along with his ability to describe what he saw (***men walking as trees*** v.24) reveals that he had he probably had not been **born** blind.

Tell no one (v. 26)

"Then He sent him away to his house, saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town."

The request of Jesus was precise; the man was to go home, avoiding the village on the way so as not to publish the fact of the miracle. According to Matthew 11:21 great miracles had been done in Bethsaida and they had only **hardened** their hearts. Perhaps this may account for Jesus' command to this blind man, not to even go into the village.

Whether or not this man carried out the instructions of the Lord any better than others who had been likewise instructed previously (Matt 9:31, Mk 1:45, 7:36), we are not specifically told. But, since we are not told that this man disobeyed (as we were with the others) perhaps we may infer that he did obey.