

Blind at Bethsaida

Mark 8:22-26

Amen. Wonderful to get off to a great start in our service, singing praises, being blessed by the kids, affirming that Jesus is better. Jesus is better; that is so true, and that's what we're continuing to see in Mark's gospel, this focus and emphasis and being amazed at our Savior the Messiah.

As you make your way to Mark, I ask you this morning, if I were just to kind of individually have a conversation with you and ask you do you have a favorite movie, would you right away have something that comes to mind? Right away, you have, oh yeah, this is my go to, my favorite. I actually own it. I have it on Blu-ray, DVD, and VHS because I'm that passionate about this movie or whatever it is. You might have a lot of it memorized. You could probably quote it. If I were to sit with you in your living room and watch it, you could tell me the whole movie before it happens and ruin it for me. You might be one of those people. But more than likely, if you are a person that likes movies, you probably have a favorite movie or something that ranks up there, and you know it really well, in and out, and every time you watch it, you discover new things. Right?

I kind of became aware of how familiar you can become with movies when I had kids - I didn't realize that could go to a whole new level. But I've seen movies far too many times than I ever imagine I would. If you want to know anything about Zootopia, you could feel free to ask me. I'll be the expert. After service, we can have a little Zootopia small group maybe or something like that. But, yeah, even the other day I was pretty impressed with myself. I threw out a little Zootopia quote in the middle of the day, and my wife was, like, where's that from again? I was, like, sigh! You don't remember? Zootopia! And then, I realized how pathetic it was that I was proud of quoting Zootopia - and I digress.

But this is how it is sometimes with our favorite song or favorite movie. We watch it over and over again, and we listen to it over and over again, and sometimes, they're that good. You discover new parts every time, and you're like, wow, I didn't even notice that. That's an amazing little feature. I can't believe I missed that. How many times have I seen this now? And the same thing really can happen in the life of Christ as we're familiar with

Christ. In fact, many believers when they come to put their faith in Christ, kind of the first spot we go is the gospels. We go to Matthew and Mark and Luke and John. We get very familiar with Christ and rightfully so. He's our Savior, and that's where the good news is bound up in, including the rest of the Bible, but we become especially familiar with (and especially if you're grown up in the church), you become so familiar with the gospels and the life of Christ. And you can open up to any gospel and you feel like, oh, I remember this one. I know how it goes, and you could quote it to me. Right? You could tell me how it progresses and the development of the plot and things of that nature. And that happens, but sometimes we grow just a little callous maybe even, a little apathetic, because, oh, we know this one. I've seen this one before. I've heard this one before. And that's a temptation every time we come to study Christ. Every time we come to study our Lord, we think I've read this part of the Bible, so I've kind of got it. Right? But that's not the case. Every time we come, it's like that amazing (if it's a well-made movie), it's like that masterpiece that every time you look at it again, you continue to discover new things. It is that jewel, that diamond that you can just turn over in your hand with the light and just see brilliant new features every time. You're just amazed at this, and that's really the life of our Savior.

As we look at the gospels and continue to study it, sure, maybe you've heard this before, maybe you've read even before, but as we come back to it, hopefully, that's what your experiencing, this turning over of a jewel and just seeing new amazing brilliant features of Christ, and continuing to be amazed at Him and worship Him and follow Him. That's the hope for this morning as we come to another miracle in the life of our Savior in Mark 8:22-26. Join me now and we'll read through our passage for this morning. Mark 8:22-26; "And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. 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?' And he looked up and said, 'I see people, but they look like trees, walking.' Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. And he sent him to his home, saying, 'Do not even enter the village.' " This is our short text for the morning. We come to another miracle in Mark's gospel, and this one's unique in the sense that you cannot find it in any of the other gospel accounts. You won't find it in Matthew, Luke, or John. Much like the

miracle we saw at the end of chapter 7:31-37, where Jesus healed that deaf mute man, in the same way that was unique only to Mark's gospel, so we have this with Jesus healing a blind man now, unique only to Mark's gospel.

As we get into this, it progresses like many of the stories in the narrative of Christ's life and His ministry. As the problem is presented, it's dealt with and then concluded. And so, as we get into it, let's look at our first verse here and see the approach - the approach as the scene is set for us, and we get to the context developed. Verse 22 again says, "...they came to Bethsaida..." ... "And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him." Notice, first, the change in scene. As we've seen over and over, we have to keep tracking and realizing where we are. So, as we think about Jesus's ministry, in chapter 7 we saw a detour. We saw kind of a change from the norm as Jesus took His disciples and got away, went into Gentile territory, in order to show His disciples the heart that they should have for the Gentiles, too, and that they will have in the establishment of the early church.

But that wrapped up, and, really, not too long ago in chapter 8:1-1, after He fed the four thousand in the Decapolis, and that was, as you can tell, there on the southeastern side of the Sea of Galilee. So, then, they crossed over, and they came over to Magadan which is where that little marker is, and that's where we saw them last time, and this was Jesus, and this was Jesus in His encounter with the Pharisees where He ended up rejecting them and refusing to give them what they wanted which was a sign. After all Jesus had done, they wanted more. Give us something else. Give us a sign. And Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to [you]." And He left that place. And then, you'll remember, the last discussion we left off with was kind of following that arrow on the way to Bethsaida, on the way to the other side of the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, and that was when Jesus was with His disciples in the boat and telling them to "...beware of the leaven..." and the life and the faithless and the unbelief of the Pharisees. And instead, the disciples were concerned about bread, literal bread, and Jesus had to rebuke them on the boat ride.

So, now, we see in our text in verse 22, they make it. They make it to Bethsaida, and this is what comes to them as they come to Bethsaida, our verse gets right into "And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him." So, "...some people brought to him a blind

man...” This is not the first time. In fact, if you just think about the last eight chapters, we’ve seen lots of people bringing people to Jesus. There’s been a lot of this. I mean even starting in chapter 1 when Jesus went to Peter’s mother-in-law’s house, and she was sick and ill, and He healed her of her fever, and people heard about this, and the whole town of Capernaum came to the doorstep, and they showed up at the evening and said here we are; heal us. And Jesus went through and ended up healing the town, essentially, of Capernaum. And this is what continued to happen; as Jesus went from place to place and from town to town, we see people brought their sick. They brought their diseased. They brought the demon-possessed to Jesus, just for Him to touch them, even be close in vicinity to Him, that they might be healed. This is common, over and over again. You remember Jesus teaching in the house in Mark 2, and these men brought the paralytic, and they kind of broke a hole in the roof and kind of laid him down in the house where Jesus was teaching, just so that He could interact with this paralytic and heal this man.

And if you look at Mark 7:31-37, again it was a miracle we’ve covered where Jesus healed this deaf and mute man, but in a lot of ways, it really parallels what we’re seeing this morning. It’s very similar (and obviously different in the sense that you have a deaf mute verses a blind person), but it’s pretty similar as you look at this in verse 32; “And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him.” It’s like the same thing - this group of people bringing a diseased person, a sick person, a handicapped person, for Jesus to hopefully touch, and they’re coming with this begging. And this is what we see over and over again. Also, what’s unique, if you think about it, of all the miracles we’ve seen Jesus doing, have we had any mention of blind people yet? If you think about it, and you go back through Mark (hopefully you’re not thinking of anything because we haven’t seen anything), this is the first blind person that has come onto the scene. We’ll see another blind person that comes in Mark 10 with blind Bartimaeus, but this is it. This is the first time we see Jesus interacting with this scenario, a blind person that is brought to Him.

What’s even more significant though is noticing how they come. Look at the manner; “And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him.” ... “...begged him...” A phrase that we’ve seen over and over, not just in chapter 7 as well, but many other people that’ve come to Jesus;

and just think of it this way, when people came to Jesus throughout Mark's gospel, if they came with this attitude, if they came begging Jesus, if they came just pleading with Him, would He refuse to heal them? Absolutely not! He was willing. Anytime people came to Him with this attitude, anytime this was their demeanor where they came humble, begging, pleading, asking for mercy, Jesus was happy to give mercy on these people. That's what He's done over and over again. You think of the woman who had been bleeding for twelve years, and she's just if I could just get close to Him and just touch His garment - and trying not to inconvenience Jesus, trying not to get in the way of what He had to do in His business, but yet, Jesus highlights her example of faith. He's happy to heal these people. He's happy to engage with these people that come and they are low in spirit. The poor in spirit are blessed, and Jesus has shown that over and over again in how He's interacted with these people.

So, you wonder, and we already know as we've read our text, how will Jesus interact with people like this that come begging, that come with this attitude? I mean, if you think about this, sometimes we have hard days, sometimes things just aren't going our way, and at some point in the day, we lash out in anger at the next person that talks to us. It's not fair to that person. Right? We feel so bad for them because it's nothing that they did. They just caught us at a bad time, and we were just so full of rage after everything that happened previously to that encounter, and then they get the wrath. Right? And you feel bad. Well, that's wrong, and if ever there was a time for Jesus to do that, could be now actually, potentially, in the flow of all this, this might be a good time for Jesus to kind of respond in that way and say I've had it. I'm done. Stay away.

And you think, how so? Well, think of what just took place. Jesus getting back into Jewish territory after a successful tour of the Gentile territory, coming back to Magadan and the Jewish territory, and what did He get? Give us more. We're not satisfied and Jesus has to say I'm done with you Pharisees. No more. You are blind spiritually. You cannot handle this. You don't accept it. You have no faith. And so, then you think, okay, Jesus is just like, wow, that's a bummer, to come back into Jewish territory and get that, and so He goes into the boat with the disciples. And you think, okay, that'll be better. He gets with His disciples in the boat. That'll be a good time of comradery and some unity there, coming together, and what are they talking about the whole time in the boat? ...bread! They're worried about lunch.

They're worried about lunch, and they're totally missing what Jesus is trying to warn them about and teach them. So, Jesus has to rebuke them and says you guys still don't get it. Do you still not understand? The unbelief of the Pharisees, it will permeate into you, if you're not careful, as well.

After these two discouraging interactions, He now comes to Bethsaida, and here comes some people that want to be healed, and you think this is a great time for Jesus to say beat it. Not now. Catch Me in the morning, maybe. Right? I'm done with this. I don't want this. But that's now it. That's not how Jesus responds to people that come begging, to people that come with this attitude, this manner, this lowliness, this poor in spirit attitude. It seems like it would be a perfect recipe for Jesus just to lash out and to be angry, but He doesn't. And it's still true of our Savior today, isn't it? We know this. We know this is what Jesus has done over and over in the gospels. He's had plenty of opportunities where He could be inconvenienced by people and say no thanks. I'm done. But He is willing. He's willing. He's compassionate. He's merciful, and you and I know this to true even today. This is the God we sing about. This is our Savior. You and I have this confidence that when we pray, and really when we go to God, we know that He will listen. We have Scripture that teaches us that we can cast all our cares upon Him. Why? Because He cares for us. He really does (Philippians 4:6); "...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." And He hears. When we come to Him with this need, this dependence, begging, He hears. This is the God that we pray to. This is the God that we serve, and this is Jesus once again consistently showing that to be true. If we're not convinced of that, then let this be another aspect, let this be another time to take the jewel, to take the diamond and turn it over and realize, look at it anew, the mercy and compassion of Christ. You cannot miss it. Over and over and over again in the gospels, and you continue to see as you see His day unfold and all the difficulties, and yet, He remains merciful. In fact, His mercies are new every morning. We know this.

Is this how you are though? Are you like these people, begging? Do you even approach our Savior for help? Do you even come to Him with this attitude? Or, maybe, you have the abilities. You're fine with all your responsibilities. You carry them out just fine and well. You really have no need in your life, but you know if you ever do have need, you could talk to God, but as days go, things are kind of lined up just fine for you, and so you

don't have this huge need. Don't be self-sufficient in your responsibilities. Learn. Learn to become dependent upon God every day. Learn the truth of "I need thee ev'ry hour..." Learn the reality that that is true for all of us, and that we need Him for every breath that we inhale and exhale. This is the truth. We need Him. If we see it that way, we will come to Him pleading, begging, in the midst of every day, what we have before us. But maybe you do talk to your Savior, maybe you do feel like I spend time in prayer, but how's your attitude? Is this your demeanor? Is this your approach? As you come to Christ, as you come to God in prayer, do you come with arrogance? Do you come with pride? Do you come expecting God to kind of bend to your will? Do you come expecting God to bless the plans that you already have? Are you that spoiled child expecting their parent to bend over backward for them? Or, do you beg for mercy and grace because we need it, and you recognize that's the only way you can actually live your life, that's the only way you can please Him, and you recognize the truth that when Jesus says apart from Me you can do nothing? That's the truth. Without Him we can do nothing. We are unable; so we must beg. We must come before Him in this manner. Why? Because He's merciful. He's compassionate, and this is not the only text of Scripture that teaches that, but this should be convincing. This should be plenty convincing for us.

As we've already read, we know how Jesus responds to this begging. He doesn't get angry. He doesn't lash out at them. He's willing. He's willing to engage and heal this man. In verses 23-24, we see the first attempt - the first attempt here in this unique miracle in Mark's gospel - the first attempt in verses 23-24; "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?' And he looked up and said, 'I see people, but they look like trees, walking.'" Jesus is responding positively to their attitude as they come, and Mark gives us the vivid details of this story and this healing that's not really like other healings if you think about it. If you think about what we've encountered so far, if you think about the other gospels, if you've read them at some point in your life, you think this one's a little different. There's some aspects of it that are interesting. As we'll work through it, we'll see.

But to begin with, He takes this blind man by the hand. He begins by taking him by the hand and leading Him out of the village. You think, why? Why that? Why does He have this need to take this man by the hand out of the

village? Why can't He just say, hey, follow Me, because He's got a group of people with him, and they can easily lead him, but, no, Jesus, specifically, Himself grabs this man's hand and leads him personally out of the village. It's very similar to this miracle I mentioned at the end of Mark 7. I mean, take a look back at Mark 7:33. Mark 7:33 with the deaf and mute man, it says, "And taking him aside from the crowd privately..." very similar, "...he put his fingers into his ears..." A very odd kind of peculiar way of healing that we saw that time, but this is a similar thing. Jesus is isolating this man from the crowd, taking him away from the village, and when Jesus put His fingers into this man's ears, He was identifying with this man and communicating to him through sign language, compassionately, that He knew this man's needs. And in the same way, Jesus does this with the blind man. He grabs his hand, and He leads him personally because He knows this man's needs. He knows this man's struggle and hardship in life, and He Himself will engage in that.

Notice that it also doesn't just say that He leads him personally. When grabbing his hand Himself, He actually takes him out of the village, right out of the village, isolation, this idea to not deal with the crowd, and this has been a desire of Jesus, and it makes sense a little bit because, as we come to this point in Jesus' ministry, He has done a lot in this Jewish territory. He has spent so much time with these people. In fact, in Matthew's gospel and other accounts, He will actually condemn certain cities like Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, the city they're in right now, and you think, well, why will He condemn these three cities? That seems really harsh. It's simple. He'll condemn them because of the fact that He'd done so many miracles in their midst. He had given them so much teaching, so much exposure to who He is, and yet, they respond in unbelief. They're just the enthusiasts, just there for the show, and Jesus condemns them, and says, "...it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for [you]..." You think, wow, it's harsh. So, Jesus has no appetite to do more miracles in this town. They've got plenty. They don't need more. It's not as if they could have one more display of what Jesus could really do, if they could really see Him heal this blind man, then maybe that would... No! They'd seen plenty, so Jesus removes this man from the town because they did not need more judgment heaped up on them. He'd done plenty in their midst. He removes this man in the midst of this unbelief.

Our verse goes on; "...and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him..." and you further see this kind of peculiar, strange way of doing things. This is odd. Alright, you just wanted to take the man out of the city just to spit on him. Is that why? You had that desire. You didn't want to do it in public so you took him out. No. That's not the case at all. Once again, this kind of seems similar to that miracle that we saw at the end of Mark 7 where He not only stuck His fingers into the man's ears, but after spitting, He touched the man's tongue, the deaf and mute man. And so, here, we have something similar where He compassionately leads the man out of the city, but then He spits on his eyes. And it's very possible that this could be kind of like John 9:6-7 where He healed the blind man there as well; "...he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing." It could be like that. That could be the case here or it could not be. We don't have the specifics. That's another instance in the gospels where Jesus heals in this way though spitting, through His saliva, so to speak.

This is what He does, and then He lays His hands on him, this kind of compassionate but also powerful healing hands that He has, as so many people have come to Him and they've requested this, please lay Your hands, please touch these people because that's all it takes. You're powerful enough, if You would just touch them. So, the odd thing is Jesus does this this kind of peculiar, weird way of healing this man, but then He asks him a question. He asks him, "Do you see anything?" And you might think that's also weird, not only weird how He's acting with this guy, but then to do this and then ask him if he's seeing anything. Is this how Jesus has healed other people? Normally, it's simple. I mean, He's healed people from a distance. He doesn't even know where they are, and He's healing them, or He's in person and all He has to do is say the word and they're healed, or it's a touch and they're healed automatically. There's no question. Jesus never followed up any previous miracles, going did that work out? Do you want a follow-up? Is that okay? Okay, that works. Okay, good, just making sure. That was never what Jesus did. He never had to. He knew full well what He was doing. So, you think, is this a time when He doesn't know? Is this an instance where all a sudden He kind of lost control a little bit, and He's thinking, ahh, did that work? Do you see anything? Shall I try that again? Want Me to spit a little more on you? Alright, is that what's happening here? No. Jesus is in full control. We know this.

We know His sovereignty. We know His knowledge, even, of all this. He's asking because as we see this miracle as a unique miracle, that it doesn't really happen in one main part - it happens in two parts as we see it unfold, and so He knows what's going to happen. He asks this man, "Do you see anything?" expecting the response this man gives. He knows exactly what this man's going to say. Jesus knows that this man's sight is not fully functioning, but at the same time, He does know something has happened, something has happened, no doubt. That's what we go on to read. Right? "And he looked up and said, 'I see people, but they look like trees, walking.'" Right. You kind of think, okay, that's not great. That's something... It's progress. Right? It's progress, considering the man was blind, but now he's seeing something, but you probably shouldn't give him a driver's license just yet. Right? He's not quite there. We don't know if he'd pass some eye exams. He's seeing trees, and so, this leads some people to believe that more than likely this man could see at some point in his life. At some point, he could see, and then he lost his vision. He lost his sight, his ability to see, because now that he's getting some of it back, he's comparing people to trees. Well, how would he know what a tree looks like? Unless, perhaps, that he was born blind, and he kind of felt and understood the thick mass of trees, and just said, okay, it's an undetailed, thick piece of wood, and that's what these people are looking like, but they're moving around. It's possible.

But it's interesting, this kind of way of doing things that Jesus is doing as He's engaging this man and letting him gradually see a little bit, but clearly this man's not there. He has some vision. There's some progress, but he has no idea what he's looking at. He doesn't know. Some people think, okay, this must be unsuccessful. Not at all. In verse 25, we go on to read that Jesus does the full healing in the second attempt, and when I say the word attempt, I'm not at all meaning, like, the first one wasn't good enough. This was Jesus' intention. He's purposeful. He knows exactly what He's doing. There is a reason. There is a purpose to how He's unfolding it this way, and so, after the first initial removal of some barriers so this man can see, now we have the second removal in verse 25; "Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly." Jesus laid His healing hands on this man's eyes. Once again, this is what He'd done, and it's interesting, Mark, here, really gives a vivid display of this miracle because he uses different words for eyes as he goes throughout it. Every time he uses a verb for seeing, it's a different verb. He's

kind of giving you everything possible to let you know, especially in this verse, that this man could see in full clarity - in full clarity no doubt, and that's what happened. As you read the verse, you see kind of it restated in three different ways; "...he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly." Alright? It's pretty obvious what's taking place here. It worked. Right? It worked. This man can see now, kind of like these people when they kind of come out of a successful surgery, and they talk about how great it was. Oh, it was amazing. Now, I can actually eat food. I can throw a ball. Right? I can drive my car, and it doesn't hurt anymore - my shoulder, my elbow, whatever it is, and they talk about all different ideas, yeah, it worked. Got it. Okay. And that's what's happening here. Mark is giving the kind of overwhelming evidence here that this man can now see perfectly. He can see fine and clearly.

So, with all this in mind, you think this has already been a little odd, but the two-step thing is so bazaar. Does Jesus heal like this? Can you think of other miracles where He healed people in two phases? And you think, not really. I can maybe think of a couple that are similar, but this seems so unique, and so people start to speculate. And at this point, I think it's worth actually trying to understand this and also to make you aware of what some people say, just in case your reading commentaries as well; and just as a little tangent, to talk about Bible interpretation, how to study the Bible, and how to make sure we're getting it right, we're actually understanding what's in front of us here and not getting some other understanding that's not what God intended or Mark even.

For instance, some people kind of say that the solution is, aw, maybe this was just a particularly hard miracle. This man was, you know, really at a detriment or there was even some demon possession involved, so it just took a little more work. It took a little more time. It took a little more effort. That's just ridiculous because let's see, God created the world just by speaking; He flooded the earth as well. Is anything hard for God? Not really, so if Jesus is God in human form, I don't think this is a different kind of miracle because He's up against a really, particularly difficult situation with this blind man. So, it's not that. Some people will actually say that. Some people actually say perhaps (and this is the most popular view), perhaps this miracle was more than just a supernatural act. Maybe there's more than what meets the eye here in our text. So, what we see is Jesus healing a blind man. That's at face value, but maybe there's more going on. Maybe what's really

happening is there's this symbolic background, this symbolic working of Jesus healing the spiritual blindness of the disciples, and He's doing it in these phases. And you think, oh, that's interesting. That sounds like a really deep interpretation. Right? Another way of looking at this passage, and, you know, they have different reasons for why they say that, that seem kind of interesting. For instance, if you look back up at verse 18, the text we covered the last time we were in Mark - Jesus on the boat ride. What did He say to His disciples when He was rebuking them? "Having eyes do you not see...?" And so, they'd say, look, He already rebuked them for this saying, spiritually, it doesn't seem like they can see and understand Him. And then, there's this two-step miracle that takes place. And let's look ahead - let's look at the verses next time, verses 27 and following. Well, what happens? Look at verse 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?' And they told him, 'John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.' And he asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Christ.' " And you say that's right! That's the right answer. And so some people say (based on that the question of their spiritual sight and then Peter's right answer after in the middle here), Jesus wasn't just healing a blind man, He was healing the spiritual vision of the disciples.

And you think, well, that's an interesting thought. I mean, I wonder, you know, is that possibly what's also happening here? The hard thing with this is, as you look throughout the rest of Mark's gospel, the disciples are still really slow, and they still don't understand. They still mess up. They will still not understand what's taking place, not just in who Jesus is. So, they'll have moments where they'll say, "You're the Christ..." but then they'll start to think, wait, are you the Christ? And they'll question it all, and they'll throw it way back, and they don't know, and then even His mission, wait, You're going to die? I don't know about that. Is the Messiah supposed to die? Hold on, I'm not getting this, or is this supposed to be the timing of it all? And so, the disciples, they don't have the spiritual vision until we all can really see in the book of Acts. That's when the Holy Spirit comes, and that's when they go out, and they become the boldest heralds and proclaimers of the gospel. There's no doubt about that. So, it really takes the resurrection of Jesus and His ascending into heaven for them to be convinced that they know who Jesus is and what He's done, that they can then go out and preach boldly. They then obviously have vision. They spiritually see and

understand. So, if that's the case, then is it actually legitimate to say that in this text this is what's happening as well in the background, Jesus is not just healing a physical person He's also spiritually healing their blindness as the disciples? I think it sounds really nice, but I think that's just not what the Bible says.

I think we need to be careful because this is what will happen. Sometimes you pick up commentaries, what men have said about the Bible, and they're really helpful, and they tell you lots of information that we wouldn't know, about the original languages and the background and everything, and you're thinking, aw, this is really great. I understand this a lot better now because of these commentaries. But if you pick up an average commentary on this particular passage in Mark, most of them will say that, that there's more taking place here. It's the spiritual background of Jesus healing the disciples' sight. And you look at our passage, and I don't see anything about that. I see Jesus healing a blind man. That's what He's doing. And that is amazing. Let me add that. Right? That is amazing. We shouldn't lose sight of that, the very fact that He's healing a blind man, has He done that yet in Mark's gospel? No, He has not. This is incredible that He would actually do this, interact with sick people. Sure, right, all these other things He's done, but now a blind person? And why is that so incredible? It's pretty simple based on some scriptures we have from the Old Testament. Who heals blind people? Who gives them sight? If you just look at the Old Testament, it's God. There's no question. The Lord is the One who does this. The Lord alone has this power and ability. So, for Jesus to do this in this passage right here, we have a bold and obvious teaching that Jesus is not just a man, He's God.

And so, you take the diamond and you turn it over again, and you see another brilliant feature of how Jesus alone can actually heal the blind and give them sight. He's God. And you keep looking at other aspects of the Old Testament teaching, and when it talks about this coming Kingdom and the reign of the Messiah on this earth and then eventually the new heaven and the new earth, it talks about how the fallen world, all the sickness that's around us, not just the sin, but the physical ailments, they're going to go away when the Messiah comes, and one of the signs of this is, "Then the eyes of the blind shall [see]..." Jesus Himself here in this text doing what they would expect the Messiah to do in the Kingdom. That's amazing. That is amazing for these disciples to behold this, to witness this, to recognize that

they have with them no mere man. This is God, and more than that, this is the Messiah. This is the Messiah with them, the One who can bring in the Kingdom (Isaiah also states this in 35). So, there's no getting around this, and this is the obvious part. And for some reason, I think, perhaps some commentators and some scholars think, yeah, yeah, that's all well and good. I'm going to look for something deeper. The concern is if you look for a deeper meaning in the text, it might not actually be there, and we need to be careful about that.

So, what can we do with this text? Let it be the miracle that it is, a vivid and unique portrayal of Jesus' power over the effects of the fall - Jesus' claim to be God - Jesus' demonstration that He's the Messiah; that's amazing, that's an incredible teaching because He healed this man. But I know what you're thinking. Okay, this sounds good, Cody, but still, why the two steps? Tell me. Why the two steps? He doesn't do that in other places. Well, could it be as simple as if this man used to see at one point in time, and he gradually became blind? Doesn't Jesus have the freedom to gradually restore his sight to show that He can reverse the effects of the fall. Yeah, of course Jesus could've snapped His fingers, and the guy could see right away, but maybe Jesus is showing, hey, the same way that you gradually lost your sight, look what I will do; I will reverse that entire process. It will apply to you and to the entire world because I'm the Messiah. I'm the King, the Son of God. So, if you want to ask what is Mark doing in this text as he puts it here, I think it's simple. I think he's just upholding the very thesis of why he's writing which is the first verse of the letter Mark 1:1; "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ [the Messiah], the Son of God." This passage, Jesus healing a blind man, shows them He's the Messiah. He's the Son of God because only the Messiah and Son of God can do something like this. That's incredible; let that be enough. Let that be a diamond that you continue to turn over and see these brilliant features coming forth of Christ, who He is, His character, that He is God, that He is the Messiah. This is what we see in this second attempt which is really just Jesus' prerogative and how He wants to heal this man.

After this healing, we see the quick ending here in verse 26. This is where we find the admonition - the admonition in verse 26; "And he sent him to his home, saying, 'Do not even enter the village.'" ... "And he sent him to his home, saying, 'Do not even enter the village.'" This is once again another aspect of Christ that comes forth in this really loaded small passage. In the

beginning, we saw Him willing to be merciful and compassionate to these men that came begging Him. We saw His mercy and compassion, and then we turn the diamond more, and we saw Him interacting with this blind man and healing this blind man, and we saw His clear claim to be the Messiah and God at the same time, and now we see His humility come out - His humility. We all love it. We love the appreciation of others. We love when people recognize what we do. We love it when people come up to us, pat us on the back. When we have a following, a crowd, or some type of fame of any sort, we love it. And Jesus could have all of it if He wanted. Let this man go back and tell the village. Why not do the whole miracle in the village? This isn't Jesus' way of operating, not just because they had seen enough, but also, this is not what Jesus desires. He doesn't want to come and set up the show and get all the popularity and let the enthusiasm and the excitement rise up. He's after something greater.

And if you think about it, this is what we've seen sometimes. He's done this often where He's told people to not say something, and there's a difference. When it's been demons that are speaking out, and demon possessed people that are saying "You are the Christ." ... "...the Son of God." ...and He tells them to be quiet, they're quiet. They shut up right away, but when there's these people and He says, why don't you go back? But you don't have to tell people about this, and yet, they go tell people. And you think, well, Jesus why don't You stop them? There's something different there. With demons, He shuts them up. And if He wanted to stop the people from talking, He could too, but He lets them talk, and that's fine, and His whole point is because He doesn't want that to be the main attraction. So, what does He want the main attraction to be? It's simple. The main attraction comes at the end of His life and ministry. The main attraction comes when He gathers His disciples and His resurrected body and says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." That's the work I want you to tell people about. Don't go and tell people about, oh, yeah, He healed this person, and He fed these people a free lunch, and He did that. Those are great things. That's fine, but I want you to stay with Me. You haven't seen it all yet. You need to see the greatest miracle; that is Him dealing with sin on the cross, offering up His life and then conquering death three days later, coming out of the grave. That's what He wants them to see. That's what He wants people to get, and that's when He tells people to go and preach. He says now go; take that one out. That's the truth. That's the good news. That's what the world needs. This is why Jesus is humble in His ministry throughout. He's humble,

telling this man, don't go into the village, just go home, just go straight to your house. Don't worry about telling everyone about this. This is His desire to be unnoticed in this regard.

And as you see, this small passage, it just becomes more and more alive as we're familiar with Jesus, and there's things we say about Him and how powerful He is, and, yeah, we say He's the Son of God, but you have a passage, a simple, short passage like this, and you see all of it just brilliantly shining forth. In the same passage this is amazing mercy in the front end, the fact that He even relates to these people and shows compassion to this man, but then, also, the power, the qualifications He has because of how He has healed this man that He can be claimed as the Son of God, and He is the Messiah bringing in the New Age, but also, here at the end, that He is humble in what He does, and we follow His example of humility, just brilliant, amazing, amazing picture of our Lord that we get to see, not some need to go deeper and find some meaning that's really not there, but enough of who Christ is and for us to be in awe and to be amazed. Think of His mercy towards us. Think about the fact that even in our failure to come begging, the times when we are rebellious, He's still merciful. He's still gracious to us. Think of the power that He has had in your life, the power to be able to allow you to walk in righteousness and no longer in the sin that you once loved. Think of the hope that He's given you; because He's conquered death, now you have hope that you too will be with Him in glory. And think of the example of humility that we get to live out. He lived it perfectly. We don't need people's fame. We don't need the praise of men. We have obedience to our God as enough as Jesus lived out and modeled. He was obedient to the point of death on the cross; that's the humility that we get to model and look forward to.