

Title: **“HE SAW EVERY MAN CLEARLY.”**

Text: Mark 8:22-26

Reading: *1 Corinthians 2:1-16*

Subject: *The Gradual Healing of the Blind Man*

Date: Sunday Morning — October 23, 2005

Tape # Y-79a

Introduction:

I want us to look at Mark 8: 22-26. Four or five years ago, Bro. Rex Bartley read this passage to us and made a few brief comments. They struck me, at the time, as tremendously insightful and instructive. So I wrote them down, hoping the Lord might give me a message from this text. I have no idea how many times I have read these five verses, rolling over Bro. Rex's comments in my mind since that night. Now, I believe, I have a message from our God for you. May God the Holy Spirit enable me to deliver it and enable you to hear it, for the glory of Christ and the everlasting good of your souls.

Mark 8: 22-26 records one of our Savior's miracles that is recorded by none of the other Evangelists. Mark alone was inspired to tell us about the healing of this blind man at Bethsaida.

None of our Lord's miracles were accidental or mere representations of his supernatural power over physical things. Every miracle performed by the Master was designed to teach us spiritual, gospel truths, particularly truths about the workings of his grace in his elect. On this occasion, we see a blind man who was healed

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gradually, by degrees. This is the only time in the New Testament that happened. So, we might properly expect that that is, in itself, highly significant and instructive.

(Mark 8:22-26) “And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. (23) And 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 upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. (24) And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. (25) After that he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. (26) And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell *it* to any in the town.”

Proposition: The healing of this blind man is a picture of the way God saves chosen, redeemed sinners by the almighty power and grace of his Holy Spirit.

Keep your Bibles open on your laps and follow the account here given by Mark of this remarkable event. I pray that as our Lord Jesus took this poor blind man by the hand he will take you by his hand and lead you to himself, giving you light, and grace, and life by his almighty power.

BROUGHT BY FRIENDS

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Verse 22. “*And he cometh to Bethsaida.*” — Bethsaida was a fishing village, the home of Andrew, Peter, and Philip (John 1:44). The Lord Jesus came here on an errand of mercy. In verse 13, we read that our Savior left the Pharisees. What solemn words we read there, “*And he left them!*” Having left them in judgment, he came to Bethsaida on an errand of mercy, seeking one of his lost sheep for whom the “*time of love had come,*” a poor blind man who must now receive his sight. — “*And they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.*” — **Here is a blind man brought to the Lord Jesus Christ by his friends.** Mark tells us three simple, but very important and instructive things in this verse.

1. This man was blind.

In that fact, he is representative of all men in their natural, unregenerate state. Whether religious or irreligious, educated or uneducated, all human beings are spiritually blind. This poor man did not have so much as one faint, glimmering ray of light until the Lord Jesus touched him. That is exactly the case all men naturally. It is not that there is a lack of light, but a lack of sight.

(Romans 3:11) “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.”

(1 Corinthians 2:14) “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know

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them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

This poor soul did not have the least glimmering of any thing, until he was touched by Christ. So it is with every man by nature. You who are without Christ, who alone is Light, live in darkness. You have no sight. You cannot see yourself. You cannot see the kingdom of God, or the things of God. You are blind.

- You are poor, miserable, wretched, and naked. But you cannot see it, because you are blind.
- The Son of God stands before you. But you cannot see him, because you are blind.
- God’s salvation is displayed before your eyes. But you cannot see it, because having eyes, you see not. You are blind.

2. This poor blind man’s friends brought him to the Master.

We are not told that this blind man believed anything or expected anything from the Lord at all. He seems to have come to the place where the Master was simply because his friends persuaded him to do so. What a blessed man he was to have such friends!

- He did not know Christ, but his friends did.
- He did not believe Christ, but his friends did.
- He would never have come to Christ, but his friends brought him.

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3. Having done all that they could do, this blind man’s friends “besought the Lord Jesus to touch him.”

They could not heal him, but they knew Christ could. This blind man, it appears, did not have sense enough to pray for himself. So his friends prayed for him.

- Blessed is the man who has such friends!
- Blessed is the man who is such a friend!

DIVINE SEPARATION

Now, read verse 23. Here, we see our Savior performing his operation of grace upon this man in a most unusual way. We have no other picture like this in all the Word of God. He performs his work gradually and in private. Surely this is intended to teach us some things we need to learn and remember. This is what the Son of God does for sinners in the saving operations of his grace, when he turns them from darkness to light.

(Mark 8:23) “And 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 upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.”

First, the Master took him by the hand. That was in itself an act of great condescension. But here is a far greater act of condescension. One day the Lord Jesus took me by the hand! He took me in his hand as my

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Surety in old eternity. Taking me in his hand, he separated me from all the rest of the human race by sovereign election and particular redemption. Then, at the appointed time of his love, the God of all grace stooped to take me by the hand in effectual calling. **And I am here to tell you that...**

- If he takes you into his hand, he will open your blind eyes.
- If he takes you by the hand, he will never let you go.
- If he takes you by the hand, you are perfectly safe. No man can pluck you out of his hand.
- If he takes you by the hand in time, he took you in his hand before time began.

When the Lord Jesus takes sinners by the hand, he “becomes their guide and leader. A better, and safer guide they cannot have. He brings them by a way they know not, and leads them in paths they had not known before; makes darkness light before them, and crooked things straight, and does not forsake them.” *John Gill*

Next, he led him out of the town. As Hosea allured Gomer and brought her into the wilderness, that he might speak comfortably to her, so the Lord Jesus graciously brings the chosen sinner away to himself alone, that he might speak comfortably to his beloved in the time of love.

Illustration: *The Adulterous Woman — John 8*

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He led this poor blind man out of the town because he was not interested in the town, but in this one man. He did not want the applause of the people of Bethsaida, but the heart of this sinner. The people of Bethsaida, because of their unbelief, were declared unworthy even to witness the wondrous works of Christ (Matt. 11:21). So *“he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town.”*

When the Son of God saves his people, he calls them out of the world. He bids us come unto him without the camp.

- Outside The Camp Of Human Religion.
- Outside The Camp Of Worldly Ambition.
- Outside The Camp Of Sin’s Dominion.
- Outside The Camp Unto Him!

Oh, how I pray that he would do that for you who yet do not know him! Can you imagine how elated, how thrilled, how excited this man’s friends were when they saw the Master stretch out that arm which they knew was the arm of omnipotence in mercy, love, and grace to their friend?

A DESPISED MEANS

Now, watch this. — **The next thing our Savior did, if he had allowed anyone to see it, would have been**

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looked upon as an utterly despicable, contemptible, and foolish thing. — “*And when he had spit on his eyes.*”

Why did he do that? Many suggest that because it was a common medical practice (Doctors believed there was healing, medicinal power in saliva!) our Lord used the common medical practice of the day to heal the man, adding to it his divine power. Needless to say, I do not agree. The Son of God did not employ falsehood to perform his work.

But our all-wise Savior did choose (and still chooses) to use a terribly despicable means to perform his work of grace upon this poor blind man. — God has chosen the foolishness of preaching to save his elect. The spit from the Savior’s lips represents the eye salve of the gospel with which the Son of God anoints the eyes of the blind.

(Revelation 3:18) “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”

AN OMNIPOTENT TOUCH

After spitting on the man’s eyes, the Lord Jesus “*put his hands upon him.*” The touch of his hand is the symbol of

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his omnipotent grace, without which the means of grace, the preaching of the gospel, is utterly useless.

A SOVEREIGN SAVIOR

We have before us a picture of our Lord’s sovereignty in the exercise of his grace. God will not be put in a box. He never limits himself and cannot be limited by men. He heals some gradually and others immediately, some with spit and others without any spit. All saved sinners trust the same Savior, experience the same grace, and believe the same gospel. But we do not all experience grace the same way. This will come as a shock to some; but God does not deal us all the same way. In fact, we are told in the New Testament of at least five blind men who were healed by our Savior (Matt. 9:27-30; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43; John 9:1-7). Three were healed by his mere word, without his touch. One was healed by the Savior spitting in his eyes and touching them. And another was healed by our Savior spitting on the ground, making clay, and anointing his eyes with the clay. In all five cases, there were certain things that were done differently.

Illustration: *“Mudite Baptists
and Non-mudite Baptists”*

TREES WALKING

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After he touched the blind man’s eyes, the Savior asked him if he could see anything, “*and looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking*” (v. 24).

He could see, but not very clearly. So it is with us. When the Lord God saves a sinner, he is immediately translated from darkness to light. Every saved sinner sees the kingdom of God; but we do not immediately see everything in the kingdom of God.

When the Son of God, who came to give light to this spiritually blind sinner, my experience of his grace was much like that of the blind man in our text. — *First*, the Savior spit in his eyes and touched them. As a result of the Savior’s gracious work, when he looked up he saw “*men as trees, walking.*” That might not seem like much to us, but I assure you it was much to this man who had been blind! His sight was imperfect and the objects obscure; but he could see!

That is often the way it is with new born babes in the family of God. They may not see much, and may not see clearly, but they see. It should be remembered, and remembered with great thankfulness, that seeing beats the daylight out of blindness! If you have any true spiritual sight, any true spiritual knowledge, you have great reason to lift your heart in praise to the Son of God. Though you may not see as clearly as you wish, if you see “*men as trees, walking,*” it is beyond doubt evident that he has given you eyes to see; and seeing eyes are the result of him giving you life.

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If I see the Lord Jesus Christ as my all-sufficient and complete Savior, trusting him alone as my Savior, I am born of God. Seeing is but another word for faith in the Book of God. And if I have faith in Christ, I have eternal life in him. Seeing is the evidence of life. Seeing, believing on the Son of God, I have a good report from God himself that I am his (Heb. 11:1-2; 1 John 5:1).

(Hebrews 11:1-2) “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (2) For by it the elders obtained a good report.”

(1 John 5:1) “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”

I long to see more of him, and to see him more plainly; but the sight I now have is the blessed gift of God to my soul. And the fact that I now see begets in me a lively hope that he who has begun his good work of grace in me will perform it to perfection. **Robert Hawker** wrote...

“The way to ascertain the reality of spiritual life, is not unsimilar to what is done in doubtful cases in respect to animal life. It is a sure sign of life if the body feel, though the other symptoms of health may be suspended. There is a vast difference between deadness and death. If a man cannot speak, yet is he conscious of what others say? If he

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cannot make signs, yet can he take food? If he cannot take food, doth he move? If he doth not move, doth he breathe? Still then there is life. And, in like manner, the soul that is breathing after Jesus, though he doth not move, hath life. He is looking up, like this poor creature, and all he seeth is imperfect. But Jesus will do by him as by this blind man. — He will put his hand upon him again, and at length he will make him to behold every object clearly.”

When God first saved me, I knew whom I believed; but I did not know much about him.

- I knew that the Lord Jesus Christ is my God and Savior; but I didn't know much about eternal Sonship and the distinction of persons in the Holy Trinity.
- I was convinced of my sin; but I didn't know the difference between iniquity, transgression, and sin.
- I was convinced that Christ had brought in everlasting righteousness for me, and that I had no righteousness but him; but I knew nothing about imputation and forensic righteousness.
- I was convinced that judgment was finished by the judgment of my sin in Christ my Substitute; but I didn't know a thing about forensic justification.
- I knew that it was God who had saved me, that “*Salvation is of the Lord;*” but I didn't know a thing about the decrees of God.

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If you had asked me about lapsarianism, I would probably have said, “I don’t know anything about Lapland.” — If someone had asked me about election, I would most likely have said, “I’m not old enough to vote.” — This is what I am saying: I knew my Savior; but I really knew very little about how he had saved me. I could say with the blind man our Lord healed in John 9, “*Once I was blind, but now I see.*” Yet, I didn’t see much. All I saw was “*men as trees walking.*”

I said all that to say this. — Let us never “*despise the day of small things,*” with regard to ourselves or others. We do not learn everything at once. I didn’t and you didn’t.

But the picture of our Savior’s work does not end here. He who touched me is the God of...

THE SECOND TOUCH

(Mark 8:25) “After that he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.”

When the Master touched this man’s eyes a second time and made him look up, he was restored and “*saw every man clearly.*”

(Proverbs 4:18) “But the path of the just *is* as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the

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perfect day.”

So it is with us. Our shining light increases, and shines more and more unto the perfect day. The fact is, as long as we live in this world, the light we have is far from perfect, even among those who see the most and see most clearly. I am sorry to have to tell you this, but there are some things you do not yet know, and some things you know about which you know very little. It must be, if we are truthful, acknowledged that we “*see through a glass darkly.*”

Now, let me remind you of what Rex told us after reading this passage to us. He said, “When Christ heals a sinner, restores his sight, and makes him look up to him, he sees every man clearly.” Then he named four specific men spoken of in Holy Scripture, in whom every man is included, and said, “When a sinner is taught of God, he sees these four men clearly.”

THE FIRST MAN

When a sinner is taught of God, he sees the first man, Adam, clearly.

(1 Corinthians 15:45) “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit.”

(Romans 5:12-14) “Wherefore, as by one man sin

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entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (13) (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. (14) Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.”

- A Representative Man
- A Fallen, Sinful Man
- A Spiritually Dead Man
- A Typical Man

THE SECOND MAN

The first man, Adam, was made in the image and likeness of the second Man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

- The God-man
- The Obedient Servant
- Our Divine Surety
- The Lord Our Righteousness

(1 Corinthians 15:45-49) “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit. (46) Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. (47) The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* the Lord from heaven. (48) As *is* the

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earthy, such *are* they also that are earthy: and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly. (49) And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

(Romans 5:15-21) “But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. (16) And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification. (17) For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) (18) Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. (19) For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. (20) Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: (21) That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

(1 Corinthians 1:30-31) “But of him are ye in

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Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (31) That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

(Colossians 2:9-10) “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (10) And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:”

Do you see the second Man clearly?

- In His Incarnation
- In His Obedience
- In His Death
- In His Resurrection — “*Justified in the Spirit!*”
- In His Exaltation — Upon His Throne!
- At the Father’s Right Hand — Your Advocate!

THE NATURAL MAN

Then, the Scriptures speak of the natural man, that is man in his lost, ruined condition, without Christ. All who are taught of God see the natural man clearly.

(1 Corinthians 2:14) “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.”

- Depraved

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- Lost
- Condemned

The natural man is dead in trespasses and in sins, without Christ, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger to the covenant of promise, having no hope, without God, in this perishing world.

THE NEW MAN

There is another man set before us in the Book of God. And all who are taught of God see him clearly, too. The Holy Spirit calls him “*the new man.*”

(Ephesians 4:24) “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

(Colossians 3:10) “And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:”

This new man is that holy thing in you called, “*Christ in you, the hope of glory,*” that which is “*born of God,*” “*his seed*” that remaineth in you, “*the spirit,*” “*the divine nature.*” John tells us, “*he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*”

- The new man “*created in righteousness and true holiness.*”

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- The new man, “*the spirit*,” that is in you is at war with the old man, the natural man, “*the flesh*.”
- The new man delights in the law of God.

(Galatians 5:16-25) “*This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (17) For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. (18) But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. (19) Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, (20) Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, (21) Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (24) And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. (25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

- This new man is a new creature in Christ.

(2 Corinthians 5:17) “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed

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away; behold, all things are become new.”

- All who have been born of God are one new man in Christ, one with him and one in him, “*the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*”

(Ephesians 2:13-15) “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (14) For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; (15) Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace.”

(Colossians 3:10-11) “And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: (11) Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all.”

We see “*every man clearly*,” but not perfectly. But, soon, that will change. Soon, we shall see face to face and know, as we are known. How clearly will all things be seen in the new Jerusalem. There there will be no need of the light of the sun or the moon of gospel ordinances; but Christ, the Lamb will be the everlasting light that City in which the nations of them that are saved shall

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walk! There, we shall see him face to face. Then, and not until then, will we see all things perfectly.

TELL IT NOT

There is one more thing I want you to see in this passage. It may seem strange, and it should. In verse 26 the Lord Jesus Christ, our God who “*delighteth in mercy,*” performs an act of judgment. That, too, is his work; but it is “*his strange work.*”

(Mark 8:26) “And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell *it* to any in the town.”

Our Savior told this man to go home. And he specifically commanded him not to go back to Bethsaida and not to tell anyone in that town what the God of all grace had done for him. Why?...

The Lord Jesus had done many wonderful works among the inhabitants of Bethsaida; but they did not believe him. Therefore, because they would not hear him and would not believe him, he left them to themselves! This is horrible to consider; but it is his just judgment upon men who will not receive his Word (Pro. 1:23-33).

- Israel After the Flesh
- The Nations
- Individual Churches — When he takes away the candlestick, no man can set it up.

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What great wrath our God heaps upon those who refuse to believe him! He orders his servants to preach no more to them. He allows none to tell them of the good news of life and salvation by him. He even commands his prophets not to pray for them. And even if they try to do otherwise, they simply cannot.

As soon as our Lord had healed this man, he took his disciples and left town (v. 27), but not until he had healed him.

Application:

1. Let us bring our families and friends to the Savior, praying that he might touch them
2. Has some caring friend brought you here, hoping that the Lord God might touch you? Be wise, cry out to him, *“Pass me not, O blessed Savior!”*
3. You who have been blessed of God to be in this place where God has placed his candlestick, cherish it. Hear his Word and receive it gladly, and pray that he may be pleased ever to shine forth the light of the gospel in this place and from this place into this dark, dark world, using us to bring light to the blind for the glory of Christ.

Amen