

# Then His Eyes Were Opened

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(Mark 8:22-29)

## I. Introduction

- A. In 1985, I got word while at camp that I had to move to Memphis for 2 weeks
  - 1. Due to someone's error (mine), I only had 2 weeks to finish my thesis.
    - a. I left camp, drove 17 hours to Memphis and hunkered down in dorm
    - b. After a week at camp and a long drive, I was not a happy camper!
  - 2. My little pity-party was interrupted when I met my suitemate Darryl.
    - a. Darryl was also rushing to beat a deadline, but not due to procrastination
    - b. Darryl was blind; he had to rely on books-on-tape and volunteer readers
    - c. I got more than just a degree in those two weeks—I got an education
  - 3. We hung around and went out to eat—he seemed to enjoy my discomfort
    - a. He'd grin when he would said, *“Oh, I see”* or *“Well, see you later”*
    - b. We use sight expressions like that all the time without realizing it
      - 1) We say *“I see”* when what we really mean is *“I understand.”*
      - 2) We say *“open your eyes”* if we want someone to really think
      - 3) Someone may have *vision* or *foresight*; if not, they have *hindsight*
      - 4) If we really know someone, then we can *see right through them*
- B. So we use sight as a common metaphor for other things, and so does Jesus.
  - 1. Due to disease and accident, blindness was common in the first century.
    - a. The Jews saw blindness as the ultimate punishment from God (**John 9:2**)  
*“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”*
    - b. Begging was only option; the blind we meet in gospels are all beggars
  - 2. So it is no surprise that Jesus had special compassion on the blind
    - a. Healing the sight of the blind was one of Jesus most common miracles
    - b. He also deals with spiritually blind who don't need glasses... but a clue
    - c. And sometimes Jesus deals with both physical and spiritual blindness
  - 3. That happens in **John 9** at healing of one blind man (**John 9:39**).  
*Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.”*
  - 4. Also happens in yesterday's reading, a strange story only in **Mark 8:22-26**

## II. Then His Eyes Were Opened: The Text (Reading: Mark 8:22-26)

- A. At first glance, this may seem to be just another of Jesus' healing stories
1. Jesus has compassion on one with physical malady (*in this case blindness*)
    - a. Jesus heals him and tells him not to go into the village (*to tell people*)
    - b. **Messianic Secret:** Jesus keeps identity quiet until after Peter's confession
  2. But something that makes this healing story **very different** from others
    - a. The man is **twice touched**. This is the only time Jesus has to try twice
    - b. Every other healing was instantaneous; why does Jesus touch him twice?
  3. Why does it take this second zap? *Like dialing up power on defibrillator?*
- B. The answer, I think, is found in the context; look back in our reading in Mark
1. Look at the miracles of feeding of 5000 and walking on the water (6:30-56)
    - a. Apostles saw Jesus' feed multitude with nothing more than a sack lunch
    - b. It was right after that miracle that Jesus walked to meet them on the water
      - 1) Why were the apostles terrified (6:50) and completely amazed (6:51)
      - 2) Why? They didn't understand meaning of feeding the 5000 (6:52)  
*for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.*
    - c. They saw the miracles, but they didn't understand what they meant
    - d. So the apostles saw, but then they didn't really see at all!
  2. Then Pharisees accuse them of breaking tradition in hand-washing (7:1-23)
    - a. Jesus attacks the reliance on tradition as setting aside the word of God
    - b. Then Jesus explains about what makes someone truly unclean (7:15)  
*Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean'*
      - 1) Though Jesus expects them to get it, the apostles don't get it at all
      - 2) Jesus is exasperated, "Are you so dull?" (7:18). He explains point
    - c. Again, the apostles saw the parable, but then they didn't see it at all.
  3. After feeding of 4000 (8:1-13), Jesus warns the apostles of Pharisees (8:15)  
*"Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod"*
    - a. They think that Jesus is upset with them because they forgot to pack lunch
    - b. Jesus goes over the details of the two miraculous feeding stories (8:17-20)
    - c. He says, "Do you still not understand?" (8:21). *They saw, but they didn't*

- C. So there's a pattern here that leads to this strange healing story in **Mark 8**.
1. Jesus powerfully reveals himself, but the apostles keep missing it
    - a. They saw all the miracles, but they really don't see them at all.
    - b. They heard Jesus' teaching, but they continued to just not get it.
    - c. And immediately after all these failures, Jesus heals a blind man.
      - 1) Jesus touches him and he sees, but he doesn't see everything clearly
      - 2) For him to see clearly, then Jesus had to touch him a second time
  2. I think what is happening is that Jesus uses this healing as a metaphor
    - a. The disciples are beginning to see, but not clearly (*trees walking around*)
    - b. Before the disciples will ever see clearly, Jesus must touch them again
    - c. The only way they will really see is to continue to be touched by Him
  3. What comes next in our reading is Peter's "***good confession***" (**8:27-30**)
    - a. Peter's confession changes everything in Mark's story of Jesus'
      - 1) Up to this point, Mark is showing us exactly who Jesus is
      - 2) After this point, it's about what Jesus means— point to the cross
    - b. Even as Peter makes his confession, he doesn't really understand
      - 1) Peter tries to correct Jesus when he predicts his coming death (**8:32**)
      - 2) Peter sees Jesus, but not clearly—he needs to be touched again
    - c. The blind man who is twice-touched points disciple to our need as well

### **III. Then His Eyes Were Opened: The Application**

- A. Like the apostles, we must remain forever open to Jesus' second touch
1. There are two very important points we need to see in this context.
    - a. **First:** The apostles faith gave them a relationship with Jesus
    - b. **Second:** They continually had a hard time really understanding Him
  2. Like the blind man, they saw but with a vision that was blurred
    - a. They saw Jesus, but he looked like something different (earthly king)
      - 1) They stayed near Jesus and allowed Him to touch them again-n-again
      - 2) They finally came to see Him clearly—like the blind man saw clearly
    - b. Like the apostles, we must stay near Jesus and he touched again-n-again
    - c. Like a mustard seed, faith begins small and grows slowly & powerfully

3. What made the disciples of Jesus truly disciples? They hung around Jesus
    - a. They didn't always get it. Sometimes there were really, really confused
      - 1) Sometimes they **KNEW** they were confused (*beware leaven of Pharisees*)
      - 2) Sometimes they **DIDN'T KNOW** how confused (*Peter corrected Jesus*)
    - b. Even though they didn't get it, they continued to stay close to Jesus
    - c. They had to be touched again; that's object lesson ... and what we need
- B. At the cross, Jesus touched us, healed us and made us new (2 Cor 5:17)**  
*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*
1. This renewal takes through God's grace and the Spirit's (Titus 3:5)  
*he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit*
    - a. We weren't saved because we got it all right or figured it out right
    - b. We were saved by grace and washed in baptism and made new
  2. Like the blind man touched by Jesus, things are often unclear & unfocused
    - a. We don't act like we're very new or renewed—old ways creep back in
    - b. Things we want to do, we don't do; things we don't want to do, we do
    - c. We stumble around in the dark when we should be walking in the light
  3. Like the blind man in our story, we need to be touched again and again
    - a. We don't just get saved, we continue to be renewed daily (Col 3:10)  
*put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator*
      - 1) A times we struggle; what should be clear looks like trees walking
      - 2) Sometimes we despair we will ever understand what God requires
    - b. But then Jesus touches us again, and we are made new (2 Cor 4:16)  
*Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day*
- C. Old Story:** Stranger asks old man directions , “*You lived here all your life?*”
1. The old codger looked at him and grinned, “*Not yet!*” Good answer!
  2. Our response is always “*Not yet!*” We are a work in progress
    - a. We must stay close to Jesus—His word, His presence, His people
    - b. We must allow Him to touch us again and **AGAIN**
    - c. He will continue to touch us, and we will continue to be healed by Him