

分步完成的瞎眼得见——马可福音 8:22-26

The Stepwise Opening of the Eyes—Mark 8:22-26

Introduction

- Scripture Reading: Mark 8:14-33; 2 Corinthians 3:17-4:6
- Sermon Scripture Mark 8:22-26

22 And they came to Bethsaida. And they *brought a blind man to Jesus and implored Him to touch him. 23 Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, “Do you see anything?” 24 And he looked up and said, “I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around.” 25 Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly. 26 And He sent him to his home, saying, “Do not even enter the village.”

- This miracle of healing the blind is the only miracle in the Gospels that was accomplished in two steps. Why is it done in two steps?
- Outline:
 - Title: The Stepwise Opening of the Eyes
 - 1. Who Is the Blind Man (v. 22 & context)
 - 2. Partial Eye-opening (vv. 23-24)
 - 3. Total Eye-opening (vv. 25-26)

Who Is the Blind Man (v. 22 & context)

- “They came to Bethsaida”: the northernmost village on the Sea of Galilee, very close to Capernaum. Jesus must have often preached here in his early ministry (see 1:38). Some of Jesus’ disciples were from Bethsaida (John 1:44).

Matthew 11:21 says Jesus did many miracles and taught and preached in Bethsaida, but the people here did not repent. Verse 23 says Capernaum was even worse. They saw more miracles, but didn’t respond correctly. Why? Because they had no spiritual sight. The Jesus they saw was just an ordinary man who could do tricks. They are all **spiritually blind!**
- “A blind man”: Jesus healed a physically blind man in this spiritually blind city. The spiritual significance of this miracle is that Jesus will heal the spiritual blindness of his disciples and give them spiritual sight.

【Disclaimer】 This is not a spiritual interpretation of the Bible. The error of spiritual interpretation is to impose on scriptural texts spiritual meanings that are not expressed in the texts. However, the miracle of healing the blind here is intended by God to show us spiritual significance. The focus of spiritual vision is very clear in the context. In the previous verses 17-20, Jesus had just severely rebuked the disciples for their spiritual blindness. In the following verses 27-30, Peter saw that Jesus is the Christ. How did he see it? What happened between the two acts? Jesus healed a blind man.

Do you see the point? Who is the blind man?

Partial Eye-opening (vv. 23-24)

- “Taking the blind man by the hand”: What the blind man needed most is to have someone hold his hand and lead him to walk. Jesus is loving and compassionate and knows what people need.

【Insight】 When Peter looked back on this scene, he was the blind man himself. Seeing with spiritual sight, the one whom Jesus takes by the hand is every soul who knows he is blind and needs to be guided to walk. The deeper you see your own spiritual blindness, the more mercy and love you will feel from Jesus’ holding hand here.

- “Brought him out of the village”: Bethsaida had seen too many miracles, and there was no more sign to show them. Jesus wanted to show this miracle only to his disciples, because the experience of the blind man was directly related to theirs.
- “Spitting on...laying his hands on..”: not a magic step, but a loving touch. Jesus expressed God’s loving mercy to sinners. Close your eyes to picture the scene. Take time to enjoy the intimacy of your loving relationship with God in Christ.
- “Do you see anything?”: Jesus of course knew what he could see, for this step was only a partial healing as He designed. Jesus asked him not because he didn’t know, but that he wanted to tell the disciples through the blind man’s mouth: through the blind man’s own testimony, he wanted to show the process of sight recovery so the disciples may ponder what it means.
- “I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around.”: Consider the disciples’ astonishment. Has Jesus’ power failed? Only half healed? Jesus’ healing is always instant and complete. There’s never been a half-healing step.

【Ponder】 Jesus packed an entire lesson about spiritual vision into this miracle. But He did not teach it directly with words, but designed the event and dialogue to stimulate his disciples to think for themselves. How are people like trees? Has anyone ever said you look like a tree? How bad does your vision have to be to see people as trees? And what are walking trees? Don't you think it's a bit funny?

【Conclusion】 After laughing, think about it, isn't your own spiritual vision a bit funny sometimes? How confident are you in your spiritual vision? Have you ever laughed at your spiritual vision? Is there anything that you thought you saw clearly at the time, but later you realize all you saw was at best a tree shadow?

【Warning】 Anyone who has never laughed at his spiritual vision is a very prideful person. If someone only laughs at his former spiritual vision but never doubts his current spiritual vision, he too is a very prideful person.

1 Corinthians 8:2 “If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know.”

Proverbs 30:2-3 “Surely I am more stupid than any man, And I do not have the understanding of a man. Neither have I learned wisdom, Nor do I have the knowledge of the Holy One.”

Acts 9:5 “.....Who are You, Lord?.....”

【Application】 What this kind of humility produces is an easily teachable person who is not stubborn nor insists on his/her own opinion, but admits his/her faults and is willing to listen to others' opinions and accepts corrections.

【Examination】 When you talk with others, is this kind of humility reflected in your words and attitude? Or do you more often seem to know everything and make no mistakes in your judgment?

Total Eye-opening (vv. 25-26)

- "he looked intently": The compound word is "look" prefixed with "through", literally, "look through," like X-rays seeing through the skin and to the bones. Like 20/20 vision, he can now see facial details such as wrinkles and white hairs, not just blurry images.
- “began to see everything clearly”: Complete healing. The verb literally means "to look into", to see inside.

【Insight 1】 How many intermediate states are there between complete spiritual blindness to being able to see things clearly? The process of spiritual growth is a process of being blind, seeing, blind again, seeing again, repeated countless times.

【Example 1】 God's sovereignty. Easier said than applied. God does everything according to His will, and nothing is beyond His control. Who couldn't say it? But once trial comes, we immediately forget that God's sovereignty also includes this trial, and we become anxious, doubtful, faithless, and cold toward God. Then we get through this trial and feel we finally understand God's sovereignty this time; yet another trial comes, and we immediately become anxious, doubtful, faithless, and cold toward God again...

【Example 2】 Understanding of sin. The wisdom of an old pastor: "Writing down all sinful thoughts? What a difficult task! Mission impossible! If I were to start recording my every sinful thought and temptation, then I probably wouldn't be able to do anything at all." All forms of pride, worry, bitterness, complaining... Do you see clearly enough?

【Key point】 Spiritual vision is not binary, either 0 or 1. The growth of spiritual vision is a process and is definitely not a one-step thing.

【Application】 When you see others having huge blind spots on certain things, don't rush to judge. You have larger blind spots on other things; you just don't see it.

【Insight 2】 Christians have the blessed hope that Jesus will eventually give us a completely clear spiritual vision. If you have seen the glory of Jesus dimly now, however dim it may be, even if it's just like a tree shadow; if you have repented of your sins and follow Him with all your heart, then eventually He will let you fully see what a glorious Savior He is!

1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

- “Do not even enter the village”: Jesus may have said this as an indictment that the spiritual blindness of Bethsaida was beyond remedy. Jesus had offered them many opportunities for spiritual healing, but they had rejected them all, and so they'll remain in complete spiritual darkness forever. In the coming judgment, they will weep and gnash their teeth in the outer darkness. Bethsaida's spiritual blindness was a terminal illness that could never be cured because they rejected the only Physician who could heal blindness.

Summarize:

If you have not had the first step of healing, you cannot expect the second step. If you continue to reject the light of the truth of the gospel of Jesus, one day you will lock yourself in darkness forever. But if you admit from your heart that you are sinful and are willing to enter into the light of Jesus, you will see more and more of the radiance of His salvation. Because He has accomplished perfect salvation, you will no longer be afraid of the light of the truth, for His death has paid the price for all your sins, and the light of His resurrection will lead you continuously towards the light.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, **beholding** as in a mirror **the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image** from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Spiritual vision is a life-transforming vision, and the key to transformation is to gaze intently on the glory of the Lord.