

Scripture: Mark 8:22-30

Jesus Can Also Open Your Eyes!

Beloved in Christ, we live in a world without confidence and hope, a world of darkness. We need clarity! And we have it here, in Jesus. He is the light of the world. He is the truth! It is so clear here, but it needs to be received by faith for us to see.

Jesus opens ears to hear as we see in Mark 7, but He also opens eyes to see! These two stories are unique to Mark and not found in Matthew or Luke. In both these stories, God intervenes in Christ, the Messiah, according to His promise in Isaiah 35, *"Behold your God . . . will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped."*

We see how the amazing work of Christ leads to the confession of faith from Peter and the other disciples of Jesus, *"You are the Christ."* Peter recognizes, sees the Messiah for the Messiah has just opened the eyes of the blind. The Messiah opens his eyes to see!

This is all preceded by a conversation Jesus had with His disciples where Jesus was asking them pointed questions, *"Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear"* [8:18]? Indeed, the Messiah opens ears to hear, and also opens eyes to see. These miracles are signs to point to a much greater work: He can also open your eyes to see who Jesus truly is so that you confess Him! From Mark 8:22-30, we see that

1. Jesus opens the eyes of the blind man [vv.22-26]
2. Jesus opens the eyes of Peter [vv.27-30]

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Jesus now goes to Bethsaida. Bethsaida was a fishing village, north of the Sea of Galilee by the mouth of the Jordan. Interesting enough, the healing of the blind man occurs in this village. This is the hometown of Peter, but also Andrew, Philip and John [John 1:44].

People from the town bring a blind man to Jesus and beg Him to touch him. Blindness is a terrible condition. Everything is dark. You can't see. All you see is darkness, no light, no beauty. You don't know where to go or where you are going.

When God created the world, He said *"it was very good"* [Genesis 1:31]. There was no blindness. Our first parents, Adam and Eve disobeyed God's Word. Terrible blindness came into the world. Satan contradicted God's Word, saying to Eve, *"the day that you eat of it, your eyes will be opened..."* [Genesis 3:5]. Man believed the lie of Satan and ate. You see the sad results of sin. The Bible says men *"walk in darkness"* [John 8:12], *"being alienated from the life of God ... because of the blindness of their heart"* [Ephesians 4:17].

Yet God in His abundant grace, intervenes in the Messiah, Jesus, God-in-the-flesh. *"Behold your God will come . . . and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened."* He has come! Jesus takes this blind man by the hand --- leads him out of town --- spits on his eyes -- puts his hands on him, and then, and not until then restores his sight. They bring him to Jesus and now . . . Jesus becomes his new Guide!

Why does Jesus spit on his eyes? This man was blind. He can't see. By putting spit on his eyes, Jesus draws attention to what He is about to do, 'something will be done for your eyes . . .and I will do it.' Jesus is calling for a response of trust!

But there is something unique about the way Jesus heals this blind man. He does not heal him at once. He might have done it in a moment, but He chooses to do it step-by-step. The healing occurs in two steps: Jesus first asks if he sees anything. He just asked his disciples, “do you not see?” They did not. Now He asks this blind man, “Do you see anything?”

He looks up, saying “*I see men like trees, walking*” [verse 24]. He was seeing but it was not clear. He was not seeing clearly. Men looked like trees walking around. Then Jesus puts His hands on his eyes again and makes him look up. This is the second step. “*And he was restored and saw everything clearly*” [verse 25]. Now he has 20/20 vision.

So why two stages? Why does Jesus put His hand on him again? Did Jesus fail the first time and then succeed the second time. Sometimes we say, ‘oops, I have to do it over again. Let me try again!’ Is this what is happening here?

No. Not so. It’s unusual but Jesus intends to say something to His disciples and also to us through this. Indeed, Jesus restores sight to the blind. He opens our eyes through faith in Him. We then see; we perceive.

But it is a life long process. Just like this blind man did not see clearly all at once so too His disciples are not seeing everything clearly at once. They fail to see [8:18]. But they also are moving from blindness to seeing clearly. So it is in the Christian life. By faith we see. That ability to see is a gift of God. We don’t see everything at once. We don’t see everything clearly. Our vision remains imperfect, blurred. Sometimes, its like driving in the fog. Sin and unbelief stand in the way. We don’t see Jesus as we should or fellow believers as we should in the light of God’s Word. We don’t discern as we should. Sometimes we see trees when we should be seeing people. We lack 20/20 vision.

We need the healing touches of the Savior along the way. His hand today is His Word. The beautiful thing is that the risen Lord Jesus Christ, by His Spirit, continues to illumine us, turn the lights on, inside of us using His Word. His Word illumines us. That’s the means of grace the Holy Spirit uses to make us see more and more clearly as we grow in our faith. Ephesians 1:18 speaks of “*the eyes of your understanding being enlightened.*” That ability to see is a gift of God, and not from us.

And like this blind man who was restored and saw everything clearly, so Jesus also promises, “*that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it....*” [Philippians 1:6]. See the power of the Anointed One, the Messiah. The one who opens the eyes of the blind man also

2. He opens the eyes of Peter [vv.27-30]

That first healing touch for Peter and the other disciples comes on the road to Caesarea Philippi. Caesarea Philippi was about twenty-five miles further north of Bethsaida, on the border of Israel and Gentile lands. This is significant. Why? This is where this remarkable confession is made by Peter, a remarkable confession which will eventually change the world!

On the road, Jesus asked His **disciples**, saying to them “*Who do men say that I am?*” [verse 27]. And the disciples answer what others say in **verse 28**, John the Baptist. Some say, Elijah. Others say, ‘one of the prophets.’ These were the popular opinions of the day.

To say that Jesus is Elijah, John the Baptist, or a great prophet – or as we often hear today – that He is the greatest teacher or prophet or moral example who ever lived – may seem like an honor, a compliment. But it's not. It ultimately denies His uniqueness. People say all kinds of nice things about Jesus. But they are blind. Every religion in the world defers to Jesus but they are all saying the same thing -- that He is but a man. It's unbelief. Whether Elijah, John the Baptist, or a prophet, makes no essential difference – all are men.

But Jesus is more than a man!

What about you? Jesus asks His disciples, *"But you, who do you say that I am" [verse 29]? Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ."* In Matthew, we hear an expanded form of Peter's confession of faith, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" [Matthew 16:17].* This is a personal, but also a bold confession of faith. It's also risky because this confession stands against all the opinions of others. We live in a society where there is open hostility to this confession!

It is the truth. He is the Christ! He is not just a man. He is not what the imaginations of people make Him to be. It proves they are blind. 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, *"But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."*

In Christ, God has come to save us and give us new eyesight. Jesus is the culmination of history. He is the culmination of the Old Testament! He is the culmination of all the promises of God. He is the one and only Savior for all mankind! This is who He is! He is the One! He is the truth. Peter confesses his faith because God, in His grace, opened his eyes. God revealed it to him. In Matthew's account, Jesus says, *"Blessed are you. . . for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" [Matthew 16:17].* It's not a personal opinion. It's the truth!

He is the Christ who brings in the kingdom, the reign of God to all who believe. He is the Messiah, meaning 'anointed.' Jesus alone has the power to save us from our sin. He is appointed by God and is anointed by the Holy Spirit to be our chief Prophet, who reveals the way of salvation in His Word. He is God's revelation to mankind. He is anointed to be our only high priest, who opens and secures the way of salvation for man through His sacrifice on the cross for sin and who now continually intercedes for us. He is our eternal King who keeps us in the way of salvation!

He is the One; there is no other, whom you can turn to in your desperation. He forgives; He restores. He gives joy and peace and eternal life. He restores fellowship. He brings you through life's circumstances. Trust Him; follow Him. He brings you through it. By trusting in Him, He also opens your eyes to see and confess, "You are the Christ!"

At this point, Jesus strictly warns His disciples, 'don't tell anyone' [verse 30]. He said the same thing to the blind man, 'don't tell anyone in the town' [verse 26]. So why not?

Why did Jesus tell them not to proclaim what He did? It was not time to proclaim it, Many will misunderstand. Even the disciples do not yet fully understand as we see in verses 31fff. They still see men who look like trees. That time to proclaim it will come! The preaching of it must wait until after the reversal of the curse takes

place through Christ's finished sacrifice on the cross for sinners. A new creation comes forth through His resurrection from the dead and the pouring out of His Spirit on the church.

Now, today, Christ, the Lord of lords and King of kings commands us, 'Go and tell!' In Mark 15, He commands His disciples, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*" [15:15]. Go and tell! He is the One. He is the Christ! God manifest in the flesh! He can open your eyes to see. In contrast to all the bad news in the world; this is good news! It's public. Make it known!

"He is the Christ!" By the way, if this is not your confession, He calls you to believe in Him and then you will see! Otherwise, you remain blind and in the darkness. In Him, there is no longer confusion, but clarity; no longer darkness, but light, no longer opinion but the truth. He is the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Him. Amen.