The Two Stage Healing of the Blind Man

Zanesville, OH | February 24, 2019 | Sermon Notes

**Foundational Scripture:** Mark 8:22-26

**Intro**:

* Last week we discussed the nature of miracles. We said that they are impossible to fully comprehend and explain since they take on a divine nature and they transcend human nature and the laws of science. More importantly, we said that miracles are signs pointing to something greater! Today, I want to share a particular miracle and the message it was pointing to. Only Mark records this very distinctive sign for us but it’s one that is baffling to many for many reasons. **Why was this miracle done this way and what is the significance of this sign?**

1. **Keys to Understanding the Message**
   1. Light/Darkness & Sight/Blindness Metaphor
      1. In the OT the prophets spoke of a time where God’s Servant (The Messiah) would open the eyes of the blind and lead them to the light (Psa. 119:18; Isa. 42:16, 20). This is clearly speaking of the hearts of man and the spiritual emphasis on seeing God and obeying His message.
      2. In the NT there are many occasions where this metaphor is illustrated as a contrast between sin and salvation, God and Satan. This is no clearer than in John’s gospel (Jn. 1:4-5, 9; 8:12; 9:3-5, 39-41; 12:35-36, 46).
   2. Contextual Placement
      1. As is the case with most bible passages, they are placed within a larger context for a reason. The context determines the meaning and significance of the story. There are three major events in the context that affect the meaning and significance of this miracle:
      2. **The Case of the Forgotten Bread (Mk. 8:13-21)**
         1. After the feeding of the 5,000, the disciples along with Jesus get in a boat and begin to argue about not having bread when Jesus warns of the leaven of Herod and the Pharisees.
         2. This situation clearly depicts the disciples’ lack of understanding of Jesus and their yet “blinded hearts.” Like the blind man, this shows they are completely blind.
      3. **The Case of the Misunderstood Jesus (Mk. 8:27-34)**
         1. After Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ, Jesus predicted His coming death and resurrection. Peter rebukes Jesus sharply by telling Him He will do no such thing.
         2. Peter exhibits shortsightedness of Jesus. He knows He is the Messiah but fails to understand and see the importance of His coming. Like the blind man, this shows the ability to see but only a little. Their vision of Jesus is shortsighted.
      4. **The Transfigured Christ (Mk. 9:1-8)**
         1. In the chapter following Jesus is transfigured on a mountain in the presence of 3 disciples one of which is Peter. Moses and Elijah are also present.
         2. A voice out of Heaven (God) proclaims that Jesus is His Son and everyone needs to listen to Him. Jesus holds preeminence even among figures like Moses and Elijah.
         3. This clearly illustrates the need for the disciples not only to confess the Christ but to heed Him and do as He says. This shows, like the blind man, stage two. Now they begin to realize that recognizing and seeing Jesus doesn’t stop at the confession but it goes beyond that.
2. **The Nature of Jesus’ Mission**
   1. This miracle, this unique sign Jesus performed in 2 stages clearly reflects purpose and meaning. There are two main takeaways from this miracle (two main messages gained from the sign).
      1. Jesus is the Christ, The Son of God
         1. To really know Jesus and to understand Jesus is to understand why He came to the earth. Jesus came to reveal God. He Himself is the Son of God (Mk. 8:29).
         2. This is, of course, one of the very reasons Jesus performed miracles. Jesus’ greatest desire was that His audience would be so careful and considerate to appreciate the message and its meaning and not to get carried away with the works or powers themselves (Jn. 20:31).
      2. Jesus must suffer and die and rise from the dead
         1. To recognize Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God is to do well. It is necessary. But to stop there is to be shortsighted as the blind man seeing men like trees. One would still be blind.
         2. The nature of Jesus’ incarnation and His walk on the earth is all pointing to the reality that He must suffer and die and rise from the dead in order to impart salvation. This is the other reason Jesus did miracles.
         3. That they would not only believe Him as God but also that He has come to give life everlasting is key to understanding Jesus and His mission (Jn. 20:31). Until one recognizes both these things, they will still be blind.
3. **The Role of the Disciples**
   1. Maybe the most daunting question of this entire scene is why would Jesus spit on this man? If you’re going to heal someone in two stages could spit maybe not be involved? Again, the only plausible explanation is that Jesus did this with a specific purpose in mind.
      1. Jesus shares in our suffering
         1. Jesus took upon Himself our suffering and our pain when He went to the cross. Ultimately this act demonstrates the larger reality that Jesus knows what we are going through since He Himself did it (Isa. 53:3-4; Mk. 14:65).
      2. We are called to suffer as He suffered
         1. That Jesus spit on this man points to the larger reality that if we truly want to be saved and we truly want to serve Jesus then we must understand that it involves sacrifice, service, selflessness and suffering (Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 1:8, 12).