

## Christ Gives Sight To The Blind.

Text: Mark 8:22-26

Suggested Hymns:

500, 520, 263, 288, 158

1) Spiritual blindness

2) Christ came to give sight to the blind

3) Jesus demonstrates His power and mercy to the blind

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Mark 8:22-26, <sup>22</sup> *Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him.* <sup>23</sup> *So 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 on him, He asked him if he saw anything.* <sup>24</sup> *And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking."* <sup>25</sup> *Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly.* <sup>26</sup> *Then He sent him away to his house, saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town."* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Today we look at the second Miracle of Jesus by the sea. We note that there is physical blindness and that there is spiritual blindness. Today we will see how Christ gives sight to the blind, both physical and spiritual. May the Lord bless our meditation.

### 1. Spiritual Blindness

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus fully condemns the "righteousness" of the scribes and Pharisees, which was a shallow and a superficial righteousness, a righteousness based on the works of men.

This man-centred religion of the Pharisees Jesus condemned again on the shore of the Sea of Galilee after He had fed the 4,000 and after the Pharisees had asked for a sign from Him.

When they were at sea on a boat the disciples were very concerned because they *had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with*

*them in the boat.*<sup>1</sup> Jesus cautions them, saying, ***“Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”***

He is telling them that they should surely recognise Him as the almighty Son of God, since they themselves had gathered the 12 basketfuls after the 4,000 were fed. Jesus then asks them, ***Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened?*** <sup>18</sup> ***“Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?”***<sup>2</sup>

### **Jesus Labels It As “Blindness”**

This lack of spiritual perception on the part of the Pharisees is called a kind of “blindness” by Jesus. This is because it is a righteousness that is no righteousness. It is the leaven that spreads and contaminates people’s thinking with false notions about the ability of man.

Once, after Jesus healed the man born blind at the temple, some of the Pharisees sneeringly asked Jesus, ***“Are we blind also?”*** <sup>41</sup> ***Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains.”***<sup>3</sup>

On that same occasion, Jesus said, ***“For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.”***<sup>4</sup> The unbelief of the Pharisees is plainly labelled by Jesus as spiritual blindness.

Now, in the incident at Bethsaida given in our text, Jesus demonstrates by a miracle what He elsewhere declares by His preaching that He is the only One who gives sight to the blind.

## **2. Christ Came To Give Sight To The Blind**

At this time Jesus was in semi-Jewish, semi-Gentile surroundings. Quite likely the blind man was a Gentile. This is indicated by the rather timid approach of the people to Jesus. Some people brought the blind man to Jesus, begging Jesus to touch the man.

Perhaps they had heard of others who had been healed by the mere touch of His garment. Perhaps He would condescend to do just as much for a Gentile. Whether he was blind from birth or as a result of injury or disease we don’t know. But we do know that he was in a desperate condition and needed help.

## **Blindness Is A World of Darkness**

The world of the blind is a most wretched one. It is a world of darkness. Blindness is a handicap that many people learn to live with. Some people live with it as with a burdensome weight which they have learned to carry cheerfully.

An example of a cheerfully confident person was a sightless man who was a regular attendant at church and at the Lord's Table and one of the faithful few at adult Bible class. He was a respected and influential member of the church and worked daily at a very useful job. He was a man who always greeted you with a smile, which helped to give those around him the encouragement they needed to find the strength to carry their lesser burdens cheerfully too.

Another example was couple who at Christmas time used to bring blind people to Christmas Eve Services. He was employed by the Society for the Blind to find jobs that sightless people could fill. The wife was employed as a social worker to help people who had newly become blind to adjust to their condition, especially to help them to overcome the emotional disturbances that come with the affliction.

This was a very cheerful and optimistic couple. Both the man and his wife were blind. Their parting words were, "*We'll be seeing you!*" They truly had a greater "vision" than many sighted people have.

The blind always are aware of their burden. If they should forget it for a moment, a rude bump or an unexpected stumble will remind them abruptly of their helplessness.

## **A Far Worse Condition**

However the blindness that is far worse than physical blindness is spiritual blindness. Speaking of idolaters, St. Paul writes of their senseless minds being "*darkened.*"<sup>5</sup>

Jesus says much the same thing of those who do not hear and believe His parables, as recorded in Matthew 13:15, <sup>15</sup> *For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'*

This is the desperate condition of the spiritually blind: They know and care nothing for God's sacrificial love in Christ. Jesus Christ is no more to them than a swear word or at best a vague and uncertain character in history. But to be without Christ is to be without God and without hope in the world.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Spiritually Blind Think That They Can See**

The hopeless character of spiritual blindness is this: Those who are spiritually blind are themselves the last ones to admit such blindness. In fact, they suppose themselves to be the possessors of true light.

The Pharisees, with their valueless righteousness, supposed themselves to be the bright lights of their time (and had many people believing it). Jesus indicated this when He told them that because they said, "***We see,***" their sin remains.<sup>7</sup> They, in fact, felt that they needed no light from Jesus. They did not need the Daystar to arise in their hearts to dispel the darkness of sin by His forgiving love.

### **The "Blindness" of Moralistic Religions**

Today those who profess a merely moralistic type of religion, a religion of man's righteousness, deem themselves to be the possessors of true light. However they are false religions of works.

Sadly, Christians are often led to seek this kind of "moral light" unwittingly, even though they have known for many years that the "***the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world***"<sup>8</sup> is Jesus Christ.

Always remember the word of Jesus recorded in John 8:12, "***I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.***"

There is a condition of the optic nerve which causes one eye to do all the work while the other eye rests. Doctors have sometimes sought to correct this condition by putting a patch over the "working" eye to force the "lazy" eye to function once more. It had been getting along on a mere appearance of functioning, without really seeing.

Perhaps we need to force ourselves to a more active functioning of our spiritual vision. We need to put a large patch over the eye that has been looking with so much satisfaction upon our long history of church membership, upon

many acts of service in the congregation, and upon our faithfulness in the face of adversity.

This “eye” is often overworked by church members, so that they cannot clearly see the sin that outweighs any acts of righteousness that we may credit ourselves with. Of course the credit belongs to God to begin with, not ourselves.

We need to take a clear, long look at our sin and the need for the Saviour, God’s own Son. With that vision inscribed on the retina of the spiritual eye of a man, he is clearly made to see the Lord Jesus as the only One who can give light, the *“light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.”*

### **3. Jesus Demonstrates His Power And Mercy To The Blind**

As Jesus takes aside this blind man and deals mercifully with him, He shows us that He, as the eternal Son of God, has power to heal all blindness of body and soul.

#### **Mercy Is Extended**

Note that Jesus took the man by the hand and led him out of the village. He singles out this man for His attention and the bestowal of His help. Not only did He show compassion on the multitudes (feeding 4,000 and again 5,000), but He also showed concern for the individual when He took aside a man of Decapolis who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech and healed him.

Jesus sought out Zacchaeus of Jericho to go to his house to help him. Jesus is concerned not only for the masses but also for the individual sinner.

#### **Mercy Offered to Us**

We know that Jesus reaches out with His mercy to the individual sinner today, for He demonstrates this by His personal promises of mercy to us. When you partake of the Lord’s Supper, Jesus is taking you aside personally, as He took the blind man by the hand, and is making His promise of mercy and pardon directly to you. The words *“for you”* are as direct and as personal as they can be.

#### **Divine Power Is Evident**

See how the power of the eternal Son of God is shown. First, Jesus spits on the eyes of the blind man and lays His hands upon him. Partial vision is restored. Then Jesus laid His hands on the man's eyes, and he could see everything clearly.

This, we note, is the only miracle of Jesus which He accomplished in gradual stages and which did not effect an immediate cure. We wonder why.

Perhaps, it was done to aid the faith of the man. These obviously inadequate means of spit and laying on of hands were to draw attention to Jesus' person as the One who was actually bestowing power and healing by His own authority. All thought of magic was dispelled.

Nor should we despise the simple means by which His power to give light comes to us, as Jesus declares in Luke 4:18, <sup>18</sup> ***"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind ..."***

Jesus' power is still healing blindness — spiritual blindness, which is the worst kind — by the power in the simple and humble means of speech, water, bread, and wine.

Who are we to despise or neglect these means when the power of the Son of God is contained in them and works through them (just as His power worked through the spit on the blind man's eyes).

### **Seek Christ's Light And Understanding**

Now the important lesson for us in all this is that we should continue to seek Christ's enlightenment all our life. At no point in this life can we say that we have achieved perfect "20-20" spiritual vision. ***"For now we see in a mirror dimly."***<sup>10</sup>

We must constantly seek improvement of our spiritual vision — not by man's righteousness but by the power of Jesus, who came to show us the light of God's eternal glory by His sacrifice on the cross.

And one day perfect vision shall be ours, when we come to the perfect light and the endless day of eternity, described by St. John as follows, <sup>23</sup> ***The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.*** <sup>24</sup> ***And the nations of those who are saved***

*shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.* <sup>25</sup> *Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).*<sup>11</sup> ... *They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.*<sup>12</sup> Amen

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark 8:14

<sup>2</sup> Mark 8:17-18

<sup>3</sup> John 9:40-41

<sup>4</sup> John 9:39

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 1:21

<sup>6</sup> Ephesians 2:12

<sup>7</sup> John 9:41

<sup>8</sup> John 1:9

<sup>9</sup> 2 Cor. 4:6

<sup>10</sup> 1 Cor. 13:12

<sup>11</sup> Revelation 21:23-25

<sup>12</sup> Revelation 22:5