



river west church

Do You See Anything?

Mark 8

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Today is Palm Sunday, a day in which Christians remember the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem the week before His death and resurrection (Matt. 21:1-11). Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week which concludes on Easter Sunday. The events of this week represent the heart of the Christian Gospel, and believers all over the world are preparing their hearts to remember, to receive and to rejoice in the life giving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. Today, my prayer is that we will prepare for this as well. My prayer is that the next seven days will be some of the most significant of the year in your Christian faith. So how can we prepare for what lies ahead? To answer that question, we are going to look today at one of the more interesting miracles of Jesus in the New Testament.

Spiritual “Blind Spots”

Mark 8 records an account of Jesus giving sight to a blind man. The miracle is unique, because the first attempt only partially restores the man’s sight. Jesus must touch him a second time. The reader wonders what the meaning of such a two-staged miracle could be. Has Jesus lost His edge? Has He actually encountered a challenge on earth that is too great for His power? Surely the answer to this is “no”, and a careful investigation of the text confirms this. The account of the blind man sits in the middle of a chapter that is all about the spiritual blindness of the disciples. They cannot perceive the true identity of Jesus. The depth of this blindness is such that even as they make progress in spiritual perception, glaring blind spots remain.

In verse 29, Peter has a flash of insight in which he declares for the first time, “You are the Messiah”. But within moments we find Jesus scolding him for his failure to recognize the true purpose of the Messiah on earth (Mark 8:31-33). Recovery from spiritual blindness is often a process. It very rarely happens in an instant. The healing of the blind man serves as a paradigm for the spiritual healing of the disciples’ sight which comes gradually and with difficulty. Isn’t this true for you and me as well? Our recovery from spiritual blindness is a process. It takes time. It happens in stages. Sometimes, we think we see clearly, only to find that we are living with significant blind spots to the things of Christ.

Jesus Wants to Diagnose Your Spiritual Vision

A crucial and beautiful moment occurs in the healing of the blind man. After laying His hands on the man, Jesus asks him a question; “Do you see anything”? When the man indicates that his vision remains partially impaired, Christ completes the healing. At first glance, this question seems straightforward and inconsequential, but we must not miss the rich significance of this moment. Jesus wants to diagnose this man’s condition. But, it is a diagnosis that requires that the man recognize his own vision problem. He becomes aware of his need for further healing when he begins to see men who “look like trees walking”. Can he see? Yes. Is his sight clear?

Surely not, and it would be cruel to send this man off under the false pretense that his sight has been restored. Many of his problems would continue. In the same way, many of our problems in this life are due to the impaired vision that we live with towards Christ and the truths of His Gospel. We may see partially, but the blind spots that we still have can create problems in our attitudes, actions and relationships. We desperately need Jesus to diagnose and heal our spiritual vision.

A Prayer for Passion Week

So, how can you and I prepare to receive all that God has for us this week? I would like to suggest that we begin with a humble prayer for Jesus to diagnose and heal our spiritual vision. How clear is your vision of Jesus? Are you open to the possibility that you may have blind spots in your understanding of Christ and His Gospel? Do you trust Him today to point out those blind spots and to bless you with a greater vision of the significance of His death and resurrection? Today, as we worship and learn from God's word, I pray that Jesus will do a miraculous work in your heart so that you can see Him more clearly!