

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
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Healed By Jesus
Mark 8:22-26

Before I had children, I used to be a silent movie watcher. I don't mean I liked watching old, silent movies. I mean I liked watching movies silently. I didn't want people guessing out loud what they thought would happen next. I didn't want people commenting on every, single line. I didn't want people trying to figure out how they recognized one of the actors in the movie ("Was he in Steel Magnolias? Talk about tear-jerker. I think he was in Steel Magnolias. What do you think." "I don't know. I think he is in the movie I'm trying to watch right now. So...")

But having children has helped me grow more patient about how we watch movies as a family. My kids haven't always paid attention, especially when they were little. They'd talk through scenes and miss significant details. So, Emily and I had to focus through the chatter and keep an eye out for important scenes and sometimes pause the movie and say something like, "Guys, you don't want to miss this scene. It may not seem like it but it's pretty significant to the rest of the story."

And that's how I feel about our text for this morning. It may not seem like it, but it's pretty significant in our study of the book of Mark. Let me give you a few reasons why I say that:

Significant miracle in the book of Mark

- This miracle completes the series of repetitions we talked about last week. (Compare it to the healing of the deaf man in 7:31-37).
- This miracle only occurs in the Gospel of Mark, (that means Mark sees it to be uniquely important).
- This is the only miracle in all the Gospels that occurs progressively/in stages.
- This miracle concludes the first half of Mark. The very next passage brings a seismic shift in Jesus' earthly ministry. His focus becomes the training of the twelve and His journey to the cross rather than ministry to the crowds.
- This is the last scene before Peter acknowledges the identity of Jesus as Christ, or the Messiah of Israel. Next week, Pastor Carey is going to lead us in the study of that passage, so I don't want to go too far down this road. But Mark was Peter's assistant during his ministry in Rome. So, Mark is almost certainly telling these stories about Jesus through the lens of what he heard and learned from Peter. No doubt, this healing had a dramatic impact on Peter. It's as if watching Jesus open this blind man's eyes over time helped Peter realize that Peter's eyes had been opening to the truth about Jesus over time.
- Lastly, this miracle is a microcosm of what Jesus came to do on the earth. It's a picture of the Christian life and how Jesus works in His followers. Jesus came to take His followers on a step-by-step journey that would bring healing over time as we make our way toward our heavenly home. And that's going to be our focus for this morning. I want you to see that our text is not just the story of a man who was healed by Jesus 2,000 years ago, it's the story of every person who says 'yes' to following Jesus. It's your story and mine.

Mark 8:22–26

22 And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. 23 And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" 24 And he looked up and said, "I see people, but they look like trees, walking." 25 Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was

restored, and he saw everything clearly. 26 And he sent him to his home, saying, “Do not even enter the village.”

Let's start with two initial observations.

The first is that this story begins with people who have heard and believed the Good News about Jesus.

22 And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him.

Now, why would these people come to Jesus hoping He would heal this man? Why would they specifically want Jesus to touch him? The answer is that they heard that Jesus could heal you completely with a single touch.

You see, this isn't the first time Jesus headed to Bethsaida. A few chapters ago, when Jesus walked on the water, He got in the boat with His disciples on their way to Bethsaida. Listen to Mark's description of what happened when they landed on shore.

Mark 6:56

56 And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.

Word was spreading that Jesus had the power to heal. And, as people heard that good news, many believed it was true and made their way to Jesus. That's what is happening in our text. This blind man and his friends heard the good news about Jesus and believed it. So, they come to Jesus in faith and ask Him for healing. And that's the story of the Christian life. It begins when we hear the truth about Jesus and respond in faith.

Ephesians 1:13

In him [Jesus] you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

The Christian life begins when we hear and believe the truth that Jesus provides salvation. Through His perfect life on earth, His sacrificial death for our sin at the cross, and His glorious resurrection power from the grave, Jesus provides for our complete and total salvation.

- Jesus saves us from the penalty of our sin (which is eternal death in hell) – by forgiving our sins.
- Jesus saves us from the power of sin in our day-to-day lives – by giving us a new heart filled with His Holy Spirit – to enable Christ's resurrection life in us.
- And, one day Jesus will even save us from the very presence of sin - by taking us home to heaven where we will live forever in the joy and pleasure that are only found in the presence of God.

That salvation, in every aspect, is a healing work of Jesus that begins when we hear and respond to the good news about Jesus.

Notice what happens next with our second observation. Faith becomes a journey with Jesus. It wasn't a one-time event.

Verse 23 And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village...

Don't miss this. What had they begged Jesus to do for this man? They begged Jesus to touch him because they believed one touch from Jesus would heal any and every disease. And what does Jesus do? He touches the man. He takes Him by the hand.

But the guy isn't immediately healed. That's sort of the whole point of this story. Faith in Jesus and healing by Jesus aren't one-time events. This blind man goes on a journey of following Jesus by faith, one step at a time. This man who just met Jesus was willing to be led by Jesus through the crowds, down busy streets, and out of town. Imagine the kind of faith that is being exercised here. We know from the text his home was outside the village. He would have come to Bethsaida to sit all day every day, begging people for charity. So, when Jesus leads him out of the village, He is leading him away from his source of income, his comfort zone, and the people and places that were familiar to him. He was putting his whole life in Jesus' hand. It was a journey of faith in Jesus. It started in the village that was the backdrop of his broken way of life and it lasted until he was finally ready to go home.

And that's exactly what our life is like with Jesus. It isn't a one-time thing. Following Jesus is exactly what it sounds like: It's a step-by-step journey with Jesus that begins the moment we respond by faith in the Gospel and continues until He finally makes us ready to go home.

And, in the rest of our time together, I want to look at our text and see how it illustrates what we can expect from Jesus on our journey of faith with Him. And, let me go ahead and give you the big idea we will unpack from the rest of our text:

Big Idea: As we Journey by faith with Jesus, He heals in His Own Way, Along the Way, and All the Way.

Now, let's go through that big idea, a little at a time.

1. Jesus Heals In His Own Way

Let me show you why I say that.

Verse 23 - And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him,

I'm not a physician, but I feel confident in this next statement: you can spit in people's eyes all day long, but your spit won't heal anyone of their blindness. You can't do that. That's under the category of "only Jesus can do that." Jesus heals in a way that is unique to Jesus. Only Jesus can forgive our sin. Only Jesus can restore us to God as our Father. Only Jesus can bind up the broken places of our hearts and lives. Only Jesus can give us resurrection power that is stronger than death itself. Buddha can't do what Jesus can do. Mohammed can't do what Jesus can do. Mystics and Modern psychology and self-help can't do what Jesus can do. You can't do what Jesus can do. No one else can do what Jesus can do.

And this man followed Jesus out of the city and stood there while Jesus spit in his eyes. Why? Because He believed that only Jesus could heal him. So, he says, "Jesus, do what you want to do. I trust you."

But there's even more at work here with Jesus spitting in His eyes. You don't have to be an expert in world culture to imagine that spitting in someone's face is pretty much universally offensive. But that's exactly what Jesus does. He does something that all of us would naturally find to be offensive.

And Jesus does a similar thing to everyone who follows Him. Part of His healing work in our lives includes something that is deeply offensive to our flesh, a work we would naturally avoid.

Romans 7:24

24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

In Romans 7, Paul describes how Jesus worked in His life to convince Paul that he was completely sinful and totally unable to do anything about it by his own strength. Jesus worked in Paul for him to realize that, if Jesus didn't save him, he wouldn't be saved. Just like the blind man in our text, Jesus offended Paul's flesh. He led Paul away from the place of relying on himself or anyone else but Jesus.

And that's the work Jesus will do in you as you journey in faith. He will lovingly and mercifully and relentlessly expose your sin and your smallness. He will hold the mirror of His word to the eyes of your heart so you can see that you are a mess, and your only hope is Jesus.

When my children were small, they all went through a stage known as "I can do it myself." Each of them expressed it in their own way, but they all had it in them. Sometimes we would be working on a project together, other times they would be trying to dress themselves or tie their shoes. But inevitably, there would be things they thought they could do that they actually couldn't do. And, your parenting approach might be different from mine, but I was firmly convinced the best thing for my children in those situations was for me to stand by and let them find out the hard way, "No, you can't do it yourself." I'd watch them make a mess of their artwork or let them fumble with their shoestrings until they were willing to look to me and say: Dad, you have to do it. I can't.

And that's similar to the work that Jesus does in us. He will allow us to struggle, to encounter difficulties of various kinds, so that we can feel our own weakness and inability. He will allow every self-reliant part of our flesh to be offended, not because He wants to harm us but because He wants to heal us. So, more often than not, we won't experience the healing power of Jesus until we are convinced that we can't heal ourselves, until we are willing to look to Jesus and say, "Jesus, you have to do it. I can't."

So, where in your life today do you need to give up trying to fix and heal and save yourself? Where do you need to look to Jesus and simply say, "Jesus, you have to do it because I can't."

Jesus heals in His own way.

2. Jesus Heals Along The Way

23 And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" 24 And he looked up and said, "I see people, but they look like trees, walking." 25 Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

Remember, this is the only miracle of Jesus that happens over the course of time. Jesus spits on his eyes and lays hands on him. Then, Jesus asks if he sees anything. The guy says, "I see people, but they look like trees, walking." I'm not an optometrist but I'm pretty sure if you see people and mistake them for trees walking around that constitutes a failure on the eye exam. It might be better than total blindness, but it's certainly not full healing. So, he was partially healed before he was fully healed.

And that's exactly what Jesus does in the lives of those who trust in Him. He begins healing us the moment we place our faith in Him at the beginning of the journey. He forgives all our sin immediately. He restores us to God immediately. He adopts us into God's family immediately. But, we are partially healed before we are fully healed.

The word the Bible uses is the word "sanctification." The word "sanctification" basically means "separation." It refers to the fact that Jesus is going to separate us to God by separating us from sin. And part of that has already happened. We've already been separated from the penalty of sin which is eternity in hell. We've already been separated from the power of sin because Jesus has set us free and given us His Spirit to live a new life as we trust Him. So, part of our sanctification has already happened.

But there's a part of sanctification that will take a lifetime to accomplish. It is the process of us being so separated from sin that we become more and more like Jesus until we will finally and fully be just like Jesus. And that's what Jesus is doing in the life of everyone who has placed their faith and trust in Him. He's making us more and more like Himself.

Romans 8:28-29

28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

When we talk about all things working together for good, many of us don't stop to think about what that really means. The good that God is working all things together for isn't that you and I would have nice, comfy lives. It isn't a promotion at work or a vacation from work. The good thing God is working all things to accomplish is that we would become more and more like Jesus.

Follower of Jesus, if you want to know what Jesus is doing in you today, it's this: He is using everything in your life for the purpose of making you more like Himself for the glory of God. He's using every pain and pleasure, every step forward and every two steps back, every mountain and every valley. He is using them all for one, primary purpose: to make you more like Jesus.

And guess what? You aren't there, yet. You know how I know? Because you are still here. You are a work in progress. He's healing you along life's way and nothing will be wasted. That's why James 1 says we can rejoice when we encounter the various trials of this life. Jesus is using them to make us more like Him. Yes, it's hard. Yes, it's painful. But it's how the Great Physician is healing us along the way.

So, let me ask you this: What would change about your life today if you truly believed Jesus is using everything in your life to make you more and more like Him? How would you see your setbacks or disappointments, your mountaintops and valleys? What if you looked at your life today through the lens of faith and trusted Jesus is using all the stuff going on in and around you to make you more like Him?

That's exactly what He is doing today. If you are trusting in Jesus, He's healing you along the way and it will take a lifetime to accomplish that work.

And that brings us to the final thing we see about the healing journey of faith in Jesus...

3. Jesus Heals Us All The Way

Verse 25 Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. 26 And he sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."

In verse 25, there are three different phrases that describe the blind man's sight – he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. That's Mark's way of painting a word picture to describe the fact that this man's vision was perfect...it was it was better than new - fully and completely restored.

When all was said and done, Jesus healed him all the way. Nothing was left undone. He left home that morning a blind and broken man. At the end of the day, he walked through the door of his home better than new.

And that's exactly what Jesus is doing in those who trust in Him. He has begun a work that He will completely fulfill. Listen, if you are trusting in Jesus, there is amazingly good news for you in the Gospel. One day, Jesus will finish the job He started the moment He first took your hand at the start of this journey. If you are in Christ, He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it. (Phil. 1:6)

Listen, again, to the word of God from Romans 8.

Romans 8:18–19

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

The day is coming when all the pain and suffering of this present time will be over. On that day, God will reveal (He will unveil like a statue) the work He was doing through Jesus in this age. And it will be glorious. All of creation will rejoice. It will be so amazing that the New Heavens and Earth will erupt in eternal praise to the glory of God. The angels and the stars and the saints will spend eternity praising Jesus for the amazingly glorious work that He accomplished during the history of this world. And do you know what the work is that will be unveiled on that day, the work that will be so glorious that the universe will explode in eternal praise?

I'll tell you what that work is. It's you. If you are trusting in Jesus, you are a child of God. And the day is coming when Jesus will unveil His completed work in the Sons and Daughters of God and that includes you. And it will be glorious.

It will be worth it all. Children of God, your destiny is glory. Jesus will finish the work He's begun – He will heal you all the way. The pain and grief of this age will be a distant memory and you'll spend eternity enjoying the glory of God. You'll finally and fully be home and whole and all will be well. So, stay the course. Look to Jesus.