

## Possible Metaphor, Definite Miracle Mark 8:22-26

### **Announcements**

1. Mission Aid Sept 15th @ 9am in the Fellowship Hall
2. Women of Faith Sept 16th @ 10am in the Fellowship Hall
3. AWANA's post card—hand it to someone
4. National Day of Prayer Sept 26th @ 5:30pm Courthouse
5. 4-6th Graders, watch kids, not teaching them, just supervision

Our passage this morning brings up a couple questions for me. One I think we have answered before. Two that need to be answered. Three that I am not sure we can say without conjecture, because the text does not implicitly say. And, one that should challenge us as we walk out of here.

Here are the questions:

1. Why does Jesus heal this man and tell him to go home, and not go to the village?
  2. Why does Mark put this story of this miracle in his gospel, and why does he put it here?
  3. Why does Jesus heal the man in two stages?
  4. What does this have to do with the price of watermelon in china?
- The answer to that question is that it doesn't, but it does have to do with your walk with Jesus.

Mark, in his gospel, is giving us lots of proof for his question? The question that he is answering is this: Who is Jesus? Of all the questions we can ask, this is the most important question. Why? Because it is the question that will help you see clearly. It is the question that will lead you to all the questions you have and give you a foundation for an answer. It is the question that reveals who you are and who God is. It is the right question to ask.

There are a lot of sources out there that answer this question, but there is only one source that has tested true throughout the ages. Newsweek and

People Magazine have tried to answer this question. National Geographic has tried to answer this question. People have answered this. There are other books that have answered this. But, there is no other source as proven as the Bible to be accurate, faithful, and reliable. There are multiple numbers of eyewitness accounts to testify to this. Not to mention most of the New Testament letters or books as we also call them, were written within 15-30 years of Jesus's death. That gave plenty of time for eyewitnesses to refute the words and actions of Jesus. You have historical writers of the day mentioning Jesus, His words and actions, His death on the cross, and even the sightings of Him after His death on the cross. Not to mention, all the evidence surrounding Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection.

Mark reveals the answer in the very first sentence of his gospel letter. At Jesus's baptism, God calls Jesus, "His Son". The demons declare Him, "The Most Holy One", "the Son of God". The disciples asked this question when He calmed the sea. They said, "Who is this man? Even the wind and waves obey Him." In our next passage we see Peter answering this question. The Pharisees fight against this answer because if He is who He claims, they will be found out for the fraud they have been doing.

Let's look at our passage this morning. I believe our passage is definitely the true act of a miracle performed by Jesus upon a blind man, but our passage I believe is possibly a metaphor about the disciples, as well as us. Miracles reveals a greater truth. Miracles are to authenticate the performer of the miracles. They authenticate the messenger. The Pulpit Commentary says this, "His [Jesus] miracles were for the sake of His doctrine, and not His doctrine for the sake of His miracles."

I believe the greater truth is that it takes time for the justified person to understand. It takes time to understand the truths of Jesus. Some will get them sooner than others. Some of those truths may take a life time to begin to understand. But, we must remember, we are called to be faithful first, and then in the process of faithfulness begin to understand deeper the things of God. Our growth, the sanctification process of a believer is just that, it is a process of learning, failing, hearing, gaining understanding as time goes, learning to trust, growing in faith.

Mark 8:22-26

## Verse 22

### Bethsaida

#### -Two Bethsaida's

- One on the Gentile side and one on the Jewish side. This is the one on the Jewish side.
- It meant "place of fish"
- Jesus spent a fair amount of time in and around Bethsaida. This was also where Philip, Andrew, and Peter were from.
- Listen to what Jesus said about Bethsaida, "Then Jesus began to denounce the towns where He had done so many of His miracles, because they hadn't repented of their sins and turned to God. What sorrow awaits you, Korazin and Bethsaida! For if the miracles I did in you had been done in wicked Tyre and Sidon, their people would have repented of their sins long ago, clothing themselves in burlap and throwing ashes on their heads to show their remorse. I tell you, Tyre and Sidon will be better off on judgment day than you."
- The people of Tyre and Sidon did not have the presence of Jesus in front of them, but seeing the things Jesus had done would have caused them to realize who Jesus is. Bethsaida had the presence of Jesus and experienced those miracles, and they have not repented for their sin.

## Verse 23

- Some people brought a blind man to Jesus to heal Him, and what does Jesus do? Verse 23 tells us He takes him outside the city. It could very well be because of the unbelief and Jesus's rebuke of Bethsaida. They were ignoring His message and seeing Him as the great teacher who heals.
- Notice what Jesus does: spits in His eyes and then lays hands on Him
  - Spit was thought to have healing properties
  - Laying hands on them was what healers did.
  - Jesus used what was familiar.
    - the healers and medicine of the day was crude, and was known to have very little help
    - Jesus using the resources of His day that were crude and mostly non-effective would reveal 'Who He is' and the it revealed the authority and power He has over creation

-Isaiah 35:5-6

Speaking of the Messiah, Isaiah speaks of one of many ways to know who the Messiah is, “And when He comes, He will open the eyes of the blind and unplug the ears of the deaf. The lame will leap like a deer, and those that can’t speak will sing for joy!”

-The people of Bethsaida would have been familiar with this passage. Just a few weeks ago in Mark 7 we saw Jesus putting His fingers in the ear of a deaf man, unplugging his ears, and gaining his ability to hear again.

-Jesus asks an interesting question, “Can you see anything now?” Listen to the blind man’s response. “Yes”, he said, “I see people, but I can’t see them very clearly. They look like trees walking around” In the rest of the accounts we have seen of these miracles, Jesus speaks and they are healed. Jesus didn’t ask if what He did worked. Does that seem strange?

-Is it possible that this issue was bigger than he could handle?

-Is it possible the blind guy didn’t have enough faith?

-The answer to these questions is ‘No’!

-We have seen Jesus work when there was a lack of faith. We have seen Jesus heal many times over. So is there something deeper going on? Is there something Mark is trying to reveal? To this question, I believe the answer is “Yes”.

-Before we get into that, let’s look at the man’s response.

-I can’t see clearly.

-Have you ever been swimming and looked up out of the water and what you see is blobs? Maybe a friend or parent was standing above you out of the pool. You can kind of see them, but they are a blob. That’s the idea here. His vision wasn’t perfect. He could see, but not clearly.

Verse 25

-“Then Jesus placed His hands on the man’s eyes again, and His eyes were opened. His sight was completely restored and he could see everything clearly.”

-This man was completely restored. The idea is he could see perfectly.

What was once broken had now been fixed. What once was an issue that plagued his life, now had no power over him, and effectually was done away with.

-When Jesus touches a life, this is what He does. He heals, restores, redeems. But it is a two step process. In this physical world, it is a spiritual renewal. When we die or Jesus comes back for us before we die, that spiritual renewal process will be completed. Philippians 1:6 tells us this. "He who began a good work in you will complete it." That completing isn't stopping in the process wherever you are at. It means to be completed, whole, absolutely finished with nothing left to do.

-We live in this world of sin, and we still deal with the effects and consequences of sin in the world and maybe we even are dealing with the ramifications of our sin or someone else's sins committed in this world. But for those who have received Christ, it doesn't have to have power over you. The scars and pain of the scars may be there, but they don't have to control you. Hold on, because there is a day that is coming when all that will be completely wiped away. Until then, Jesus wants you to learn to experience the fullness of abundant life He promises, to grow in trusting that He is your provider and care giver, to grow in faithfulness so you can experience the blessings that can be found in this life, to serve Him and watch how the things of your life can be used to help out another person.

-Mark's placement of this passage to me just seemed strange. Mark writes with intention to get a point across, to answer some important questions and writes to a crowd that needs strengthening and understanding as they face the challenges of a culture that is very hedonistic, deep in idol worship, engrossed in worldly things.

Again, context is everything. I think Mark is making a point.

-previously we saw the pharisees absolutely missing point because of their hatred, anger, pride, and self-righteousness.

-then we see the disciples not getting it. But not because of hatred and anger, but because they were not taking time to understand and they were just not getting it. They only saw what was on the surface. They couldn't yet see the deeper things. They just weren't ready for it. They were lacking understanding. Jesus says to them, "Don't you understand even yet?" Are your hearts too

hard to take it in? You have eyes—can't you see? You have ears—can't you hear? Don't you remember anything at all? Do you understand yet?

-I believe the context is revealing to us the disciples maturing process, as well as ours.

-Jesus could have healed the man by giving a command. This was definitely a miracle of healing, but as so much of what Jesus did, it served a purpose, it makes a point.

-Mark 4 speaks of the seed thrown by the sower on the 4 different soils. The seed being God's Word, the soil our hearts.

1. the hard soil, Satan takes the seed away

2. the rocky soil, it takes root and grows quickly, but dies quickly...no maturing process, no persevering, lack of faithfulness

3. amongst the weeds, it takes root and grows, but gets strangled out by the cares of this world, the fame and glamour of this world are more important.

4. the good soil. it takes root, takes time to grow. Has to be cared for, worked, weeded, nourished, watered, re-nourished, re-weeded. It's a process of the plant's life and maturing.

-There are theological terms for this. Justification and Sanctification. Justification is the beginning of the salvation process.

It's a miracle that reveals a greater truth. I believe the greater truth is that it takes time for the justified person to understand. It takes time to understand the truths of Jesus. Some will get them sooner than others.

Some of those truths may take a life time to begin to understand. But, we must remember, we are called to be faithful first, and then in the process of faithfulness begin to understand deeper the things of God.

Two weeks ago we looked at the Pharisees anger and hatred for Jesus. The Religious leaders denied and resisted against Jesus. They chose themselves and their ways over Jesus. They ignored His warnings. They looked for ways to mock Him and cause Him to fail. They denied His existence as Messiah, God, and Savior.

Last week we talked about Jesus as the patient Savior. Jesus is patient. He is loving, gentle, meek and puts up with a lot! He worked with the disciples to train them up. They were not against Him. They did not have anger for Him. They did not deny or resist against Him as the Pharisees did. Their motives were different. They saw something about Jesus that they felt they needed to go where He went, be a part of what He was a part of, and learn from what He taught. But, they were fighting the pull of their culture as well as what had been engrained in them from birth against what Jesus was teaching them. They were having to relearn. They were being transformed. It took time. It took failing and getting back up again. It took lots of experiences with Jesus to begin to understand the deeper truths. It was a process of change from within led by teaching and keeping themselves in the presence of Jesus. Jesus is truly patient, loving, and willing to go through our process of growing with us. However, that doesn't mean that He does not judge.

**Acts 10:42** refers to Him as the “judge of the living and the dead.”

Romans 2:16 says, “the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone’s secret life.”

**2 Corinthians 5:10** says we will “*all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ.”

**Revelation 19:11** says “And I [John] saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.”

There is judgment for all. There is judgment of the unbelieving and judgment of the believing.

Judgment for the unbelieving will not be pretty. It will be the saddest day. Period. Why? Because there will be no hope for the unsaved. There will be no second chances. The severity of judgment for the unbeliever at the Great White throne judgment will be according to what they have done. Don't be confused, you could be the most moral, upright, kind, giving unsaved sinner and it will be much worse than the worst, most immoral saved person will experience in heaven.

Hell is likened to gnashing of teeth that comes from absolute agony. It's likened to the ever-burning sacrifices in the valley of Gihenna: the repulsive smell and sight of burning flesh from torturing a child and the loneliness and despair of that child while being sacrificed by fire as that child locks eyes with their parent being the sacrificer. Not a pleasing thought at all! Not happy!!

There will also be judgment for the believers. Wait!! “I thought when I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior I was no longer going to be judged?” That is true...in regards to heaven or hell, eternal punishment and separation or eternal life and the fullness of God’s presence. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must **all** stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body”. The context of this verse is speaking to believers. That verse should shake us.

So what will the judgement of believers entail? Reward or loss of reward. 1 Corinthians 4:5 says, “So don’t make judgments about anyone ahead of time—before the Lord returns. For he will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due.” This makes sense in light of Jesus words in regards to the motives of our heart being greater than our outward acts when the Pharisees came to Him and complained that the disciples were following the traditions of men by washing their hands before they ate. This judgment has nothing to do with losing salvation, but rewards. Ephesians 1:13-14 says, “And when you believed in Christ, He identified you as His own by giving you the Holy Spirit...the Spirit is God’s guarantee that He will give us the inheritance He promised and the He has purchased us to be His own.”

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 says it like this, “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ. Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person’s work has any value. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.” Our motives matter. Is it for Christ? Is it what Christ is up to? Is it what Christ loves? We will be judged if our actions were selfish or to pour effort into what Jesus is about.

Jesus is the judge of the living and dead. For those that don’t know Christ, I truly hope you receive Him as Savior. For those that know Christ and are living for yourself, instead deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus. There is a blessing now and there will be a future blessing.

Jesus is the perfect, fair judge. He is a judge whom has been given all authority. His authority spans law, but also mental, physical, as well as spiritual. He can heal as He wishes and who He wishes and when He wishes...and it will be in the right time, for the right reason, revealing the right things.