

Where Are You Blind?

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[0 : 00] Rendering ever-ending love for us, Lord, does not stop. Can't stop. We can't stop it, even if we try. It doesn't stop coming at us, and we thank you for that, Lord.

Bless the fathers here today and their work and their labors and their struggles with children. It's hard sometimes. Put them in your hands.

Bless them today and help them to continue to fight the good fight. Lord, that you've called them to do, called us to do. And again, have all of us open up and hear the words with our ears and our eyes to see the truth today.

Amen. So I just have one.

So I'm going to go to the book of Mark today, back to the book of Mark, but I would have a little mini thing to say about Father's Day if I could. And I was just reflecting about memories of being a dad.

[1 : 09] You can probably relate to this. Get back to bed. What are you doing up? How many times has that happened? What are you still up for? Get back to bed.

I told you, I told you three times. Why'd you hit him? Really? Right? Fighting?

Kids fighting? Well, he looked at me bad or, you know, whatever the reason was, right? Eat your food. You're not going nowhere until you finish your supper.

It's hard sometimes at the time. It seems funny now at the time, but at the time it's challenging things that kids do. And as they get older, sometimes they start doing things that are even harder things.

Really? I didn't think you would ever do that. Then we have lots of really good memories as well. I know there's some tough things, but there's good things, right? Fun things.

[2 : 04] I know I probably shared this before, but I just remember when we were sleeping and my daughter was like two, middle of the night, ka-plunk, ka-plunk down the steps, you know.

Pitter, patter, pitter, patter across the steps, right in the middle of the night. And then we decided that we're going to let her sleep next to us on a little, my wife made a nice little blanket for her to sleep there at night.

That was for a season. You guys might have handled it differently. It was just a memory I had. It was a good memory. And so I was just thinking, what would be a good verse to share with the dads today just to put things in perspective?

Because I know we all have good memories. We have hard memories sometimes with our children. But I think there's one verse that really encompasses a father.

And you're well familiar with the prodigal son. The son went to the dad. I want my inheritance. I'm leaving. And he gets his inheritance. And he leaves. And he squanders everything.

[3 : 05] And pretty soon he becomes hungry. And decides, I better go back home. And this is a father. And this father, don't think this father was perfect.

The prodigal son's father is perfect. He's just like us. I'm sure he had made mistakes. But this one thing he did right. Something we never want to forget, you dads.

So he rose up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

And, you know, I know what my kids look like far away. And I bet you fathers do too. Because we know him well. And he saw and he knew what his son looked like from a long way off.

That's because he knew him well. And our father in heaven knows us well. From a long way off, he sees us. And so I just encourage you fathers to remember that verse today as you spend celebrating Father's Day.

[4 : 10] Okay, well we're going to go to the book of Mark. Did I pray yet? I did. Sorry. It's got worked up there.

Yeah, it was a good song. All right, we're going to do actually two stories today. Okay, both stories are about Jesus healing a blind man. And hopefully it will encourage you. They're both short stories and there's a lot to unpack to learn from these stories and glean. And you probably have some other thoughts after hearing this as well. So let's read through the two stories here.

Mark chapter 8. And they came to Bethsaida and they brought a blind man to Jesus and pleaded with him to touch him. And taking the blind man by the hand, he brought him out of the village. And after spitting in his eyes and laying his hands on him, he was asking him, Do you see anything? And he looked up and was saying, I see men, for I see them like trees walking around. [5 : 11] And then again he laid his hands on his eyes and he looked intently and was restored and began to see everything clearly. And he sent him home, sent him to his home saying, Do not even enter the village.

And the next story is in chapter 10. Then they came to Jericho and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road.

And when he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and said, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And many were sternly telling him to be quiet. But he kept crying out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stopped and said, Call him here. So they called the blind man saying to him, Take courage. Get up. He is calling for you. He is calling for you. And the last part here. And throwing off the outer garment, he jumped up and came to Jesus.

[6 : 19] And Jesus answered him and said, What do you want me to do for you? And the blind man said to him, Rabbani, I want to regain my sight. And Jesus said to him, Go, your faith has saved you.

Immediately he regained his sight and began following him on the road. There's an account of two healings, a blind man that Jesus had a part of and healed them.

And so let's go back to the first story here, verse 22, the first account. And the first verse of 22, And they came to Bethsaida, and they brought a blind man to Jesus and pleaded with him to touch him. So we know there was a boat journey, brings Jesus and the disciples to Bethsaida, on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. So we've been talking, we've been showing maps, and there's the sea, and this is on the north side there of the Sea of Galilee in a town called Bethsaida.

And we see a blind man asking Jesus to touch him. Perhaps he has some knowledge of Jesus touching and healing people.

[7 : 29] He pleaded to be touched by Jesus. If you have your Bibles handy, and you go to Mark, in a previous story that we read in chapter 7, I want to reread part of this because there's some similarities of healing in previous stories that I think is important and relevant.

And I don't have the verse here, but it's in chapter 7 and verse 31. I'd like to read a few of these verses here to show you some parallel, the two stories. So chapter 7, verse 31, And again he went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis.

And they brought to him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they pleaded with him to lay his hands on him. And Jesus took a side from the crowd by himself and put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting he touched his tongue.

And I'm going to just pause right there. Most of this stuff happens in this story where Jesus takes him off to the side, he touches him, lays his hand, he spits, touches, and heals. And we're going to see the same thing in this story of the blind man.

Let's continue to read. And taking the blind man by the hand, he brought him out of the village, and after spitting on his eyes and laying his hands on him, he was asking him, Do you see anything?

[9 : 01] And he looked up and was saying, I see men, for I see them like trees walking around. Then again he laid his hands on his eyes, and he looked intently and was restored and began to see everything clearly.

So he takes the blind man by the hand. Isn't that special? The Savior grabbed him by the hand and touched him.

That's heartwarming to me. And he takes him out alone. You didn't heal him right there. He's going to separate the situation. I'm going to take you out here all by yourself, you and me, and have a

special time together, and I'm going to heal your blindness.

You know, the Savior desperately wants to spend time alone with us. He wants to take our hand. Come along outside with me.

I've got some things to do for you, to heal for you. Maybe not physically, but spiritually. It's a privilege. It's a privilege that he wants to do this for us.

[10:12] The Savior, healing the blind man, is showing us physically, the physical Jesus, of how this works, taking care of us. We see Jesus, on other occasions, separating himself.

It wasn't the first time. We saw it in the previous story. He separated himself, from the one we just read. He spits in his eyes, and lays hands on him.

It's an interesting thing to do, isn't it? Who would have thought to do that? Spitting, and laying hands on. In the Old Testament, you really don't find, laying on of hands, for healing.

You'd be hard pressed, to find that to happen, in the Old Testament. But you do see, laying on of hands, in the Old Testament. There's a few, few cases, that I can share with you. The dedication, of sacrifices to God.

They laid hands on the bull, before they sacrificed it. Exodus 29, verse 10. They laid hands on the Levites, when they were making them priests.

[11:20] And we've been going through, the Joseph story. We know that, I believe Isaac, and both Jacob, laid hands on, kids and grandkids, for blessings. But in the New Testament, Jesus takes laying on of hands, in a new role of healing.

Most of the time. People touch Jesus, and Jesus touches people. We see both. It was powerful.

And we see the human, humanness of Jesus, touching, touching people.

Physical touch. It's a very, very powerful thing. If you've been around, elderly people, and you hold their hand, you touch them, it is, remarkably, healing for them, special for them.

I saw, Anna holding hands, with her daughter, this morning. That was sweet, and special, wasn't it? Holding hands, touching people, laying hands on people. We lay hands on people, and pray for people.

It's a really good thing to do. I encourage you to, I had a friend, back in graduate school, when I was learning to be a math teacher. He was from West Africa.

[12:35] He was 6'9", big, tall, black man, and we were friends, and we were walking down the road, and we were talking about, he wanted to hold my hand, in a good way, not the way that we think.

I don't think I did it, I just, we don't do that in our culture, but, it was a good thing. I've seen that in other cultures, people holding hands, women, women in the right way, in a good way.

What was his response? Do you see anything? Verse 23, and he looked up, I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around.

Interesting. Evidently, he doesn't see quite clearly yet, does he? The process of getting his vision back, was taking time, it was in stages.

Or did Jesus mess up? I don't think so. No, he didn't mess up, did he? Many of the healings, were right on spot. He healed them right on the spot, but in this case, it was in stages.

[13:44] In Mark chapter 5, there's a couple examples, in Mark chapter 5, about healing a dead girl, and a demonic. He does it right on the spot. In this case, he's doing it in stages.

That's kind of how our life is, I think, when we grow and learn in Christ, it's in stages. You know, we don't get it right away. And he sent him home, the last verse here, and he sent him home, sent him to his home, saying, do not even enter the village.

It is clear Jesus, does not want him to broadcast, this miracle. And you wonder why that is. I'm going to give you three reasons, why I think, could be other than that, it doesn't really say.

But I think Jesus want him, to reflect on his restored blindness, and his new faith. Probably the biggest one, in my mind.

And perhaps, Jesus just wanted to have him, get some time to process this. Wow, what really happened? We know that this city, Bethsaida, was a city of unbelief.

[14:57] And it was a very, had a very hardness of heart, in that city. So I think maybe Jesus wanted him, to stay away from there. And also, I think I've heard people say, that, Jesus didn't want people, just coming to him, to get healed.

For the only reason, because we know, Jesus wants us, to come to him, to get a new heart. So again, we see the gradual healing, of the blind man. The ability to see and hear, spiritually and

physically, both, comes from God.

And it's not on our ability. So in the blind man's healing, we see nothing from him. It completely comes, from Jesus' repeated touching.

And we need, repeated touching. I think that's a good story. We need, repeated touching. Don't we? It's why I read my Bible, every day.

I don't do it legalistically, I do it because I want to do it. I need repeated touching. I need him to hold my hand. I need to do it, separated from the world, so to speak, in a quiet place.

[16:09] We call it a quiet time. You can call it whatever you want. Connecting with Jesus, repeatedly, regularly, daily. I try and read, my whole Bible a year. I try and read the Bible, once a year.

Just what I do. I'm not saying you need to do that, but it's what I need to do. It's how we get clear vision. It's a story about becoming to see things.

We see the disciples going through the cycle in their faith. Non-understanding, to misunderstanding, to complete understanding. Kind of how we see the disciples in their walk, don't we?

They struggle the whole time with Jesus. And this is how it works in our own life. We have to remember when you learn a verse or you memorize a verse, okay, I've got that down.

Well, maybe you don't. That's a stage of getting it down. You know, sometimes it takes a month to learn things. It takes a year to learn things to get good vision in things.

[17:12] the disciples were, until really, until his death and resurrection, they started to see things better. It took that whole three years for the disciples to really learn Jesus' mission, what his task was and what theirs was going to be.

That's an amazing story. Let's go to the next story. Mark chapter 10. Then they came to Jericho and as he was leaving Jericho with the disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road.

So, when he went to Jericho, this was Jesus' final leg of his journey to Jerusalem. He stopped by Jericho and maybe another town or two.

It's claimed to be one of the oldest cities of continuous living people Jericho was. And once again, the disciples were with Jesus and there was a large crowd which was happening quite often.

The blind man calls out to Jesus He is sitting He is sitting by the roadside on the edge of the road. He's calling out to Jesus.

[18:30] Right? He's sitting by the road on the outside. Later, we're going to learn that he comes to the inside of the road from the outside of the road.

You can see there's a kind of where we're at before we know Christ and when we come to know Christ, we're on the outside. We get to be inside with Jesus. Let's go to verse 47.

When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. What Bartimaeus lacks with his sight, he's blind, he certainly has insight.

He gains insight. His very words, crying out, show what he knows about Jesus. He knows he's the Nazarene. He's from Nazareth.

We know he's a healer. Healer came from there. And we know he calls him Son of David. Well, that's the prophecy from the story of David of the Messiah is going to come through the seed of David.

[19:40] He recognizes that. He almost knows more than the disciples do. Maybe he does. The insight, just in his crying out, Son of David, he knows what to call him.

Have mercy on me. the promise from God that he would raise up a savior from the city of David, the messianic leader that was going to come.

He seems to have some insight into that and he's blind. And many were sternly telling him to be quiet.

But he kept crying out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stopped and said, Call him here. So they called the blind man saying to him, Take courage, get up, he is calling for you.

And throwing off his outer garment, he jumped up and came to Jesus. Verse 48 there, the crowd tries to silence the blind man.

[20:48] The crowd is preventing him from coming to Jesus. Whoa. May I never do that. Right?

May us never do that. Keep someone from coming to Jesus. Wow. But nothing's going to stop him. Not Bartimaeus.

In fact, he even gets more persistent. Says it twice, right? He's coming after Jesus. And he is desperate for the kingdom of God and this is a wonderful thing.

They think he's a nuisance. Not Jesus. And Jesus stood still. Does it say he stood still there?

Take courage, get up. And throwing off as he jumped up right there, quiet, call him here. Jesus, stop. Verse 49.

[21 : 48] There it is. Verse 49. Jesus stopped. A blind guy on the side of the road got the Savior's attention. Everyone's important to the Savior.

Isn't it? Aren't they? Every people group is important to the Savior. He stops. He threw off his cloak and jumped up to come to Jesus.

His faith got rewarded. And let's not forget all the people groups. Maybe we shouldn't have even people. Maybe we shouldn't even have people groups.

Right? Separating people in different groups. Everyone's important to Jesus. He loves everyone desperately. He's persistent.

If you're out here today and you want to know the Lord, just be persistent. Go after him. He's there. He'll stop. Just for you. Next two verses.

[22 : 56] And Jesus answered him and said to him, what do you want me to do for you? And the blind man said to him, Rabbani, I want to regain my sight.

And Jesus said to him, go. Your faith has saved you. Immediately, he regained his sight and began following him on the road. It's a little different account, isn't it? It wasn't in stages.

It was, your faith, there you are. You have it. And it's a great question. What do you want me to do for you?

If you read verse 36, you should see what the disciples want Jesus to do for them. It's not this. They want to sit on his right and his left.

He's got a good answer. He just wants, all he wants to do is to see. We want all kinds of things, right? I want all kinds of things sometimes, right? He just wants to see.

[24 : 00] I'm fascinated by Jesus' questions. I know Pastor Jack has always talked about that. Ask questions. Get people to think and probe and think for themselves.

What is it that they want? What is it they need? It should probe our brains. What would you say if Jesus asked you that today? What do you want me to do for you?

What would you say to that question today? Ponder this question. That's your homework assignment for this week. Answer that question. What do you want Jesus to do for you today?

The question gives the blind man a chance to express himself as a person and not a problem.

Jesus is giving him great value and he doesn't just want to see him for him just to see but he wants spiritual seeing as well. And how does he reply?

[25 : 03] Rabbani, I want to regain my sight. Calls him Rabbani. That's a degree of respect of a master, of a teacher. He's simply asking for sight and nothing more.

I don't know if most of us have probably been sick at some point in time. There's nothing more health on your mind when you're sick. Most important thing.

All these things that we want. Just having health. Basic health. He just wanted to be on the same playing field as everyone else. And Jesus responds, go, your faith has saved you.

It's how we come to know the Savior is by faith, right? We realize our sin, our blindness, and we accept Christ by faith to forgive us.

It's how we come to know him. It's how we become Christians. Christians. He no longer is sitting beside the road, but on the road with Jesus.

[26 : 14] He began following him on the road at the end there. That's so cool. Our spiritual health blindness is what keeps us from becoming Christians and getting forgiveness of sins.

this is where we need to be on the road with Jesus, right? Following him. Sometimes we wander off to the edge of the road.

We need to wander back onto the middle of the road where he's at. It's narrow. It's hard. It's hot. But we know that's the right path, isn't it?

After learning the scriptures, we know it's the right path. So I'm asking you today, what's your stage of blindness as we're trying to get clear of vision, right?

Where do you think you land? Is it fuzzy? Is it a clear path? What question again, what question would you ask Jesus? Do you have eyes?

[27 : 17] We saw that in verse 18 last week, right? You have eyes but can't see. We were talking about that last Sunday, right? Pastor John Hopkins was sharing that verse. Eyes but can't see.

Is that where you're at? There's a verse, there's really one more passage that I'd like to share this morning. I shared it a few weeks ago. It was in terms of hypocrisy, but I think it fits with blindness as well.

Whoops. Maybe I don't have it there. I lost, maybe I forgot to put this verse up. Okay, you got your Bibles. If you could go to Matthew chapter 7. If you have a Bible, I'll read it to you.

So, Matthew chapter 7, verses 1 through 5. Do not judge.

I'm learning that that means condemning. Do not judge, so that you will not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged.

[28 : 29] And with what measure you measure, it will be measured to you. And why do you look at the speck? This is the part I want to really focus in on. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but not notice the log that is in your own eye?

Now, I know you know this. If you have a speck in your eye, it is pretty hard to see. And it feels like the world's coming apart, you can't see.

I've been to the doctor a couple times trying to get specks out of my eyes. So here's a guy that's got a, so let's continue to read. And how can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye, and behold, the log is in your eye?

Here's two, both guys are in trouble. They've got the log on the one guy, the speck on the other guy, it's kind of like two somewhat blind guys. You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, you'll see clearly and take the speck out of your brother's eye.

But both people have a degree of blindness. And we know how debilitating a speck is in our own eye.

[29 : 40] So here's my point about the blindness and seeing vision today. One of the points that I want to make is, yes, evaluate, take the log out of your own eye if you're struggling with something, then go.

Sometimes we take the scriptures, just don't judge, and then we don't do nothing. No, it says go and take the speck out of your brother's eye so he can see too. So we both can see.

Right? That's what it's about. Evaluate to help someone. Speak truth. Sometimes we got to be bold and speak truth in someone's heart. Look, you're sinning in this area and this is what you need to do.

I'm trying to help you get the speck out of your brother's eye. We need to help each other with blindness. So as we close, I want you to just ponder that, helping each other, and remember, getting clear vision requires multiple touches of Jesus.

Requires multiple touches of Jesus. Let him hold your hand. Let him take you to a quiet place. Don't think you can go by day after day after day and not listen to him and his word.

[30 : 53] Connect with him. Open up your word. Where do I read? Ask someone. Ask someone. Read it together with someone.

We can learn to do this. and get clear vision. It will give you good vision. The word of God will give you good vision.

Father, I want to say thank you for the scripture verses today. Thank you for Father's Day. Bless all the fathers here today. Help the fathers get good vision in their families.

Lord, help us to encourage the fathers. Come alongside the fathers. they can do your work, Lord. Thank you again for this beautiful day and enjoy each other.

Amen.