

# WAS JESUS HAVING A



Was Jesus having a bad day? Did He forget one of the “steps” of healing? Was it because “someone” didn’t have enough faith or lacked the full measure of faith? Was Jesus trying to show us another “way” for healing to take place? Was Jesus showing us that healing is sometimes a process? The above questions all stem from a very curious account that is found only in Mark 8. We read in Mark 8:22-26, “*And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to*

*touch him.* <sup>23</sup> *And 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 upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.* <sup>24</sup> *And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.* <sup>25</sup> *After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.* <sup>26</sup> *And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.”*

Recently, we came across this account in one of our BibleShare discussions. We are reading through and discussing the Gospel of Mark. In BibleShare, we read through the scriptures as if we were right there along with Jesus’ disciples, experiencing the Gospel accounts just as they would. We take every account and keep them within their context and order of events as they took place and are found within the Gospel. We also place it within its context in the entirety of scripture. We call it a “contextual expository” discussion of the Word of God where everyone is free to share. I believe this is vital in our truly being able to grasp what was actually taking place. As we found out, this was vital to understanding the above account concerning Jesus and the blind man who was brought to Him.

Actually, the answer to our questions begins back in Mark 4. Mark 4 starts off with Jesus’ teaching of the “Parable of the Sower and the Four Types of Soil.” Jesus gives His disciples an explanation of the parable but before He does, He gives them a gentle exhortation from their scriptures and then asks them a question. We read in Mark 4:11-13, “*And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:* <sup>12</sup> *That **seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand;** lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.* <sup>13</sup> *And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?”* Jesus told them that this parable in which He just taught was primary to the mission that they would be sent to fulfill after His death, resurrection and ascension to the Father. Take note and keep in the back of your mind concerning the phrase Jesus quotes from Isaiah about seeing but not really seeing.

As I just mentioned, Jesus was quoting from the prophetic word spoken by Isaiah concerning the people that were listening to His message. Most of them heard and enjoyed what Jesus taught and preached (excluding the religious leaders). However, most of them were missing what He was really saying. His disciples, as we read, also were “dull” to really hearing what He was saying. However, Jesus took the time to speak with His disciples privately concerning what this parable was truly teaching and how important its message was. In the event that follows, we get another “inside look” at their lack of understanding and their lack of truly grasping what Jesus was truly bringing forth.

In the event that follows we read that the disciples were on the Sea of Galilee with Jesus. Out of nowhere, a tremendous storm rises up. Jesus, asleep in the boat, is awakened by His desperate disciples. He promptly calms the storm and they arrive at their destination. Mark 4:41 is another scripture we need to keep “in the back of our mind” for our discussion. Mark 4:41 it states that the disciples were in awe and asked each other, “...*What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?*” They asked each other “*what manner of man*” was Jesus. Their spiritual senses were dull. Now, before you accuse me of coming down hard on the disciples, I would like for you to know that that is the furthest thing from my mind. Actually, I can cut them a lot of slack. This was all totally new to them. After all that was happening, they still stayed with Jesus. Even though they were not seeing it all clearly, they chose to stay with Jesus.

As we fast forward to Mark 8 we come to the account where Jesus feeds the 4000. We must grasp the fact that this is a different “feeding of the multitude” than that which took place in Mark 6:32-34 when He fed

the 5000. It is interesting to note that when Jesus fed the 5000, He was in an area near Capernaum, which was a Jewish area. When Jesus fed the 4000, He and His disciples were in the Gentile region of Decapolis. Hmm... Jesus had compassion on the Jewish people and “fed” them because they were like “sheep without a shepherd.” Jesus then “fed” the Gentiles because they had stayed to listen to Him for three days and ran out of food. This shows us that both, the Jewish people and the Gentiles were in need but for different reasons. They both were searching and in need, so they came to listen to Jesus. Jesus fed them both, Jew and Gentile – not just with physical bread but most importantly with the “bread of Life” – the Word of God and the Gospel of salvation. That is the true “manna” from Heaven.

Next, Jesus, along with the disciples take a boat and go to the Jewish area of Dalmanutha (Magdala) where He meets up with some Pharisees who badger Him to show them a sign from heaven to prove that He is who He says He is. We read that Jesus asks a rhetorical question, “*Why doth this generation seek after a sign?*” To which He answers, “... *verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.*”

From there He straightway takes His disciples and they set sail to the area and town of Bethsaida where the account that we are discussing takes place. On the way Jesus makes a statement that goes right over the disciples’ heads. We read in Mark 8:15, “*And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.*” The disciples thought He was chiding them because they didn’t bring any bread with them on their journey. Duh!!! No. That wasn’t what Jesus was saying. He was warning them to beware of the false doctrines and teachings the Pharisees were bringing forth that were contrary to the true Word of God and contrary to who Jesus is and His message. Jesus makes a statement to them which could be a clue to the possible answer of our discussion.

We read in Mark 8:17-21, “*And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? **perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?** <sup>18</sup> **Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not?** and do ye not remember? <sup>19</sup> *When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.* <sup>20</sup> *And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.* <sup>21</sup> *And he said unto them, **How is it that ye do not understand?***” Obviously, Jesus was telling His disciples that they were missing something. They weren’t **seeing things** the way they should. They were not seeing the things concerning Himself and the Kingdom of God clearly, as they should.*

They now reach the town of Bethsaida. “Bethsaida” literally means, “house of fish.” Bethsaida was the “hometown” of Peter, Andrew, James and John. It was where they were born. Now, in the city of Bethsaida, they meet up with the blind man in our discussion. An interesting note to remember is that Bethsaida does not have a very good reputation. If we remember, Jesus states in Matthew 11:21, “*Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.*” In other words, Bethsaida was a place that was full of people who had hardened hearts and rejected Jesus and His Gospel message. He truly rebukes Bethsaida by saying that Gentiles (Tyre and Sidon) would repent before they would. Having taken note of what a hard hearted, sin riddled city of “ill repute” Bethsaida was, we can get a better appreciation and understanding of Peter’s character and behavior before he was called by Jesus and what Jesus was “working with.” Peter was not an “altar boy.” However, this does give us a greater insight into Peter’s total change of heart and manner of lifestyle through Jesus.

We read in Mark 8:22 that there were some who then brought this man blind man to Jesus. Who they were, we are not told. They could have been friends of the blind man. They could have been some that heard of Jesus and may have believed. They may have been people from the town that brought the blind man to “test” Jesus and bring some kind of mockery against Him if the man was not healed. There may

have been some who were traveling with Jesus who saw the blind man and brought him to Jesus. Again, we are not told so it does not matter much. The one thing that is not mentioned anywhere in this account is the word "faith." It is not mentioned concerning those who brought the man. It is not mentioned concerning the blind man and it is not mentioned by Jesus. Hmm... Again, let's just put that in the back of our mind.

What we do know is that Jesus led him out of the city. This would not be out of the ordinary for Jesus to do because of the "atmosphere" of sin and wickedness that was prevalent in the city. He did not want it to become a spectacle just for the sake of being a "sign or wonder." We must remember that Jesus' main mission was to "preach the Good News." The "signs and wonders" were secondary. It was the message of salvation and the restoring of relationship back to the Father that was priority #1 for Jesus.

The next thing we see is that Jesus spits on the blind man's eyes, and puts his hands upon him. This has been an issue of curiosity for many of us. What was Jesus doing and why did He do this? We must note that Jesus had done this on two other occasions as well. Previously in Mark, Jesus placed his spittle on a man's tongue who could not speak and the man's tongue was "loosed." In the Gospel of John, Jesus used His spittle to make a mud pack and placed it on the man who was born blind to bring forth that healing. What was it about the spittle? There is a "rabbinical thought" that the saliva of the "first born" son had some type of healing powers. We know that the first thing we do when we cut our finger is that we instinctively put the injured finger in our mouth and suck on it. C'mon, you know you do. It may possibly be that Jesus was doing this as a subtle sign to say that He is the "first born of the Father" and that there is healing within Him.

Remember, we previously discussed that the Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign, to which He didn't do anything because of their wrong motives. Here we see Jesus possibly, in a very subtle way, express to His disciples and those around Him of who He truly was, the Son of the Father. Those who were there may have picked up on this and it may have been thought that the readers of the Gospel accounts would be aware of this as well. Therefore there was no reason to put anything about it when the Gospels were written. Again, this is just a thought based on the rabbinical customs and thought of that time. I am not saying that this is necessarily correct.

Now we come to the section of our discussion that gives place to many different "thoughts" and provokes the questions we brought up in the beginning of our discussion. We read in Mark 8:23 that Jesus asked the man "*If he saw anything?*" This is so very strange. Never, in any of the Gospel accounts, do we read of Jesus asking if the person He just touched or prayed for was healed. First, being God, Jesus knew everything, why would he ask the man this question? If he couldn't see wouldn't Jesus know that? And secondly, every time Jesus touched someone they were immediately healed. Actually, we read of accounts when He wasn't even present but just spoke the words and healing was brought forth at that very same moment. The man answered Jesus saying, "*I see men as trees, walking.*" Then Jesus touched the man again and the man was able to see clearly. So the question remains, "Why? What was going on?" Was Jesus having a bad day? Was He tired and weary and therefore not at His best? Come on!!! Really!!! We're talking about Jesus. I don't think so.

As we read this passage, we also do not see any mention concerning anyone's faith. So therefore, even though many teach that the man's faith was not strong enough to be healed the first time and Jesus had to touch him again, we **do not** read this in the text. Many just "**assume**" it was about the man's faith or lack of it. Another teaching or "doctrine" that comes out of this account is that "Jesus was showing us that divine healing could be a process." I do not disagree that sometimes healing is a process but we are talking about Jesus here. Jesus, again, never mentions this and it is the only account in the Gospels where something like

this happens. Remember the principle of “two or three witnesses” to establish something as being truth or as fact. That makes me think that there is something else that Jesus was “teaching” His disciples.

I think it was in direct relationship to His discussion with them on the boat as they were on their way to Bethsaida. They were still “blind” and not “seeing” but they soon would. They were with Jesus for about a year and a half at this point. They experienced and witnessed wonderful things – even through their own hands. However, they still were not “seeing.” But soon they would truly begin to “see.”

We read in the very next section, in Mark 8:27-30, of the account when Jesus asks them point blank, “*Who do you say that I am?*” Remember in Mark 4 they were asking each other, “*What manner of man is this?*” Now, Jesus asks them directly. The question is directed to all of the disciples. Peter speaks up as the spokesman for the whole group as he declares and confesses that Jesus is the Christ, the anointed One of God. In Matthew’s account we read that He also states on behalf of the other disciples that Jesus was not only the Christ but He was the Son of God. Jesus immediately tells them that it was the Father who revealed this to them. The Father “opened their eyes” and allowed them to begin to “see” the truth concerning Jesus and who He was.

When I say that they were able to “see,” they still did not see clearly. We now that Jesus went on to tell them of His sufferings and crucifixion, to which Peter actually “rebukes” Jesus. Imagine that. Peter, who is now able to see “*men as trees,*” (in other words not seeing totally clear) thinking He now knows it all and rebukes the One who they just confessed as being the Christ, the Son of God and rebukes Jesus to not to speak that way. Thank God lightning didn’t come down.

We know that the disciple’s understanding of Messiah was skewed by the “leaven of the Pharisees” and their false doctrines concerning what the Messiah would truly be coming for. They taught that He would be coming to free the Jewish people from the bondage of the Romans, not from the bondage of their sins and the bondage of satan. The disciples were only finally able to see this “clearly” after the resurrection and after the infilling of the Holy Spirit who is the “Spirit of Truth.”

The account of the healing of this blind man in our discussion was more of a “prophetic, object lesson teaching” by Jesus to his disciples as well as for us today. The apostle Paul writes in 1Corinthians 13:12 (HCSB), “*For now we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, as I am fully known.*” No matter who or what we may think we are and want to call ourselves, just as Paul states, we all still see “in part.” No one, I repeat, no one sees it all clearly. We will see it all clearly when we are with Jesus on that Great Day of the Lord. Yes, God allows us to see glimpses of His truth in many wondrous, powerful and awesome ways through His Holy Spirit dwelling within us. However, there is not anyone who is able to fully comprehend and see the vast and infinite wisdom, knowledge and glory of the One and only true God.

Soon and very soon everyone will see clearly. For those who believe they will see clearly the culmination and assurance of their faith. For those who choose not to believe, they will see clearly the folly of their ways. For all will behold and see clearly the glory of the living God and the total absolute truth of His Word. Oh, and by the way, Jesus **NEVER** had and **NEVER** will have a bad day!!!