

Mark 8:22-38

Blurry Vision

- ***“Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. So 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 on him, He asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up and said, “I see men like trees, walking.” Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. Then He sent him away to his house, saying, “Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town.” Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, “Who do men say that I am?” So they answered, “John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.” Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him.” -Mark 8:22-30 (NKJV)***
- Pray
- As some of you may have noticed...I wear glasses
 - I used to be more of a contact guy, but after Rachel and I had our third date or so, she told me that she liked glasses better so I’ve been wearing them ever since!
- But my vision isn’t the worst, I can still see and get around ok without them, I’m just near sighted to everything from like 10 yards away or so gets blurrier and blurrier to me the further away things get

- And you know, I lived with that eye sight for a while without even knowing that I needed glasses
 - I thought it was normal to squint across the room to see who was talking to you
 - Or to have to sit like 10 feet from the tv
 - I had no idea that my vision even was blurry
- That is until I was getting my learners permit, the DMV said, ya know..he might need some glasses
- But I was completely against the idea of actually wearing glasses...I had already had my teenage brand and glasses weren't going to mess it up for me
- But for my 16th birthday, my mom got me contacts
- And the day they came in, I had a basketball game that evening
 - So I'm in the locker room getting suited up...and I decided to put the contacts in
 - And it took a little bit cause its awkward putting them in for the first time....it takes some getting used to
- But then when I put the contacts in, backed away from the mirror, and began to look around the locker room, I couldn't believe my eyes!!
 - It was like everything had turned to high definition!
 - 4k didn't even exist at that time, but that's what I felt like I was seeing
 - I walk into the gym and I couldn't believe how clear everything was
 - I was seeing faces all the way from the top of the stands
 - I went out there and dropped an easy 21 pts on York Christian, had one of my best games of the season, because I could finally see clearly!
 - And I had no idea what I had been missing

- You know, there are a lot of Christians walking around today with blurry spiritual vision
 - *We don't really see the ways of God and the will of God as clearly as we should*
 - *What sin really is and the commandments of God are still a bit hazy to us*
 - *Who Jesus really is what He has come to do is more blurry than He needs to be to us*
- Now this can be unintentional, we can have absolutely no idea that we have blurry vision, that we aren't seeing some things as clearly as we should
 - I can't tell you how many times, I'll be reading the Word, or studying for a sermon, and realize a spiritual truth and think to myself...how have I been missing that for so many years?! How come I never saw that before?!
- Now we still have vision, we are seeing things, we're not completely in the dark...but we can be going through this life, even walking with Jesus, and our vision can still be blurred more than we know that it is
- You see, I believe that Jesus heals this blind man, in stages as an object lesson for His disciples.
 - These guys had physically been walking with Jesus
 - They have had a front row seat to His entire public ministry
 - They have witnessed Him perform countless miracles —and through His power they had even performed some miracles themselves!
 - They have heard every single sermon, and gotten the personal in depth break down of the message afterward!
- Yet, even with all of that experience and proximity that they had to Him and with Him...Jesus still has to get on to them earlier in the chapter. He

says, ***“Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?” -Mark 8:17-18 (NKJV)***

- If you aren't familiar, He says this because the disciples are all worried about forgetting to bring more bread on the boat with them, they only have one loaf
 - And this is on the heels of them just seeing Jesus feed 5000 people with only 5 loaves of bread
 - And then shortly after that, He feeds 4000 people with only 7 loaves!
- And now they're all worried, not even getting Jesus' lesson He's trying to teach them because they're worried about not having enough food
 - And Jesus says, “How many baskets were left over when I fed the 5000?”
 - “Uhh 12..”
 - “Annnnnnd how many were left over after I fed the 4000??”
 - -“Uhhhh 7....”
- And Jesus says in verse 21, ***“So He said to them, “How is it you do not understand?” -Mark 8:21 (NKJV)***
- So the next thing that we see happen, is Jesus come to Bethsaida, a place that Jesus would perform many miracles but be rejected all the more
 - He would even say at one point, “Woe to you Bethsaida, if the mighty works that I have done here had been done in Tyre and Sidon, the pagan place where I called a lady a dog....if I did the same works there, they would have repented long ago!”
- But He's here in Bethsaida, and “they” not sure who “they” are, but “they” bring to Jesus a blind man.

- And remember, like we covered in the beginning of this book study every physical healing that Jesus performs is recorded for us to see a spiritual truth
- And here, is the first time in Mark that we see a blind man being healed by Jesus
- But it's so interesting, that this man doesn't get healed all at once.
 - Jesus takes him out of the village, away from the crowds, its just Him, the blind man, and most likely the disciples
 - And Jesus rubbed His spit in this guys eyes, and asked him what he saw
 - Now, that's weird...
 - But we have to understand that in this time and in this era, human spit was thought to have some healing components
 - Especially whenever one would go to a medium for a healing, it was common thought that the medium had supernatural healing powers in the spittle that they would use when trying to perform a healing
 - So it's more than likely that this man, whenever he had developed his eye disease had tried to go to various mediums in order to try and get healed, and this would have been the process that they would do it
 - So Jesus is taking this guy through the motions that he is used to be going through
- But sometimes we can have blurry vision because we're just going through the motions
- **THINGS GET BLURRY WHEN WE JUST GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS**
- It's very easy in our spiritual lives to get caught in autopilot

- Yea we go to church, we're reading the bible, we pray, we go to community group
- And those are all great things, and those things helps us at least see something
- We're not walking around blind
- But before you know it, whether we realize it or not, things are still blurry...the people around us are just like trees walking around
- Even going back to the disciples, when Jesus fed the 5000 and the 4000, both instances said that when Jesus saw the multitude, He had compassion on them
 - We don't see anything about the disciples having that same compassion
 - All they saw was a crowd that needed food
 - They were seeing a task that needed be accomplished, not a people in need of a Savior
- Whenever we miss God's heart...everything is blurred
- And I wonder, if we were to be asked what we see, whenever we are out in the community, in the world, in our every day lives, would we say, "We just see people walking around like trees??"
 - Or would we see those on which the Father has compassion and loves, and begin to see clearly His will and His ways
 - And sometimes He needs to force us to see clearly.
- ***"Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly."* -Mark 8:25 (NKJV)**
- **OUR VISION BECOMES CLEAR WHEN WE LOOK UP**
 - Everything stays blurred when we just look out at each other

- That's when we start comparison games, and fall into legalistic tendencies that we discussed a couple of weeks ago
- It's when we start focusing more on what we may or may not be doing for God, more so than what He has already done for us
- But every once in a while, it's like God will take your head and force you to look where you're supposed to be looking
 - I have told story after story about times where I felt like I've gotten a gut punch from the Holy Spirit to help me refocus
 - There are times where I am blurred on an issue, don't even know it until I read something in scripture that snaps me to attention
 - Sometimes I feel like I am completely justified in a situation until I am convicted by the Holy Spirit through an encouraging word from a brother in Christ
- I think we all can probably think of a time or two in our lives where we didn't even realize how blurry we were seeing things, until God snapped us to attention and forced us to see things more clearly
- And we need to remember those moments, so we can force ourselves to look up when we need to
 - That's why Colossians 3 says, ***"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."*** -Colossians 3:1-2 (ESV)
 - Jesus says, ***"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."*** -Matthew 6:33 (ESV)
 - In 2 Corinthians we read, ***"As we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are***

***seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” -2
Corinthians 4:18 (ESV)***

- We are so prone to look at the here and now, more than the forever and always
 - And our vision gets blurred into not remembering that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing to the Glory that will be revealed to us
 - We forget that this world is not our home, this life is but a vapor, and there will come a day where He will dry every tear from every eye and pain and sin and suffering will exist no more
 - Sometimes our vision gets blurred because we look at our sin more than we do Him
- And we all have those moments in which we fall, we mess up, we come up short of a Godly standard
 - And instead of looking to Him for guidance, help, strength, and forgiveness
 - We instead just keep looking to ourselves to fix it, to beat it, or to beat ourselves up long enough before we can go back to God
- And then our vision gets blurred thinking that we're alone in our struggle
 - That we're the only one that has sinned like this
 - That no one else will understand
 - That God won't understand or we let Him down too much this time... He's too disappointed!
- *And I think so often that we have this picture of Jesus up in Heaven monitoring our movements, and as soon as we sin, we picture Him aghast*

- Saying, “WHOA!! DID YOU SEE THAT?!? I CAN’T BELIEVE... HOW IN THE WORLD...MICHAEL! GABRIEL! COME LOOK AT WHAT THIS SINNER HAS DONE!!
 - And go get his grandmother that passed away last year so she can see this and be disappointed..”
- But the Bible says that Jesus is seated at the Right Hand of the Father
 - Which is the position of all power, authority, and completed work
 - So you know how Jesus is reacting when you sin??
 - He’s chillin’
 - He says, “Yea, I saw that coming big guy. The moment you came to faith and I saved you, yea, I knew that this would happen. I died for it.
 - And it can be removed as far as the east is from the west from you...if you just stop focusing on it, and give it over to Me.
- That’s why Hebrews says, “**Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us... looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJV)**
- You see mostly our vision gets blurred because we forget the Cross
 - We can have a relationship with Him, Because of the Cross
 - We can escape the sin that so easily entraps us Because of the Cross
 - We are here in this building together right now, Because of the Cross!
- And the number one reason why the disciples still had blurred vision is because they still didn’t understand the Cross
- But they’re on the right track in the next passage: **“Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the**

road He asked His disciples, saying to them, “Who do men say that I am?” So they answered, “John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.” Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him.” -Mark 8:27-30 (NKJV)

- OUR VISION BECOMES CLEAR WHEN WE CONFESS THE CHRIST

- Now, Matthew’s account gives us a little more enthusiasm than Mark does
 - Because in Matthew’s account he tells us that Jesus responded with, “Blessed are you!! For you didn’t come up with that answer on your own, but your Father in Heaven revealed it to you!”
 - This is the moment that Jesus tells him, "You are Peter and upon this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell wont be able to prevail against it!"
 - Jesus says, “I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven!”
- I mean, wow! What a moment!
- Where Peter gets this clarity from the Father Himself, by looking up, seeing Jesus for Who He really is, and Confessing the truth about Who He is!
 - But then how quickly things can get blurred again...
- In the very next verse, ***“And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan!***

***For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”
-Mark 8:31-33 (NKJV)***

- Oh how quickly the tables can turn
- He goes from his highest pinnacle to his lowest point in just a matter of 3 verses....
 - And it's mainly because He didn't understand the Cross yet
 - You see, the disciples were still under the thought process that the Christ, the Messiah was going to be this great political and military leader that was going to save them from the Roman Empire
 - So Peter can't stand for this being killed in public talk
 - No the Messiah is a Hero not a Victim!
- And His confession was outweighed by His Expectations and therefore things got blurred again for him.
 - And Mark writes this Gospel in such a way to combat that mentality
 - He is direct and to the point about who exactly Jesus is.
 - He's the Messiah, He's the Christ, He's the Son of God
 - He wants there to be no question as to what His identity is
 - Because so many people back then and still today, want to manufacture their own idea of who they want Jesus to be
 - Some like parts of Jesus, but not all of Jesus
 - I have had people tell me before that they like Jesus' teachings and can even believe that He performed miracles...but raising from the dead? They can't get behind that....
 - To which the Apostle Paul says that if Christ has not raised from the dead than our faith is useless and we are to be the most pitied people in the world!

- You can't have a partial Jesus, that fits your curriculum
 - We like healer Jesus, we like compassionate Jesus, we like put the Pharisee's in their place Jesus...
 - But what about the Jesus who says "Not all who say to Me, "Lord, Lord, will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."
- In John chapter there's a very interesting passage that says, ***"many believed in His name when they saw the signs that He was doing. But Jesus on His part didn't entrust Himself to them, because He knew all people, He knew what was in man."*** -John 2:23-25 (ESV)
 - The word entrust, there also means to believe...its actually the same exact greek word that is used
- So essentially the passage says, many people believed in Jesus, but He didn't believe in them
- Now this isn't a part of Jesus that we like to see, because stands in stark contrast to a lot of theology and pastors, that'll stand up and declare, YOU NEED TO BELIEVE IN YOURSELF! GOD BELIEVES IN YOU! HE'S PROUD OF YOU! HE LOVES YOU!
 - Does God Love you? Absolutely.
 - Is He proud of you? Yes. We are His "workmanship"
 - Does He Believe in you? No.
- God doesn't have to believe in us, we're the ones that are supposed to believe in Him
 - Now, He does believe in the work He can do through you
 - You see the difference in perspective?
- Following a theology that says that "God Believes in you," will make you feel better about yourself, but it won't help you grow. It will lead you to put faith in yourself, not Him

- That is where things get blurred
- We have to be very careful with theology like this, because whenever we say things like “God believes in you!” God is not the focal point, we are
 - We become the center of our faith, and our expectations outweigh our confession
 - And any type of theology that elevates us is very dangerous
- Everything that we do and teach should always be about elevating GOD not us
- We should follow John the Baptists example who said HE MUST INCREASE, I MUST DECREASE
- If we call Him Lord, we have to let Him be Lord
- In John 1 John says that, ***“[Jesus] came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” -John 1:11-13 (ESV)***
- Now, notice that He said, those who BELIEVED and RECEIVED
 - *There’s a reason why the word believe was translated 2 different ways at the end of chapter 2*
 - *Because you can believe in Jesus but not entrust yourself to Him*
 - *You can believe and not receive*
- James says, ***“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!” -James 2:19 (NKJV)***
 - Even the demons believe in the reality and presence of God so deeply that it causes them to have an emotional reaction to it...but they haven’t received Him, they haven’t entrusted themselves to Him.

- Every single one of us will have to answer the question that Peter answered Jesus, “Who do YOU say that I am.”
- A.W. Tozier once said that “What comes into your mind whenever you think about God is the most important thing about you.”
 - Is He truly your Lord, is He truly your King, is He truly your Master
 - “Who do YOU say that He is?”
 - Who you say He is, doesn’t change who He is. But who He is can change you...if you see Him for Him, not what you want Him to be
- I think so often that we are like that meme from the office when it comes to God...we say:
 - “I want guidance, I want leadership. But don’t just like boss me around, ya know? Like, lead me. Lead me when I’m in the mood to be led.”
- How often is that us?!
 - He’s Lord whenever we want the answers
 - He’s master whenever we’re in trouble
 - He’s the Christ on Sunday but maybe not Monday
- But like Pastor JD Greear likes to say all the time, “He is either Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all.”
 - And whenever you allow Him to be Lord of all, this life becomes so much more clear
 - Your priorities become clear, your purpose becomes clear, your passions become clear
- If you Confess Him as Lord, and let Him be Lord
 - The word “Confess” in the New Testament means: to declare fully
 - You see Peter Confessed Him as Christ, but then thought He wasn’t doing the Christ thing the right way...and He was rebuked harshly for it

- Because He wasn't looking up, Jesus told him that he wasn't thinking about the things of God, he was only concerned with the things of man
- and he needed to reevaluate!
- Look in verse 34: ***“When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” -Mark 8:34-38 (NKJV)***
- **OUR VISION BECOMES CLEAR WHEN WE DESIRE HIM**
 - Jesus says, “Whoever desires to come after me...”
 - These verses I think show us 3 areas of our lives that we must desire Him more than. We must desire Him more than our expectations, our aspirations, and our reputations
- **We must desire Him more than our Expectations:**
 - We all have preconceived expectations as to how we want our lives to go and Who we want God to be, and what we want Him to do for us
 - However, whenever He truly has our heart, when He is our desire we realize that our expectations will never be able to live up to how great He really is
 - He will never be what we expect Him to be, and praise God because He will always be so much better!

- The Psalmist tells us to delight ourselves in the Lord and He will give us the desires of our heart.
 - That word delight, gives the word picture of savoring every bite of your favorite food
 - Taking your time to truly enjoy it, and taste all of the flavors
 - To really experience your food, not just wolf it down real quick
- This is why we are also told to “Taste and see, that He is good”
- Not just believe and know...God really wants us to experience Him, and His love, and His Goodness
- And when we take the time to slow down, put our expectations aside, and experience Him and His presence....that is when our heart begins to line up with His heart, what He desires, we desire
- And everything becomes more clear.
- **We must desire Him more than our Aspirations:**
 - I have to be willing to leave whatever aspirations I have set for myself and my life
 - Whatever I aspire to gain from this life must always take a back seat to whatever He would call me to do
 - He will always have a better plan for us than we have for ourselves
- Now that doesn't mean that we don't make plans...we do
 - That's why the proverb says, “In his heart a man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.”
 - But a lot of times we put a lot of work into those plans and aspirations that we have set for ourselves
 - And it can be very hard to give some of those things up if the Lord calls us to

- You may be called into a different profession than you went to college to prepare for
- You may be called to a new location
- You may be called into foster care, adoption, or having more kids than you ever thought that you would have
- When you follow Jesus, your life will look different than what you originally aspired to and planned
- But whenever you Desire Him most, it's actually not hard to give up the life that you planned for yourself
 - The more that you truly experience a life with Him, the more you understand that He always has a better plan, and life is so much better with Him
- So if He leads your steps to a be where you never thought you would be, or to do something you never thought you would do... it's going to be great, because He's there
 - He is with you, He is for you...and His approval is the only thing that you need in this life
- **We must desire Him more than our Reputations:**
 - Jesus' words are very strong whenever He says whoever is ashamed of Him and His Words in this sinful generation, He will also be ashamed of them
 - In the book of Matthew He says, "Whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny before My Father in Heaven."
- Now, we have all had those moments where we may have been fearful to talk about our faith in public
 - Maybe we have even had those moments where we dodged the questions or even denied we were Christians

- Well there is grace for that, even Peter, the Rock of the Church, denied Jesus 3 times and was restored and forgiven
 - It is those who continually deny Jesus for all of their days on this earth that will be denied eternal salvation
- But for those of us who have received salvation, our vision will remain blurry if we don't love Him enough to talk about Him
 - We can get so worried about our reputation, what people are going to say about us...are they going to think that I'm a holier than thou type person, are they going to think I'm a prude or a stick in the mud??
 - They're not going to think that I'm fun!
- But we gotta get that out of our minds! When you Desire Him you can't wait to talk about Him
 - When you desire Him, you will talk about Him enthusiastically
- And the only reason that we don't is because we are still worried about what other people think
 - And we're not caring about them in that moment, we're only caring about ourselves!
 - Because if we really cared about them, we would want them to experience the same salvation and relationship that we have with Jesus!!
 - And there will be some people who reject you, who misread you, who falsely accuse you of being a certain way because of your faith
 - Jesus told us to expect that
 - But that should never deter us from being proud of our God, and letting people know it
- More people rejected Jesus than will ever reject us

- And you know He wasn't concerned with His reputation whenever He allowed Himself to be mocked, spit on, and hung naked between two thieves on a cross!
 - If Jesus was concerned about His reputation He would never allow people like me and you to represent Him!
 - We've been reading in Mark, almost every time He does something cool, He tells people not to tell anyone about it!
- His reputations was never a driving force for Him. His compassion was.
- And we need to go above and beyond, to not miss His heart....To not just continue to go through the motions with blurry vision
 - But Look to Him, Confess Him, and Give Him our Heart...so that He will be our greatest desire
- Because you know this is exactly how salvation happens. Romans 10 says, Don't try to bring God down to your level...but look up, confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you will be saved."
- So look to Him, Confess Him as Lord of all, and give Him your heart results in your salvation...however we have to continually do all three of those things in order to have clear spiritual vision
 - You can't just look to Him once, you got to look to Him every day
 - You can't just confess Him as Lord once, and move on
 - You cant just give Him your heart for a moment
- This spiritual journey is an every day choice of waking up every morning, Looking to Him, Confessing Him fully as Lord, Master, and King of your life, your choices, and everything you are and everything you do
 - And its a continual pursuit of giving Him more of your heart every day and diving deeper and deeper into this relationship as a child is to their Father

- This companionship as a friend that sticks closer than a brother
- This fellowship with others, not seeing them as blank trees walking around, but us all seeking Jesus together.
- Setting aside our expectations, aspirations, and reputations, because we desire to see Him, and His will, and His way, more clearly