The Miracles of Christ (Week 6)

Healing the Blind

The healing of the blind has special significance in the Bible. The simile between the darkness of the physically blind and the spiritually blind is clearly a theme throughout both testaments.

*Then God said, ‘let there be light, and there was light.”*

We know that God is light, (1 John 1:5*) “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.”*

Psalm 27:1, *“the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear.”*

And “*that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”* (John 3:19).

So where we see Christ healing the blind men, we can also see how it can equally be applied to the spiritually blind. The common factor is faith in Christ.

There are 5 instances of Jesus healing blind men during his ministry. The healing of Bartimaeus is recorded in the three synoptic gospels, whilst the healing of a demon-possessed deaf and blind man is found in both Matthew and possibility Luke, although there the man is only mute.

**Two Blind Men Healed**

In the first miracle we will look at today, in Matthew, we see Jesus heal two blind men, and warns them not to tell of their healing.

The account is found in 9: 27-31.

*27When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, “Son of David, have mercy on us!”*

*28And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”*

*They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.”*

*29Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith let it be to you.” 30And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, “See that no one knows it.” 31But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.*

The reference to “Son of David” by not only these two blind men, but by others including Bartimaeus, signifies the general understanding by Jews of what the coming of the Messiah would mean.

In 2 Samuel 7: 12-13 we see God speaking to Nathan and requiring him to tell “My servant, David.”

*When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*

And in Isaiah 9:7

*Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*

So we can conclude that many followers of the Jewish faith would have been expecting this Messiah to appear at some time to restore their world to the former glory of God’s chosen people.

The ministry of Jesus was having the effect of causing many to start to believe that He might well be the true Messiah.

In Matthew 12:23 we read:

*All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?"*

The two blind men were well aware of Jesus and, although they could not see him, they believed he was the Messiah, the one who would restore them. This is in comparison with the religious leaders who would know the old testament better than the blind beggars, but did not believe.

Although the two keep crying out as they followed, Jesus apparently did not answer them until he entered the house. This, and his later instruction to them, indicate He did not want this miracle to be performed in public. The time was not right for His power to be demonstrated throughout the world.

When the two approach Jesus inside the house He asks them about their faith. “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” The element of faith stands out in all the cases we are discussing today. Christ is making it clear to the blind men that it is their faith that opens the door for their healing. It is the same when he speaks in parables. Only those with faith can understand the true meaning of these parables and their significance in spiritual life.

Mark 4: 11-12

*And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, 12so that*

*‘Seeing they may see and not perceive,
And hearing they may hear and not understand;
Lest they should turn,
And their sins be forgiven them.’ ”*

It is worth noting that in Psalm 146:8, the notion of restoring sight is a prerogative of the Lord:

*The Lord opens the eyes of the blind.*

Therefore the two blind men may well have been revealing their belief that Christ was the Messiah when replying “Yes Lord” to Christ’s question.

Jesus touches their eyes and says, “according to your faith, let it be to you.” There is no clearer example of how faith plays the fundamental role in Christ’s work.

And their eyes were opened.

The spiritual aspect of this verse is profound. Through Christ and through the Holy Spirit our spiritual eyes are opened. But there is none so blind as those who choose not to see.

Jesus warned the two not to tell anyone about the healing, reinforcing the idea that it was not the correct time for him to be revealed as the Son of God.

But they ignored his stern instruction and told all within the country. We do not know what became of the two, but ignoring God will have some consequence. Perhaps we should not judge them but accept that they were so joyous that they could not contain themselves. But a stern caution from the Lord is not something any should ignore.

**The Blind Man at Bethsaida**

The next episode of healing a blind man is revealed in Mark 8: 22-26.

*22Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. 23So 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.*

*24And he looked up and said, “I see men like trees, walking.”*

*25Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. 26Then He sent him away to his house, saying, “Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town.”*

In this miracle we see the man’s sight restored in two attempts. Did Christ get it wrong at the first attempt? Did ne not use enough power? Or was he teaching the man and us something else?

One obvious difference in this miracle compared to the other healings is that the man himself did not demonstrate any great faith. It was his friends who brought the man to Jesus and requested him to heal (touch) his eyes. Jesus took the man out of town perhaps to be away from his friends and the crowds. When Jesus had spit in the man’s eyes and put His hands on them, he asked whether the man could see anything. The answer of the man was that he saw vague shapes, men like trees moving. At this point did the man have faith starting to well up in his being? More than likely I think. So when Jesus put his hands on the man for a second time his eyesight was fully restored .

The lesson, surely, is that Christ will be there for all, (common grace of God) but the complete glory of salvation (restored to a relationship in heaven with God) will only be for those who believe. God will allow us to see heavenly things vaguely for a time as a catalyst to encourage us to come to him through his Son. If we fail to take the next step we will not see the restoration of our souls.

JC Ryle makes the point that:

We see then in this gradual restoration to sight, a vivid illustration of the manner in which the Spirit frequently works in the conversion of souls. Conversion is an illumination, a change from darkness to light, from blindness to seeing the kingdom of God. Yet few converted people see things distinctly at first. They are like the man before us, who at first saw men as trees walking. It is not until the work of the Spirit has become deeper and their experience been somewhat matured, that they see all things clearly.

**Restoring the Sight of One Blind Since Birth**

Moving on to the third case of healing the blind, which is the only one recorded in John, whereby Jesus restored the sight of a man born blind.

John 9: 1-12.

*Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. 2And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”*

*3Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. 4I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. 5As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”*

*6When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. 7And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.*

*8Therefore the neighbours and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, “Is not this he who sat and begged?”*

*9Some said, “This is he.” Others said “He is like him.”*

*He said, “I am he.”*

*10Therefore they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?”*

*11He answered and said, “A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and I received sight.”*

*12Then they said to him, “Where is He?”*

*He said, “I do not know.”*

The disciples clearly believe that the blindness of this man was caused by sin. And furthermore, they feel that the sins of the father can be laid upon the sons. Jesus shows by his answer that not all illness can be caused by sin, although sin can be one of the causes of sickness. It also shows that believing that all sin will be passed on to subsequent generations is dangerously untrue. The Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20:5-6 states:

*For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

One can understand the disciples asking the question whether it was the result of the man’s parents unbelief that had caused his blindness, having been born blind. But Jesus makes it clear that his parents had not sinned in a way that would lead to their son’s blindness. Yet, being human, we know they must have sinned.

Surely focusing on the second part of the commandment is more fruitful than on the first.

In the spirit of using miracles to teach, Jesus says:

"I must work while it is called today--the night comes, when no man can work."

This seems to say that opportunities do not come around that often. So we need to work hard at our spiritual needs while we can. Deuteronomy 30: 11-14 teaches us not to rely on others for our relationship with God, but to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. (Philippians 2:12).

Reading from Deuteronomy 30:

*11“For this commandment which I command you today isnot too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. 12It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ 13Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ 14But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.*

Jesus spent his whole life working at feeding, healing and teaching others to fulfil his Father’s will. As we saw last week, being as much human as God, no wonder he felt the need for sleep when in the disciples’ boat.

Returning to the miracle, Jesus, after teaching his disciples, spits on the dirt and makes a poultice with which to restore the man’s eyes. Again we see that Christ chooses different means of manifesting his power. He could simply have spoken and the sight would have been restored, as we will see when he heals Bartimaeus. But he chooses to use the earth at his feet and his saliva to form a clay which he employs using his hands.

And the man’s sight is not immediately restored as with others whom are healed by Jesus. But he has to wash his eyes in the spring after which his sight is restored. The elements that make up this healing miracle are multiple. The soil of Judah, saliva from Christ’s mouth, the presence of Christ, and water. One can make much of this, but I leave you to form your own opinion. For me I can see the law and the prophets, the Word, Christ’s human presence on earth, and the Holy Spirit all present in this event. I may well be wrong, but I hope this causes you to think more deeply about the miracles and the realisation that they are as relevant for our spiritual understanding as for as physical. Greater understanding of this will aid us in working out our own salvation.

Matthew Henry writes:

Surely, if we are not saved, the fault will be all our own. There lives at God's right hand One who can heal us if we apply to Him. Let us take heed lest those solemn words are found true of us - "Light has come into the world but men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19).

**The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus**

 The last miracle we will look at today is the healing of blind Bartimaeus, which is found in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

I will read from Mark’s account which mentions the blind man by name. (Mark 10: 46-52).

*46Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. 47And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”*

*48Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”*

*49So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called.*

*Then they called the blind man, saying to him, “Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.”*

*50And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.*

*51So Jesus answered and said to him, “What do you want Me to do for you?”*

*The blind man said to Him, [*[*f*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-24640f)*]“Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.”*

*52Then Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.*

This miracle takes place during Christ’s travels from Galilee to Jerusalem and his subsequent crucifixion.

Even though Bartimaeus was blind he knew of Christ and obviously believed him to be the Messiah, calling him Son of David.

In Isaiah 65 we see the promise of God and it seem logical that Bartimaeus believes the Messiah will restore all things including his sight. He seems to earnestly believe in Jesus as even though he is told to be quiet by many in the crowd, he shouts out even more. When we are told to keep our beliefs to ourselves, do we have the courage to seek Christ even more fervently? I think many of us do.

When he is told that the Lord is calling him, Bartimaeus throws off his cloak and goes to Jesus. The action of throwing off his garment suggests he has no doubt in his mind about the power of Jesus to restore him, and therefore wanted to get to Him as quickly as possible.

Jesus asks what this man wants him to do, which gives Bartimaeus the opening to go straight to the point of his belief. “Teacher, that I may receive my sight.”

Compare this with the bickering among the disciples who a day or so earlier on the journey had tried to persuade Jesus to give them special rights in heaven. (Mark 10: 35-45).

They were rebuked and cautioned that honour comes not by assuming or asking for it, but by serving others.

Bartimaeus, on the other hand, asks for mercy when calling out to Jesus. He is not seeking a special position, he simply believes the Messiah will restore his eyesight.

Christ, aware of this man’s faith has no hesitation in granting him restoration. No requirement to improve it slightly to implant faith, and then completing the full recovery, as we saw in the previous miracle, but simply saying “go your way. Your faith has made you well.”

And immediately his sight was restored.

Bartimaeus then saw Jesus and followed Him on the road to Jerusalem. He knew that Jesus was the Messiah and knew his power. His faith was not drowned out by the crowd telling him to be quiet. His faith was not shaken by his time in darkness, perhaps ever knowing that at the right time he would meet the Saviour and see the true light.

Luke, in his version of the miracle, says in 18:43 *And immediately he received his sight and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.*

So we see that this miracle, as with the others that we have looked at, revealed God’s glory in a very obvious and open example.

In all 4 of these miracles we see clearly the compassion of Christ, caring to stop and heal those who were blind. Each one gives us better understanding of God’s Word than simply the healing itself. The process of healing is different in each case. But the presence of Jesus is the key common element. The presence of Christ is what is important in our lives as believers. That presence becomes closer and closer the more we seek Him.

His compassion in examining the one man’s faith by completing his healing in two stages is remarkable. We cannot be perfect, but we can be compliant in responding to his desire to develop our faith.

