

“Living With Renewed Hope⁴”

February 4, 2024

Our Prayer: Lord, renew my sight.

In Matthew 14 Jesus fed 5 thousand men with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish and chapter 15 He feeds 4 thousand men with 7 loaves and a few fish. They retrieved 12 baskets of fragments from the 5 thousand. These events occurred in different locations at different times. Many preachers have focused on the feeding of the 5000, the five loaves and 2 fish. In Matthew 15 and Mark 8 Jesus had fed 4 thousand men with 7 loaves of bread and a few fish. They retrieved 7 baskets of fragments at that feeding. His fame was spreading throughout the region.

Scripture Text: Mark 8:22-25 ESV ²² And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. ²³ And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, “Do you see anything?” ²⁴ And he looked up and said, “I see people, but they look like trees, walking.” ²⁵ Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

VERSE 22 *And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him.*

After Jesus fed 4000 with 7 loaves of bread and a few fish they traveled by boat to Bethsaida an area that was comprised of Jews and Gentiles. His disciples were concerned about having only a loaf of bread when they arrived. Jesus wanted them to know that He would meet the need. He asked them if they understood the miracles that He did in the feeding of 4 thousand with 7 loaves and a few fish.

The scripture opens with their arrival of Villagers bringing a blind Gentile man to Jesus to be healed. He was standing there hopeless, listless and not believing that this Jewish stranger could do anything for him. People who had heard about Jesus brought him, for he did not come of his own accord. It was their belief and concern that were mentioned, not his. Because of their eagerness, it appears they were more concerned than he was. Perhaps *they* wanted to see a miracle.

Thank the Lord for friends who are willing to put their lives on the line for the sake of a blind friend. They took a risk of being embarrassed or denied by Christ for the healing of their friend. Whenever Christ sees that kind of faith in others He is delighted even when the recipient may have a lack of faith. There is no indication of how long the man was blind. Even one day of total blindness for eyes that God created for us to behold the glory of His creation is depressing.

Blindness is often used in Scripture as an analogy for those who reject God, making them incapable of seeing the truth.

VERSE 23 *And He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, “Do you see anything?”*

Jesus did not command the blindness to depart from the man but He approached him took his hand and lead him away from the people. Jesus’ touch alone could have cured him but Jesus lead him away from those who desired to see a miracle. This man weak in faith, held the hand of Jesus, with each step beginning to generate expectation. Jesus led him, perhaps to an unfamiliar place, away from the crowd to spit upon his eyes.

Jesus chose his spit as an eye slave to anoint and lay His hands upon him. For those who were near would observe and understand that with God all things are possible. Taking the man by the hand, leading him out of the village, placing spit on his eyes and laying hands upon him was the process that Jesus chose to heal him. It was a gradual method of building his faith for the result in the end. Jesus asked him, “What do you see?”

Many times, we want the external healing before the internal healing of our soul and spirit. Do we value the body which comes from the earth over the soul and spirit that comes and returns to God?

Mark 8:36-37 *36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

VERSE 24 *And he looked up and said, “I see people, but they look like trees, walking.”*

When He looked up, He discovered that he could see what appeared to be elongated people looking like trees. He could not distinguish, though he could see, men from trees. His sight began to give him a glimmer of reality.

Some people today are living with a glimmer of what reality is and inventors are and have created a virtual reality for people to live in. Another way of looking at it... is to live in an alternative state of mind. I believe Apple or Google have **introduced virtual goggles....** *Where are we headed?* I believe that it will lead to another addiction coupled with people using drugs to enhance their experience in doubling their pleasure.

VERSE 25 *Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.*

He had gained a glimpse of hope when he saw men as trees and now Jesus laid His hands upon his eyes again. I could imagine his faith building under the hands of Jesus. He suddenly opened his eyes and the view of his whole world changed by the encounter with Jesus!

2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

Jesus did not cure him at His command because God's providence gains the same end in different ways that man be saved by his faith in Christ. Whatever it takes for man to come to Christ, it matters not but come to Christ we must... to live in His eternal presence.

Jesus showed by His method that those who are healed by his grace are *spiritually blind Until*, they encounter His touch.

Jesus sent him to his home and told him to not return to the village and tell no one what happened.

Applications:

In these last days, it is imperative to see Jesus through the darkness.

Walking by faith is fundamental to our relationship with Jesus Christ.