

## I. Jesus and Questions

### A. Jesus loves to ask questions.

1. Within the four gospel narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Jesus asks a total of 339 questions.
  - a. He is asked 183 questions. He answers three questions.
  - b. That means that Jesus asked a hundred times more questions than He answered.
  - c. It might be worthwhile that we pay close attention to Jesus and the questions he asks.
2. Here in Mark 8, in the encounter with the blind man, Jesus asks a question, “Do you see anything?”
  - a. Now, understand this: this question has two functions.
    - (1) It functions to let us know the blind man’s experience in that moment,
    - (2) but it also mirrors the question he set before His disciples in the boat, “Do you not yet understand?”
  - b. Jesus stands before the blind man and is ministering grace and mercy and the power of God in the man’s life and Jesus asks him, “Do you see anything?”
  - c. The man’s answer is essentially, “Yes, I see something, but not very clearly. I see people, but they look like trees walking.”
  - d. When the still partially blind man responds that he can see but not clearly, Jesus keeps working. He touches the man’s eyes a second time and this time when he opens his eyes, his sight is restored.

### B. The lesson Mark and the Holy Spirit expect us to take away from this encounter is very simple.

1. Just as it took time and the work of the Spirit through Christ for the blind man to see (and to see clearly)
2. and just as it took time for the disciples to understand who Jesus really was and to respond to Him correctly,
3. so **it will take time and power for God to accomplish His full purpose in our lives.**

### C. Process and the Life of Faith

1. How many times do we think,
  - a. “Why do I have to go through this?”
  - b. Or, “Why is this particular season in my life lasting so long?”
  - c. Or, “Why am I here in this place again?”
  - d. Or, “Why am I not further along spiritually?”
2. At least one answer to these questions is that **God works in our lives over time, in a process of life challenges and responses through which he transforms us more and more every day into the likeness of Jesus in preparation for eternal life in the presence of His glory.**
  - a. **Ecclesiastes 3:11 (ESV)** <sup>11</sup> *He has made everything beautiful in its time.*
  - b. Everything in the created world fulfills its potential within the sovereign plan of God within the framework of the passing of time.
  - c. In other words, life is a process directed by God
3. The life of faith is not an instance fix.

- a. Conversion commences a lifetime of learning and becoming.
- b. Becoming like Jesus through a life of faith and reliance on the Holy Spirit is always a process, one touch of grace leading to another, one moment of understanding providing the foundation for the next, one instance of growth getting us ready for the one that is coming.
  - (1) Think about it.
    - (a) What do you think Paul meant when he wrote to the Philippians, “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ”?
    - (b) He describes a process. He expects that their spiritual life, that began when they were saved, would continue as a process accomplished and completed by God on the day Jesus comes.
  - (2) Or a little later in that letter when he writes, “It is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”
    - (a) He says God “works.”
    - (b) He means that God is presently and continuously at work in them, both causing them to desire His will and to do His will.
    - (c) If God is presently and continuously at work in the Christian, causing them to presently and continuously desire God’s will and do God’s will, then God keeps the follower in a present and continual process of developing and engaging the same heart for God’s will that Jesus has.
- 4. With this idea in mind, that God is working a process in the church and in the Christian to make us corporately and personally more and more like Jesus,
  - a. let’s take a closer look at how Jesus is presented in this encounter with the blind man
  - b. and then ask ourselves,
    - (1) “Do you see anything?”
    - (2) Do we see in Jesus what we are expected to see?

## II. What do we see as Jesus heals a blind man (Four Observations)

### A. Jesus was emphatically present.

- 1. We need to realize that Christ is present in our day and in our need, rather than treating Him as some deistic figure from an imaginative fairy tale.
  - a. Christ’s promise
    - (1) Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.
    - (2) I will not leave your comfortless. I will come to you.
  - b. How close is He
    - (1) He has filled us with His Spirit
    - (2) He sustains us with His word
      - (a) **Colossians 1:17 (ESV) *And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.***
      - (b) **Hebrews 1:3 (ESV) *He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.***
  - c. This is more than simply cosmic environment.

d. This is personal, intimate engagement.

(1) **Matthew 6:30 (ESV)** *But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*

**B. Jesus makes His work both personal and private, avoiding the tendency of the world to turn grace into a circus.**

1. Not everything Christ is doing in your life is going to be evident to everyone else until He's done.
2. Sometimes, it won't be clear to you until He's done.

**C. Jesus demonstrates both a power and a promise specifically assigned to God in His word**

1. the significance of the healing of a deaf and dumb man in the light of Isa 35:5-6
  - a. **Isaiah 35:5-6 (ESV)** <sup>5</sup> *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; <sup>6</sup> then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.*
2. That prophecy begins with the opening of the eyes of the blind, a work which is attributed to God also in
  - a. **Psalm 146:8 (ESV)** *the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.*
  - b. **Isaiah 29:18 (ESV)** *In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.*

**D. Jesus illustrates His purpose by process.**

1. The healing is a process and it is a process completely and totally under His direction.
2. There is no dictation from the patient beyond the request for healing.
3. Only utter surrender to the wisdom and grace of God and complete compliance with His instruction.
4. Christ accomplishes His purpose in His own time, in His own way, for His own glory, on His own terms

**III. Why do I tell you these things?**

**A. What's the point?**

1. Why do I ask your attention to the actions and intent of Jesus for a blind man on a dusty road around the Sea of Galilee more than two thousand years ago?
2. Why do I point you to a moment in time, an occasion far removed, the healing of a man whose life and name remain unknown?
  - a. Here is Christ's question: "Do you see anything?"
  - b. "Do you see anything?"
    - (1) That is my question for you today as well. "Do you see anything?"
    - (2) Why focus on Christ rather than the blind man?
    - (3) Why speak more of the miracle worker than the miracle?
    - (4) Why look at the Healer more than the healing?

**B. One hope undergirds this message, this personal and pastoral effort this morning.**

1. I have one desire for this message and one desire only, that having listened and learned, you will know and love Jesus Christ.
  - a. I want you to love Christ and His patient endurance with our weaknesses, faithlessness, and sin.
    - (1) Christ displays God's patience as He works with us
      - (a) **Numbers 14:18 (ESV)** *'The Lord is slow to anger and*

*abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.'*

- (b) **Romans 9:22** ESV *What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,*
- (c) **2 Peter 3:9–10** ESV *The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*

(2) I want you to see that Christ took no offense at the delayed healing.

- (a) He expressed no frustration over the process.
  - i) “Oh, man! I give up!”
  - ii) ““What! It worked the first time last time! What’s going on here?””
- (b) He knew the plan.
  - i) He knew what He was doing.
  - ii) He knew the process He took with the blind man would illustrate the process of patient, enduring grace and love He takes with all of us!

(3) **Christ is patient with the process in us because He knows both what He wants to do for us and what the outcome of His work will be.**

**C. I want you love Christ’s commitment to our restoration to holiness and reconciliation with God.**

1. **Romans 5:10** ESV *For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.*
2. **2 Corinthians 5:18** ESV *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;*
3. **Colossians 1:20–22** ESV *and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,*
4. Christ reconciles us to God by His death on the cross
  - a. He takes upon Himself the punishment we deserve
  - b. Is there anything more love-worthy than One giving His life for another?

**D. More than anything else in the world, what I want for you this morning, more importantly, what God wants for you, is that you will see in Christ one worthy of love,**

1. that you will see His love for you,
2. and that you will love Him in return.
  - a. **1 John 4:19** ESV *We love because he first loved us.*
  - b. I want you to see in the mercy and compassion of Jesus the love Jesus has for you as He works through the process in your life.

**E. I want you to truly, genuinely love Christ, because where there is no real love for**

### **Christ, there is no real salvation from Christ.**

1. If you do not love Christ, you are not saved.
  - a. If you have no love for Jesus you are still lost in your transgressions and sin.
  - b. Love, not lost, is what God wants for you today!
    - (1) God wants you to be saved.
    - (2) God wants you to have your sins forgiven.
    - (3) God wants there to be real substance and meaning for you in worship.
    - (4) God wants that you will find joy in your service and fulfilment in your obedience.
    - (5) God wants that you will look to the future with eager anticipation, and that you will dwell in the present with empowered endurance.
    - (6) God wants you to be free from self-centered, self-exalting sinful pride and free from slavery to fear of inadequacy, fear of failure, fear of death.
      - (a) All these things are the result of God's saving grace.
      - (7) And the one thing that ties every single one of these graces together is love for Christ.
2. **The true, redeemed, faith-filled, saved Christian is one who loves Christ.**
  - a. Paul said it like this, "If I have not love, I am nothing."
  - b. As he closes the first letter to the Corinthians Paul, inspired by the Spirit of God and writing the word of God says, "***If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come!***" (1 Cor 16:22)
  - c. **Love for Christ marks the genuine Christian who through faith has undergone the new birth and become a new creation.**

#### **IV. Do you see anything?**

- A. Do you see** clearly that Christ has given you every reason, in His compassion, in His mercy, in His wisdom, in His faithfulness, in His sacrificial death, in His love for you, He has given you every possible reason to love Him?
- B. Do you see? Do you love?**
  1. Do you see the debt of love you owe Him for all He has done for you?
  2. If not, if you see Christ only dimly, "as trees walking," then I urge you to do two things today:
    - a. begin to read God's word like you've never read it before.
      - (1) Read about your sin and God's salvation.
      - (2) Read about your guilt and God's mercy.
      - (3) Read about your need and God's promise.
    - b. And then pray.
      - (1) Plead with God, while there is still time and opportunity.
      - (2) Plead with God who loves you to give you His love for Christ.
      - (3) Ask God to give you everything you need to be squared away with Him in the new life and redemption that can only come to you through Jesus Christ.
- C. Do you see anything?**
  1. "To see your need of Christ and your amazing debt to Christ is the first step towards loving Him."
  2. If this morning, you can honestly and earnestly declare your genuine, pervasive

love for Christ, then there is a word for you.

- a. **If you love Christ with all your heart, then the time is now, like never before in our lifetime, to let the world know.**
  - b. If you love Christ, this is the moment to love Him out loud.
    - (1) Hiding our love for Jesus behind closed doors and computer screens sends the message that Jesus is a dismissable option in our lives and not worthy of self-sacrificing love.
    - (2) If we love Him, it is time to trust Him even with our lives, especially with our lives.
      - (a) We may be reviled and rejected for our love, but in love for Him, we will gladly suffer whatever the world has for us, in order to reveal His love for them in our love for Him.
      - (b) **Luke 6:22 (ESV) “*Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!*”**
3. “Do you see anything?”
- a. Do you see Jesus this morning?
  - b. Do you truly love Him?