

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Mark: Jesus The Perfect Servant Of God

Part II: The Perfect Service Of Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God, Mark 1:1-10:52

DD. Christ's Persistent, Gracious Work To Disciple His People Unto Full Spiritual Insight (Mark 8:22-26)

I. Introduction

- A. We learned in our first lesson in this series that Mark's Gospel presents the perfect service of God's Perfect Servant, Jesus, with Mark's focus of having rebounded unto upright service from personal failure.
- B. Some who start to serve God fail to keep at it due to dismay over the lingering spiritual darkness they see in those they disciple, but Jesus exemplified persistency here in Mark 8:22-26, so we view the passage for insight:

II. Christ's Persistent, Gracious Work To Disciple His People Unto Full Spiritual Insight, Mark 8:22-26.

- A. The healing of the blind man in Mark 8:22-26 is recorded only in Mark's Gospel, and "(i)t is the only recorded two-stage miracle which Jesus performed," Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 138.
- B. Since "(s)ight was a widely used metaphor for understanding" in that era (Ibid.), this **unique** miracle and the preceding context are strongly connected relative to the issue of *spiritual understanding* (Ibid.):
 1. In Mark 8:10-13, the Pharisees who had refused to trust in Christ due to His miracles of healing the blind, the lame and raising the dead that fulfilled the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah 35:4-6 et al. tested Jesus by trying to get Him to produce a sign from heaven, what they believed He could not do, Mark 3:22. Jesus refused to try teaching such overtly rebellious men, so He withdrew from them by boat, Mark 8:12-13.
 2. However, while in the boat, Jesus critiqued His own disciples who believed in Him, but who still suffered from a degree of spiritual blindness as evidenced in their failing to understand Jesus' warning about the "leaven" of the Pharisees and of Herod as they thought Jesus spoke only of physical bread, Mark 8:14-21.
 3. Mark's readers might have concluded from Jesus' critique of the hardness of heart in His disciples relative to their not understanding spiritual truth (Mark 8:17-18) that Jesus might cease trying to disciple them any further! However, the subsequent Mark 8:22-26 miracle signals otherwise, supplying proof that Jesus would work **persistently** to *disciple* His weak disciples unto **FULL spiritual insight** (as follows):
 - a. Jesus had the **power** to heal a blind man instantly without touching him as He did in Mark 10:46-52.
 - b. Yet, He chose to heal the Mark 8:22-26 blind man in *stages* as a **commentary** on the *previous context*:
 - (1) the blind man had begun as totally physically blind, and Jesus caused him to see something, Mark 8:22-24. The Pharisees were still in total spiritual darkness due to rebellion where Jesus' disciples at least had put their faith in Him, although they were still not mature men in the realm of spiritual discernment.
 - (2) However, as with Jesus' disciples on the spiritual level, after Jesus had begun to give the physically blind man physical sight, he saw men only "as trees, walking," seeing, but lacking complete sight, Mark 8:24. (3) Thus, as Jesus kept working with His disciples to direct them to understand He had spoken of spiritual "leaven," He kept working with the partially seeing blind man until he saw clearly, Mark 8:25.
 - C. Of special note, the **WAY** Christ worked with the blind man **highlighted** His **GRACE** (as follows):
 1. Jesus took the man by his hand and led him out of the town to give him His full attention, signaling His will to work in **kindness** on an **individual level** with the **partially spiritually enlightened**, Mark 8:23a.
 2. Christ then *spat* on the man's blind eyes, **ceremonially contaminating** them (cf. Lev. 15:8) to signal He was very motivated to **rid** His people of *spiritual darkness*, Mark 8:23b.
 3. However, in doing this, Jesus **also** put His **hand** on the man, a sign of **loving acceptance**, to indicate that in His motivation to rid His people of unclean darkness, He would do so in **love** for them, Mark 8:23c.
 4. To complete the miracle, Jesus put His **hands** on the afflicted man's **eyes themselves** and made him look up, signaling His motivation to address the **root** of spiritual darkness in His people, Mark 8:25.

Lesson: In healing the Mark 8:22-26 blind man in **STAGES**, Jesus signaled His **DESIRE** to **PERSIST** in **DISCIPLINING** His **PARTIALLY INSIGHTFUL** disciples to be **RID** of **UNGODLY SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS**, but to **DO** so in **LOVE** and **THOROUGHNESS** in addressing the **ROOT** of the darkness within them.

Application: (1) May we who trust in Christ know God is not satisfied with our having partial spiritual insight, that He intends to persist in working with us to give us full insight in love, addressing the root of our darkness. (2) As we then disciple others, may we do so faithfully, fully and in love! (3) However, as Jesus did with the openly rebellious Pharisees in their great darkness, we too should withdraw from rebelliously darkened parties!