

EYES OPENED ON THE WAY

MARK 8:22–26

Monday: The Whole Passage — Eyes Opened on the Way

Read Mark 8:22–26

Mark 8:22–26 marks a new and important part of the Gospel. A blind man is brought to Jesus at Bethsaida; Jesus takes him outside the village, uses saliva, and asks if he can see anything. The man replies that he sees people “like trees, walking.” A second touch restores full, clear sight. This healing is unique among the Gospels—the only miracle that happens in two stages—and it serves as the gateway to the “Way Section” (8:22–10:52), where Jesus begins his journey toward Jerusalem and prepares his disciples for the cross.

1. Read through the passage carefully. Who is present, what specific actions does Jesus perform, and what makes this healing different from all the other healings you've seen in Mark so far?

2. This passage immediately follows Jesus' indictment of the disciples in 8:18: “Having eyes, do you not see?” How does that question influence the way you interpret the healing of the blind man? What might Mark be implying about the connection between physical and spiritual sight?

3. This healing opens a section that closes with another blind man healed in 10:46–52. What do you notice about the differences between these two healings—in method, the responses of the healed men, and what happens afterward? Why do you think Mark used two blind-man healings to frame this entire section?

Theological Reflection: Mark describes a miracle in which sight returns gradually rather than all at once. In what way does this accurately reflect how most people come to know and understand Jesus? What does it signify that the first stage of healing is real but incomplete?

Practical Application: If someone asked you right now, “Can you see anything?” about your faith, what would you say? Where do you see Jesus clearly, and where do things still look like trees walking?

Prayer: Ask God to reveal where your understanding of Jesus is incomplete, and to give you patience and openness as you seek full insight.

Tuesday: The Healing Itself — Power Made Perfect in Stages

Read Mark 8:22–26

The healing of the blind man at Bethsaida is unique among the Gospels. Jesus takes the man by the hand, leads him outside the village, and applies saliva to his eyes—yet sight only returns partially. A second laying on of hands results in three simultaneous effects described in verse 25: he opens his eyes wide, he is restored, and he sees everything clearly. This deliberate slow process is not a sign of limited power; the emphatic completeness of the final cure demonstrates the opposite.

4. After the first touch, the man says he sees people “like trees, walking.” What does this strange, vivid description reveal about his intermediate state? What is the difference between partial sight and no sight at all, and why does that difference matter?

5. Verse 25 uses three different phrases to describe the completed healing: he saw clearly, he was restored (*ἀπεκατεστη*, meaning “fully reinstated”), and he was seeing all things plainly. Why does Mark include these different expressions? What does this focus on completeness and clarity tell us about the kind of healing Jesus ultimately offers?

6. Jesus sends the man home with instructions not to enter the village. Some interpret this as a command for secrecy; others see it as a sign of the cure—the man is now able to navigate on his own. Which interpretation do you find more convincing, and why? Does your choice affect how you understand the miracle?

Theological Reflection: The first stage of the healing is real, but it is not the final goal. In what areas of your Christian life might God be working in phases, calling you to trust his process before full restoration comes?

Practical Application: Think of a time when you've been waiting for a “second touch”—a healed wound, a resolved confusion, or clarity that hasn't yet come. How does this miracle relate to that waiting?

Prayer: Give thanks for any amount of sight God has already given you, and ask for the courage to trust that the second touch is on its way.

Wednesday: “Who Do You Say I Am?” — Partial Sight and Full Confession

Read Mark 8:27–33

Immediately after the Bethsaida healing, Jesus leads his disciples north to Caesarea Philippi and asks, “Who do people say I am?” then, “Who do you say I am?” Peter responds: “You are the Christ.” This is a moment of true insight. But when Jesus begins to talk about rejection, suffering, and death, Peter rebukes him. He recognizes something real, but not fully—he has acknowledged the Messiah while rejecting the cross that defines him.

7. Peter’s confession is genuinely correct: Jesus is the Christ. Yet within moments, Jesus rebukes him with the harshest words in the Gospel: “Get behind me, Satan!” How can someone see Jesus clearly and yet still see him wrongly? What is Peter perceiving, and what is he missing?

8. Jesus describes himself as a Messiah who must suffer, be rejected, be killed, and then rise again. Why was this shift in understanding so hard for the disciples to accept? What beliefs about what the Messiah was supposed to do were obstacles to understanding what Jesus truly intended?

9. Jesus warns his disciples that anyone who wants to follow him must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him (8:34). How does this address Peter’s mistake? What does it look like in real life to adopt a cruciform view of discipleship rather than a victorious one?

Theological Reflection: Peter’s partial sight is not unbelief—it is a specific failure to incorporate the cross into an otherwise authentic confession. How does this challenge the idea that simply calling Jesus Lord is enough? What does it mean to see Jesus entirely?

Practical Application: In what ways might you hold a correct statement about Jesus while resisting its implications for your own life, particularly the implications of the cross? What would it look like to act on what you already confess?

Prayer: Pray for yourself and those around you who confess Christ but hesitate at the cost. Ask for the grace to see not only who Jesus is but also where he is going and why.

Thursday: On the Way — Three Cycles of Prediction and Failure

Read Mark 9:30–37; 10:32–45

Three times in the Way Section, Jesus clearly tells his disciples that the Son of Man will be handed over, killed, and raised. Each time, they respond with misunderstanding, argument, or ambition. After the first prediction, Peter rebukes Jesus; after the second, the disciples argue about who is greatest; and after the third, James and John ask for the seats of honor. Each cycle ends with Jesus guiding them back to servant leadership. The repetition is not careless—it is the patient process of formation.

10. The three passion predictions (8:31; 9:31; 10:32–34) become increasingly specific and clear. Why might Jesus have repeated and emphasized the prediction? What does the disciples' ongoing failure to understand indicate about the depth of the misunderstanding he is addressing?

11. After each prediction, the disciples' response appears to worsen, not improve: Peter rebukes (8:32), the disciples argue about greatness (9:34), James and John ask for thrones (10:37). What does this rising pattern reveal about what the disciples believe the journey toward Jerusalem involves?

12. In 10:42–45, Jesus explains the surprising logic of the kingdom: the greatest is the servant, the leader is the slave, and he himself came “not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” What would it mean to live out this idea in your church, family, or workplace?

Theological Reflection: The disciples were not foolish people; they were deeply shaped by a tradition that anticipated a victorious Messiah. What beliefs about success, leadership, or recognition make it hard for you to accept Jesus' definition of greatness in the kingdom?

Practical Application: Identify one area in your life—church, family, or work—where you are more focused on being served than on serving others. What would the “ransom” logic of verse 45 encourage you to do differently in that situation?

Prayer: Pray for the humility to desire what Jesus considers greatness rather than what the world regards as greatness. Ask God to develop in you the servant heart that the disciples were slow to adopt.

Friday: Bartimaeus — Full Sight on the Way

Read Mark 10:46–52

The Way Section concludes where it started: with a blind man. But everything has changed. Bartimaeus calls out twice—“Son of David, have mercy on me!”—using the most explicitly messianic title in the Gospel. He refuses to be quieted, throws off his cloak, leaps to his feet, and asks for his sight. Jesus grants it instantly. Unlike the Bethsaida man, Bartimaeus does not go home. He follows Jesus on the way. A former blind beggar shows what the Twelve couldn't manage over ten chapters.

13. Compare the Bethsaida healing (8:22–26) and the Bartimaeus healing (10:46–52). What are the main differences in method, the role of the healed man, and the story's outcome? What do these differences reveal about the overall theme of the Way Section?

14. Bartimaeus calls Jesus “Son of David”—a title none of the Twelve have used. He persists despite being silenced, abandons his cloak (his only security as a beggar) when called, and follows without being asked. What does his behavior reveal about the nature of faith and discipleship? How does it compare to the disciples' behavior throughout the Way section?

15. Bartimaeus follows Jesus “on the way” (ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ). Given everything the Way Section has prepared us for, what does it mean to follow Jesus on this specific road—toward Jerusalem, toward the cross? What does that kind of following require from you specifically?

Theological Reflection: The Way Section is framed by two men who receive sight, but only one of them follows. What is the difference between being healed by Jesus and becoming his disciple? Is it possible to receive what Jesus gives and still not follow him?

Practical Application: What cloak—what security, status, or possession—might you need to throw off in order to come to Jesus unencumbered and follow him on the way he has chosen?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. Open my eyes to see you clearly, and give me the courage to follow you on the road you have chosen, wherever it leads. Amen.