

People Jesus Touched: Two Blind Men (Mark 8, 10)

By Bob Young

Difficult text—mysterious, enigmatic.

Few explanations. Lots of details, lots of potential applications.

Have to accept that Mark was constructed for a purpose, redactor, connector of stories. For a reason, selective. Can identify clear outline, similar but different from other gospels, especially in the Synoptics.

I want to see, I want to see clearly. Show me Jesus. Let me know Jesus. Let me follow Jesus.

Outlined this before:

Mark 1-4: The mystery of the kingdom, Jesus' identity, who is Jesus?

Mark 5-8: Blind disciples, seeing clearly, who can be a follower of Jesus?

Mark 8-10: Suffering of Christ, what does following Christ look like?

Hard to know whether the story in Mark 8:22 is the conclusion of the previous section, or the beginning of what follows.

If it is the conclusion, then both of the two central parts end with a blind person story, and note that the first part ends with the incredulity of the disciples.

If it is the beginning of the third section, then we have the two blind man stories standing as bookends or parentheses around the predictions of Christ's suffering.

Either way, it appears the application is quite the same.

The blind man stories represent the disciples, first, and all of us by extension.

Jesus came to help blind people see.

That doesn't always happen immediately.

It did not happen quickly for the Jews concerning the inclusion of the Gentiles. It did not come easily that the Messiah came to suffering and die.

As he prepares to go to Jerusalem, with his death predicted three times in the coming chapters, Jesus performs a two-stage healing. The first stage of the healing is partial. It could have stood on its own, some people see that way. Seeing that way is better than not seeing at all. But Jesus desires more, and he heals the man completely so that he can see.

Keith Miller popularized the phrase often used to describe this miracle: the second touch!

Some of us take a second touch. Some of us are hard nuts to crack.

Some are eager to see.

After Jesus' passion has been predicted three times, the second blind man story is different. Here is a man eager and willing to see, desiring to follow Jesus, simply wanting to see.

Seeing generates both fear and faith.

Along the way we learn that following Jesus means fear and faith coexisting, humility, tolerance, integrity, healthy marital relationships, simplicity, priorities, and even suffering. Despite the cost, I want to see.