**Three Times Touched**

***Mark 8:21-25*** - **21**He said to them, “Do you still not understand?”

**Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida**

**22**They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. **23**He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man’s eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, “Do you see anything?”

1. He looked up and said, “I see people; they look like trees walking around.”

**25**Once more Jesus put his hands on the man’s eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

1. ***INTRO:***
   1. **Credentials of Healing Power**

**Years ago,** if a person was unfortunate enough to have **cataracts** grow on their eyes they were **doomed to blindness**. Fortunately, ***today, cataract surgery is readily available and frequently performed*** to prevent blindness. Eye implants are becoming greater in number to help those with vision problems to see again.

* While we should be ***grateful for this advancement*** in medical science, we should ***never forget*** the healing power of Jesus Christ.
* He is still **just as able today** to heal the blind as He ever was!

In fact, according to Scripture, one of ***the credentials of the Messiah*** would be *the healing of the blind* and thus *the restoring of sight*.

### **Isaiah 42:1-7 - The Servant of the Lord**

**42**“Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One *in whom* My soul delights!  
I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.  
**2**He will not cry out, nor raise *His voice,* Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.  
**3**A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth.  
**4**He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth;  
And the coastlands shall wait for His law.”

**5**Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it:

**6**“I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, **7**To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.

***Jesus, being the Messiah, the Promised One,*** was bringing to fulfillment *the prophecy of Isaiah* as **He brought healing to the blind.**

It was ***John* the Baptist** who sent ***two*** *of his disciples to ask Jesus* **if *He was the “coming One*, or should they look for another.”**

**And *Jesus answered* and said to them,**

**Matthew 11:4-5 - 4**Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: **5***The* blind see and *the* lame walk; *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear; *the* dead are raised up and *the* poor have the gospel preached to them.

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* 1. **The Three Touched of Jesus**

**The New Testament records** at least **seven** incidents of **the healing of the blind by Jesus**. It is interesting to watch ***the actions of Jesus healing*** these blind men.

**Matthew 9:27-30** – ***two blind men are healed***, and Jesus touches their eyes.

**Matthew 12:22** – A **blind and deaf** man is healed.

**Mark 10:52** – ***Blind Bartimaeus is healed*** when Jesus speaks the word of healing.

**John 9:6** – **Jesus** uses *saliva and mud* to heal.

**Here in our text today**, ***This man is touched three times by Jesus***.

I have preached before that he was **“twice touched,”** and he was.

* **The *first* time** Jesus touched him, his eyes were healed.
* **The *second* touch** that was applied to his eyes healed his mind.

But ***what I want to show you today*** is that there were **THREE physical touches applied by Jesus** that day.

***We will focus today,*** not only on *the healing of this man’s sight*, but also the ***three touches of Jesus.***

**The first touch** is recorded in **verse 23** where,

**Jesus took him by the hand – this is The Touch of Encouragement**.

**The second touch** is in that same verse we see where,

**Jesus “put His hands on him” – this is The Touch of Enlightenment.**

**The third touch** that day was when in verse 25,

**Jesus put His hands on the blind man’s eyes – this is The Touch of Enablement**.

**Using this record in the Gospels, *I want to show you* today *how this story can be applied in our lives* in the *here and now*.**

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1. **Body**
   1. **The Touch of Encouragement**

**The Scriptures tell us** that “they,” *perhaps this man’s friends or family*, **brought him to Jesus.** It is the concept of being a ***“Stretcher Bearer.”***

**These people had enough faith and action to know that if they could get him to Jesus, he could be healed.**

* The Scriptures say that **they “begged” Jesus** to touch this man.
* They had a strong desire **to see this man healed** – and they took him to the only One they knew **could provide *the healing***.

**I wonder this morning;** do we believe ***as those who brought this man to Jesus believed?***

Do we believe **Jesus can still heal and restore and change** *the lives of our friends* and *loved ones*?

**If we do,** then we ought to **do everything we can to** *bring those in need* **into contact** with **the One who can meet their needs**!

**After the request** to touch the blind man was given by those who brought him –

**1st Touch: Jesus touches this man with a touch of encouragement.**

**The Bible says,** ***“He took the man by the hand and led him outside the town.”***

**Have you ever wondered why** it is that **Jesus**, who usually ***healed*** *on the spot*, **would take this man out of the town of Bethsaida?**

**Perhaps** we can find the answer in **Matthew 11 -**

**Matthew 11:20-21 - Woe on Unrepentant Towns - 20**Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. **21**“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

* **The city of Bethsaida had become *calloused and unrepentant*!**

**And the sad reality is,** that there are those today who are **like** the citizens of Chorazin and Bethsaida. **There are many –** *in and out of the church* – which have **hearts that are *calloused and unrepentant***.

Perhaps that is why many of our ***altars are empty*** and we are ***not seeing the miracles of healing*** we desire to see!

However, **this man,** thanks to his friends, *would be the recipient of* ***a touch of encouragement***.

* As Jesus took this man by the hand to lead him, I believe it was a personal touch – a touch that was full of tender, loving mercy.

**Listen to Pastor:**

* Our church, our town, our families, friends, and even strangers…***all need a touch from us in the most personal way*** we can touch them.
* **Jesus shows us how.**
* Jesus showed an **INTEREST** in the man.
* **By bringing this blind man to Jesus**, those who brought him ***were showing an interest*** in his wellbeing.

And, ***just like the man in our text***, ***I am confident that if we will care enough to bring people into His presence, Jesus will touch them*** -

and let them know that **He cares**!

**Listen:** the world wants to know that **we are interested in them**.

**People really want to know that they are loved.**

**They want to know** *that God loves them*, and *they are looking for God’s love* through you and me.

* **Jesus took the time *to touch*!**

**The touch of Jesus *was a patient touch* –** there was **no “hurry up!”** in His touch. **Hope was born** as *Jesus took the time* for this man.

* **Aren’t you thankful** that *God is so patient* with us?
* We live with and are **an impatient generation**.
* **We are so impatient** that we stand in front of *our microwaves* telling it to “hurry up!”
* And **unfortunately,** *with people* we seem to have even **less patience**!

**Jesus was patient,** and He brought a hopeful encouragement to this man. No doubt, **we must learn to do the same**! Not only was ***His touch one of patience and encouragement***, but also **the touch of Jesus** was, and IS, **a powerful touch.**

***I believe that as Jesus took the man by the hand,* the man *knew* that this touch was one of power – one *powerful enough to heal***.

**Jesus’ touch** was *powerful* in that it **was:**

* **Relieving** – as Jesus seemed to say, ***“Allow me.”***
* **Sensitive** – Jesus would touch the man in a ***very personal way***.

**I wonder this morning, will we let Jesus touch us to encourage us?**

* Will we allow His touch to relieve us;
* ***Even if it calls for us*** to give up a very sensitive and private part of our life?
* Be assured that **Jesus’ touch is** *a touch of encouragement*!

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* 1. **Touch of Enlightenment**

**Not only is His touch a touch of encouragement, the touch of Jesus was also a touch of ENLIGHTENMENT**.

**It is interesting** that Jesus spit on the man’s eyes and then **placed** His hands on them.

* Now, **Jesus *did not need the spit* to heal**, but the man did.
* The man **needed to feel** that **something was being done to him.**

**James 2:15-16 -** 15 Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” ***but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?***

* **This man needed to be physically touched to be healed from his physical blindness.**
* **But he also needed that physical touch for *spiritual healing*.**
* The reality is that **our infirmities** have the tendency to **harden us**.
* **Jesus** was healing this man ***inside and out***.

**This second touch,** as *Jesus asked if he could see*, **enlightened the man** to a world of vision. The man saw men as trees walking around.

* The man could see, but ***his mind did not comprehend*** what his eyes were seeing!
* He **could not** *see with clarity*.

**We are too much like this man,** sometimes.

* ***We see things,*** but *not always with* ***comprehension and clarity***.

**Helen Keller** once said,

* ***“It’s a terrible thing not to be able to see. But it is even more terrible to be able to see, but not have vision.”***

**I wonder this morning; do we have enlightenment to a vision?**

**When we come to Jesus to be touched**, *we begin to see* ***men and issues clearer than ever before***. ***The touch of Jesus is a touch of enlightenment***.

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* 1. **Touch of Enablement**

Not only will **His touch encourage and enlighten us**, but **His touch will also enable us**.

***Seeing men as trees*** is never good enough!

* ***Jesus touches the man* for *a third time*.**
* He was ***Three Times Touched*** to bring about enablement.
* **This touch *enabled him* to clearly see** *his world*, *his friends*, and *his family*!

***Not only was the man enabled to see, but also, he was enabled to walk around – he was able to live life without the constant need of help from others.***

**LISTEN:** ***Jesus’ touch will help free us from the constant dependence on people or things (vices).***

**More than ever** before, ***we need the touch of enablement*** *to clearly see our way through life’s plights*.

* **We need to see as** the Prophet Elisha saw, and **not as** *his servant saw*.

**2 Kings 6:15-17 - 15**When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. “Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?” the servant asked.

**16**“Don’t be afraid,” the prophet answered. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”

**17**And Elisha prayed, “Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see.” Then the Lord opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

***Ministry is disabled when we fail to see clearly.*** We, as individuals and collectively as a church, are ***disabled when all we see is the opposition*** rather than **the work of God** *that is happening* around us.

* **Look for *what God is doing*!**

***The touch of enablement allows us to see clearly, consistently, and continually!***

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1. **Close**
   1. **We Must Change**

**Listen to Pastor**: ***It is a risk to seek the touch from Jesus that will encourage, enlighten, and enable us.***

* ***Why?***
* ***Because to receive such a touch we must change!***

**This man whom Jesus healed was never the same again!**

**Once you’ve been Three Times Touched by Jesus, you’ll never be the same again, either!**

* 1. **Altar Call**

**The man came to Jesus with the help of others.**

* **Today,** if you are **longing for a touch from the Master**, why don’t you seek a friend to help bring you **into the presence of Jesus?**

**The blind man’s friends** *begged Jesus to touch the man*.

* Perhaps some of you precious saints of God ***can come and intercede for someone who needs to be touched by Jesus today***.

At one point it appears that the man **was alone with Jesus**.

* Perhaps you feel uncomfortable with others, why don’t you come to the altar and get alone **with Jesus.**
* ***Everyone needs to come and be touched by Jesus today***…