

Twice Touched

Mark 8:20-25 - ²⁰ “And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?”

They answered, “Seven.”

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?”

²⁵ 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.

Shirl Jennings Story - At age three, he simultaneously contracted polio, meningitis, and cat-scratch-fever. **Doctors gave up hope on him** and sent him home to probably die.

His mother was determined that her son would recover, and over the next three years she worked with him to teach him to walk again.

His eyesight deteriorated, he could distinguish only between light and dark.

- Doctors concluded that he had a **rare and incurable eye disease**.
- **As he got older**, doctors considered removing the cataracts from Jennings’ eyes, **but feared the surgery would further damage** his retinas.

At the age of 51, Jennings had the first cataract removed from his eyes, and on Halloween of that same year the other one was removed.

After Jennings’ initial delight in having his sight restored came the hard work of making sense of his restored sight.

- All his visual memory was gone.
- Jennings was seeing, but exactly what he was seeing was a mystery to him.
- He was unable to distinguish anything without **touching** it.

It was finally determined that Jennings had MENTAL blindness...

- He could see, but he could not distinguish what he was seeing.
- He could not ***understand*** what he was seeing.
- He had his eyes healed, but

What he needed was for his mind to be healed.

The Blind Man in Our Text (*Mark 8:20-25*)

When you read through the book of Mark, you will find yourself with Jesus...

- **Surrounded by crowds,**
- **Wearied by the demands,**
- **Besieged by attacks of demons.**

Some of the miracles you will find in the Book of Mark are...

- The great catch of fish.
- The healing of the withered hand.
- Peter's mother-in-law being healed.
- The healing of the Paralytic.
- The storm that was calmed.
- The Gadarene Demoniac delivered.
- Jairus' daughter called back to life.
- The feeding of the 5,000.
- The Lord walking on water.
- **Just to name a few.**

Many of these miracles **can be found in other Gospels**; however, the **Blind Man healed at Bethsaida is exclusive to *the Book of Mark***.

- There were **other blind men** that the Lord would heal,
- The accounts of which **can be found in** Matthews Gospel, and Luke.
- **But this miracle** is found only in Mark's gospel account.
- It occurs not a far distance from the scene of **the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000**.

In our text we read the story of ***a blind man who was brought to Jesus by his friends*** who ***“begged”*** *Jesus to heal him.*

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

I wonder this morning; do we believe Jesus can still heal and change the lives of people?

If you do, are you willing to bring those in need of a touch into the presence of Jesus?

After Jesus touched him, He asked the man **if he could see anything.**

The man’s reply would seem to indicate that *his eyes were not completely healed.*

- He said, ***“I see men as trees, walking.”***

The fact is, **this man’s eyes were completely healed**, but, *just like Shirl Jennings*, he could not **distinguish what he was seeing.**

His mind was **not correctly interpreting** what his eyes were seeing.

He had his **physical** sight back, but he was **mentally** blind.

The next touch that Jesus administered was not to his eyes, but it was a touch of the mind! Thus, He was Twice Touched.

Renewing of the Mind

Often, when we read this passage, it is assumed that **the first touch of Jesus was simply not adequate to perform the miraculous healing** that this man needed.

The issue, however, was in the mind of the one being touched.

The reality is that oftentimes **when Jesus touches a person’s body**, *out of habit or because their brain* is simply **unable to compute** what has just happened, the body feels as if the healing is incomplete.

- *He’s already healed your body*, now **He must heal your mind!**

Romans 12:1-2 - A Living Sacrifice - 1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the **renewing** of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.

The Greek word translated “renewing” means, literally, “a renovation.”

Paul is demanding that, ***for you to present your body as a living sacrifice, your mind must be restored to good condition*** – as if it were brand new.

Many have ***Asked and received salvation***, and are ***filled with the Holy Spirit***, but ***still have minds that have difficulty perceiving*** what has happened in our lives!

You’ve been touched once in your life, but ***you will be transformed if you will let the touch of Jesus - reinvigorate, refresh, and revive your mind, your intellect, your understanding, and your perception!***

David said in **Psalm 51:10** - Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

And then in **Ezekiel 36:26** - I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

In both verses of Scripture it ***appears*** that ***the same Hebrew word is used***. They are ***spelled the same***, but they are ***pronounced differently***, and consequently, have dissimilar meanings.

- In **Psalm 51:10**, David asked God to “chadash” [khaw-DASH], or “RENEW” a right spirit within him. It means to **REPAIR**; to cause to be new by **REBUILDING**.
- In **Ezekiel 36:26**, God promises to give us a “chadash” [khaw-DAWSH) or “NEW” spirit and heart. God’s promise is for a **FRESH, NEW** spirit and heart!

The bottom line, however, is that **God can change you either through repairing or rebuilding the old, or by giving you the new!**

Perhaps you are sitting here wondering this morning, “**How is one transformed by the renewing of the mind?**” - I’m glad you asked! LOL 😊

Ephesians 4:22-24 - 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Romans 13:14 - 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

Colossians 3:10 - 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Anyone saved by the touch of Jesus – if united with Christ – gets a fresh start.

- They are created **NEW!**
- The old life is **gone**; and the new life is beginning to grow or increase rapidly; flourishing.

And how is this done?

Titus tells us... Titus 3:5 - 5 he saved us, **not because of righteous things** we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

Illustration: Rebecca Thompson - Rebecca fell twice from the Fremont Canyon Bridge. **She died both times.**

- The first fall **broke her heart.**
- The second **broke her neck.**

She was only 18 years old when she and **her 11-year-old sister** were abducted by a pair of hoodlums near a store in Casper, Wyoming.

They drove the girls to a Canyon Bridge, a one-lane, steel-beamed structure rising 112 feet above the River.

The men brutally abused and beat both girls. Somehow, Rebecca managed to convince the two men not to abuse her sister the way they had abused her. **Both girls were thrown over the bridge into a narrow gorge.**

Amy died when she landed on the rocks below, near the river. **Rebecca slammed into a higher ledge** and ricocheted into deeper water.

With a hip fracture in multiple places, she struggled to the shore.

To protect her body from the cold, she wedged herself between two rocks and waited until dawn. **But morning never came for Rebecca.**

Oh, **the sun came up and she was found.**
The physicians treated her wounds, and the courts imprisoned her attackers.
Life continued, but dawn never came.

She was never able to climb up out of that canyon.
Nineteen years later, **she returned to the bridge.**

With her two-year-old daughter and boyfriend at her side, **she sat on the edge of the Canyon Bridge and wept.**

- Through her tears, **she retold the story.**
- The boyfriend did not want the child to see her cry,
- so, he carried the toddler to the car.

That's when **he heard Rebecca's body hit the water.**

That is when Rebecca Thompson died her second death.
The sun **never** dawned on Rebecca's dark night.

What was it that eclipsed the light from her world? Fear?

Was it anger? Perhaps...anger at the criminals, and anger at herself for the thousands of nightmares or the thousands of falls that followed.

Was it guilt? Perhaps...despite her attractive smile and appealing personality, friends say that she struggled with the fact that she had survived, and her little sister had not.

Was it shame? Perhaps...everyone she knew, and thousands she didn't know, knew the details of her tragedy.

The stigma was tattooed deeper and deeper with the newspaper ink of every headline.

She had been violated, and try as she might, she could never outlive nor outrun the memory. So, 19 years later, she went back to the bridge.

- **Canyons** of shame run deep – gorges of never-ending guilt.
- Walls of defeat and **the death of dreams**.
- Unending echoes of screams...

Stop looking over your shoulder...

Try as you might to outrun yesterday's tragedies, their tentacles are longer than your hope.

They draw you **back to the bridge of sorrows to be shamed** again and again.

Perhaps you've been touched once by the Master, but more than anything today, you need to be Twice Touched.

You have your spiritual blindness healed, but your mind is still blind, it is uncomprehending of what took place in the spirit-world.

Jesus wants to give you a second touch today!

Close - Beethoven's Harpsichord (piano)

In his later years, Beethoven would spend hours playing a broken harpsichord. **The instrument was worthless.**

- **Keys were missing.**
- **Strings were stretched.**
- It was out of tune and harsh on the ears.

Nonetheless, **the great pianist would play till tears came down his cheeks.**

To look at him, you would think that he was hearing something that was not there.

- He, in fact, was, ***for he was deaf!***
- Beethoven was hearing **the sound the instrument SHOULD make**, not the one that it did make.

Ever feel like Beethoven's broken harpsichord?

- Out of tune? Inadequate? Your service ill-timed and insignificant?

Ever wonder what God does when instruments get broken?

What happens to the song when the strings are out of tune?

How does the Master respond when the keys don't work?

- **Does He** turn around and leave?
- Does He demand a replacement?
- Does He junk the old? Or...
- ***Does He patiently tune until He hears the songs that He longs to hear?***

No...none of that. He just calls for a second touch!

Is there anyone in the house this morning that desires to be twice touched?

- **Won't you come?**