

## **Miracles of Jesus 12-09-09b**

Let's resume our study now. I'm going to pick up the pace a little bit because I have incredible amounts of things to cover and I want to try to do so thoroughly. We've seen the healing of this deaf-mute man and we're ready now to look at his response.

What happens as a result of his enablement? He was alternately abled and now he's got some more ablement that he didn't used to have. Verse 36 of Mark 7, after his ears are immediately opened. Now when is the immediate opening? It's after Jesus says, Ephphatha, be opened.

But by what authority does he say that? And Ken made a good point on the break that Jesus has looked up to heaven. We've seen that this is communicating to the man that this is of God. This is from the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

You look up to heaven, that means one thing, you are appealing to God. And then it says Jesus sighed, he groaned. This is a non-verbal expression of emotion, isn't it? Typically when we sigh or groan, we're expressing a feeling that we have.

You don't typically have your physics professor about to put the equation on there for the location of Higgs boson or something and groan. I mean that wouldn't be a way to express intellectual information or a scientific concept. This is, he might groan when he looks out and sees the glazed-over faces of people like me who are saying, what? I thought boson was a guy that blew a whistle on a ship.

I don't understand what this quarks and the rest of it, I don't get it. And he might look at me and sigh. But again, it's an expression of emotion.

So now, what emotion is Jesus expressing here? Well, you look at the nature of the initial request and they said, lay your hands on him. He's already touched him twice and that did not heal him. It is going to be the spoken word.

It is the word of authority delegated, sourced in, God in heaven, right? That's what's going to affect this change. My personal feeling, you could argue that this might be sort of a John 11 thing, Jesus groaning because people don't get it. I see this a little bit as anticipation.

I think Jesus already knows what the reaction is going to be. And it's just Jesus saying, it's kind of like when you hand your child something you know they're going to break or you know they're going to foul a thing up but you say, all right, here's the keys, you know. He groaned and said to him, be opened.

You would hope that this would be sort of a Damascus road thing, that you would get an apostle out of this moment, this encounter, that you would get somebody who's going to reflect the glory of God and be a faithful and obedient servant, right? But I think Jesus

knows that with this enablement is going to come a bad result. And it is a bad result because notice what happens in verse 36, Jesus commanded them that they should tell no one. This is an initial command.

You have an heiress here and he says, don't tell anyone. Now what happened is, notice it says he didn't tell him to tell no one, he told them no one. Up in verse 33 it said, he took him aside from the multitude.

You get the idea that Jesus wanted this man to himself. But why is he telling them? What has happened? The people who brought the man refused to grant them the privacy that Jesus was looking for. Jesus took him away from the multitude while these other people followed.

They felt like, well, we have a right to be here. We're family, we're friends, we're the ones who, we want to look out for him because he's a poor deaf guy. And so they came along.

And so these people are involved. Ideally, I think they would have stayed back with the multitude. This would have been a one-on-one encounter.

But they've got to be there. They've got to be involved. So they're there.

And so Jesus commanded them that they should tell no one. But the more he commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it. And I wish I had time to give you this in Greek.

It's really something. Because it talks about the extent to which. The extent to which he commanded them not to tell anyone, they much more, they exponentially more so, told it.

He would say, don't tell anyone. Well, they would tell two people. He would say, please don't tell anyone.

I'm asking you not to tell anyone. Well, then they would go tell ten people. The more he said it, they multiplied the more so of disobedience, of doing exactly what he told them not to do.

And it seems as though the emphasis that he gave on not telling anyone prodded them to egregious levels of disobedience. It's almost, when you read this in Greek, you get the idea. It would have been better if he had just given the one command, let them disobey.

But when he emphasizes the command, it just multiplies their disobedience exponentially. And there's a, I just don't have time to go into it linguistically, but that's the concept. And they were astonished beyond measure.

And this is everybody, the people that witnessed it, the people that are telling it, the

people to whom it is told. They all were astonished beyond measure saying, he has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.

And you say, well, how is this a bad thing? It seems like they're celebrating. How can this be a bad thing? Two problems. First of all, there is this gift and it is abused.

It is misdirected. Jesus said, here is what you do with this gift. And they did exactly the opposite.

They disobeyed and egregiously disobeyed. The more the command was emphasized, the more emphatically they disregarded it. Because why? Well, how can this be bad? I am complimenting him.

I am extolling him. He has done all things well. Look at what he does.

Has Jesus not done this before? What's wrong with telling people? I don't see a problem with telling people. Well, here's the thing. Where is he? He is in a region that has already rejected him once.

He is in the region of Decapolis. He is in the region that asked him to leave, right? Secondly, there is a larger issue. The identification of someone correctly, you correctly identify, it doesn't qualify you to communicate about that thing.

The simplest example of this is a brand new believer. You have an athlete or a notable person and they get saved. They come to Christ and immediately the traditional Christian world wants to put them behind a microphone telling the world about their faith.

Well, this will be great. Here's a famous person talking about Jesus Christ. This will be great.

The Bible argues strongly against this. Just because someone has correctly figured out that Jesus is the Savior and has become their Savior does not qualify them to be a proclaimer. There are other things required to be a proclaimer.

Once you have made the identification, there are things you need to learn. This is what is coming out of these two miracles. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.

Now, is this a good thing? Well, we know that prophetically speaking, this was one of the ways they would identify the Messiah, right? When you go back to Isaiah, you go back to some of the prophecies that talk about what would happen when the Messiah came. It said that He would heal the blind and the deaf. You can go back to Isaiah chapter 42, for example, and you see something very similar to what we have just seen with regard to the blind, which is actually coming up next.

Just turn quickly back to Isaiah chapter 42, verse 18. Jesus has just given a command to a deaf man, has He not? And somehow the deaf man was able to comply. 18 of the 42nd chapter of Isaiah, hear you deaf and look you blind that you may see and hear, by implication.

Hear you deaf that you may hear, look you blind that you may see, right? So it seems kind of cruel to tell a blind person, hey, look. Tell a deaf person, hey, listen. But that's what God does because with the command comes enablement.

God works around whatever limitations we have. But this is an identification that was associated with the Messiah. So if Jesus is doing these things, and people are, you can flip a few pages further back, if people are touting this, you would think, well, this is going to help Jesus' mission.

You go back to Isaiah 35, verses 5 and 6. The eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. The lame shall leap like a deer and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. Water shall birth forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

The parched ground shall become a pool, the thirsty land springs of water. In the habitation of jackals where each lay there shall be grass with reeds and rushes. There will be a highway.

This is all a description of the future millennial kingdom. When the Messiah comes, this is what will happen. The desert will bloom like a rose and so on.

And people think they see this happening even today in the cultivation of the land of Israel. And if you look at the end of verse 2, they shall see the glory of God, the excellency of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, make firm the feeble knees.

Say to those who are fearful, hearted, be strong, do not fear. Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God, He will come and deliver you. And these will be concomitants.

These will be associating details. Well, go back to Mark, chapter 7, chapter 8. There is the reaction and the response is disobedience. Now, if you'd step back, is being able to hear and being able to speak a blessing for this man? Most of us would say yes.

I don't have time to address the weird predilections of the deaf community in some areas of our culture. There are people who are deaf who actually think it's a blessing to be deaf and they're kind of happy if they have a deaf child. And they think, well, you know, this is great.

Well, I can't address that right now. But for the man, it's a blessing. That's the reason he came.

He's celebratory. Hey, now I can hear, now I can speak. Normal people would think that this is a good thing.

If you were the parent of a child who could not hear and he was made to hear, most of us would be happy. But step back. In the overall plan and purpose of God, when God has a timetable of revelation and of communication, and you mess up the timetable, General Eisenhower announces to the pool of reporters, we're going in for D-Day.

Wow, this is great. There's a time to communicate that information and there's a time not to, right? And a reporter might say, how is this not good news? The American public has been waiting for months and years for a big push that would, you know, liberate Europe and end the onslaught of all these enemies and so on. This is great.

Oh, it's the scoop of the century. Oh, my name will live forever as the guy that broke the story. I've got to get on the radio.

I've got to get on the transatlantic hook and tell the New York Times and tell the Post and tell everybody else this is coming. The General says, I mean, look at the faith in the integrity of Americans that we used to be able to have. He told the press beforehand that the invasion was coming.

Nobody leaked it. Whole room full of reporters, nobody leaked it because they understood there is a time to release this information and it's not now. Is it valid? Is it accurate? Is it wonderful? Yes, but there is a time to release it and there are good reasons for not releasing it that may not be totally understandable to the person who has gotten the information.

From the perspective that God has, opening this man's mouth is not a strategic blessing because the man opens his mouth in all the wrong places at all the wrong times. Jesus pleads with the man, don't tell this. He pleads with his friends, don't spread this.

They do the exact opposite. It would be like Eisenhower saying, look, you all have heard rumors, you've seen preparations, and yes, we are. Please don't tell anyone.

And they immediately go out and broadcast it to the whole world and thousands of men on the beaches of Normandy and elsewhere are slaughtered because you couldn't keep your mouth shut when you were asked to, when you were told to, when someone pled with you. Look, there's a bigger strategic picture here that you don't fully understand. Trust me, you can release this information later, but not now.

Well, this man does the opposite. It is a reminder to us, and this is really the application from our first session this morning, and it goes back to the introduction I offered you when we started. It's just like the manna.

We get truth from God, but we have instructions that come with it. There are limitations.

You don't always tell everything you know.

You know, little children are notorious for this. I well remember as a child, I remember the day, I remember the hour, I remember the occasion. I can see the room clearly as a bell because I made a huge mistake.

It was April of 1964, and it was my mother's birthday, and I was six years old. My dad had gotten my mother a really nice present. We didn't have a lot of money, but he had stretched and gotten her something really nice.

What it was, I don't remember. But he had let me in on it, and he said, your mother's really going to be pleased I got her this thing. Well, he comes home.

He's got the package under his arm, and we're going to have the birthday celebration, and me being six and having this piece of information, Mom, Dad got you a fill-in-the-blank, which totally spoiled the thing, you know, the unwrapping the anticipation, stupid. Well, I never, just the look in my dad's face, he didn't even say anything to me. He just looked at me, and I thought, oops.

And it's one of those life lessons that you don't forget. There is a time to divulge information that you possess, and if you're not supposed to speak it, shut up. Have some self-control.

Recognize that there is a larger plan. There are bigger issues than you might fully understand. This man and his friends completely disregard this.

Jesus has given him the greatest gift of his life, and he has immediately, seconds have not even gone by before he starts abusing it. We want to learn from this, to value the gifts that God gives us, and carefully read the instructions. Have you ever gotten a brand new thing, and you thought, hey, this is great, you didn't read the instructions, and you, you know, put the plastic lid on and hit the switch and suddenly something moves and the plastic lid is all chewed to small pieces because, oh, you're supposed to flip the lever that raises the mixing bowl before the big hook.

That didn't actually happen, but it could have. We, you know, we want to follow the instructions. Make sure you're aware.

Make sure that the time is right. That's the message of this, and several others where Jesus said, tell no one, but they broadcasted everywhere and after that he could not openly enter any town. Jesus was hindered.

People that over-theologize say, God can't be hindered. God's purposes are immutable and unchangeable, and he's all-powerful, he's omnipotent, and, you know, he's going to do what he's going to do. No, did you know that we as believers can hinder God? We can.

People that talked out of turn hindered the communication ministry of the Lord Jesus. He had to accomplish his goals in other ways because people screwed it up. We can do the same thing.

God may be trying to minister a particular truth, the gospel or something else important in someone's life. Can we be a hindrance? Yes. Can we be a hindrance to unbelievers coming to faith in Christ because we're such an egregiously silly person as a believer, and we talk of what we know not of, and it makes it intellectually difficult for them to join our group? You mean I'm going to become a ninny like this person? I'm going to be as fatuous and shallow and uninformed and illiterate in common knowledge as this person? You're asking me to join this crowd? This is who I'm going to rub elbows with? Really? We can be a hindrance when we speak when we shouldn't speak, when we communicate when we should not communicate.

Now, to see this, look at the second miracle we're addressing this morning in chapter 8, verse 22. Jesus came to Bethsaida, and they brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. Same thing again.

He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. When he had spit on his eyes and put his hands on him, he asked him if he saw anything, and he looked up and said, I see men like trees walking. Interesting.

Blind man, and Jesus takes him by the hand. Taking him by the hand did not accomplish anything. It's not just any time you touch Jesus you're automatically healed, which is also interesting when you consider the woman touching just the hem of his garment, and she was healed.

Jesus takes this man by the hand, but it still has to lead him. He doesn't take him by the hand. The guy says, oh, no bother, I can see.

Jesus could touch you without healing you. It's amazing. There seems to be some actual intelligent control over Jesus' healing power.

Led him out of the town. When he had spit on his eyes and put his hands on him, he asked him if he saw anything, and Jesus' healing didn't work. He doesn't have perfect sight.

The first guy, Jesus spits and touches his tongue, and then appeals to heaven and says, Ephatha, and it is the spoken word, emphasized again, that brings about the healing. But Jesus spoke, and it says the man could hear and speak plainly. He's not saying, what? What? Or partial speech, partial hearing.

Everything happens plainly immediately. This guy, no. He says, I see men like trees walking.

Then Jesus put hands on his eyes again and made him look up. He looked up the first time. Jesus did.

Who's made to look up this time? Notice Jesus doesn't pray. Jesus doesn't give an imperative in this case. Jesus makes the man look up.

And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. In both cases, there is not full healing until somebody looks up, right? Then he sent him away to his house saying, neither go into the town nor tell anyone in the town. Why? The reasons are the same.

Now, if you look at this in its context, in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus has called his disciples away from their normal lives as fishermen or tax collectors, whatever it may be, and he's been teaching them to look at life in a new way. We as believers are called to look at our lives in the light of divine revelation, in the light of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in a new way. Our jobs, our families, our relationships, our personal goals and aspirations, our education, our functions, whatever it may be, we are called to view our life in a new and different way, right? Are we not? We shouldn't be looking at it the way unbelievers do.

We shouldn't be thinking about it the way unbelievers do. The disciples have been called to look at life differently, divine perspective, divine viewpoint. And what is the goal of this? What kind of a perspective is it? What kind of a view is it? The just, the upright, shall live by his what? What does the just live by? The just shall live by his faith, right? We walk by faith.

You can say it. We walk by faith, not by sight, right? Faith. Faith is the victory.

Faith is what makes us overcomers. Faith lays hold of righteousness. Faith is the means by which we gain inheritance and opportunity and function and are qualified for service.

Faith, hope and love. Our love cannot be produced without faith and hope, right? So this is what Jesus is teaching the disciples. Walk by faith.

O ye of little faith, why did you doubt? O ye of little faith, could you not watch with me one hour? O ye of little faith, where is your faith? Faith. Faith. That's what Jesus is trying to teach the disciples.

Faith. Look up. Trust God.

Claim his word. Claim his promise. Claim the principles and the doctrines that you know.

Walk by faith. Now is this something that you can get in a moment? Can you say, wow, Sam, you know that's really right. From now on I'm going to walk by faith.

I'm leaving this room today and from now on I am Mr. Faith. I am Miss Faith. I am Mrs. Faith.

Faith is my middle name. Faith. Faith.

Faith. Faith this. Faith that.

Faith up. Faith down. Faith all around.

Faith everywhere. I am the most faithful. You'll never see anybody more faithful than me.

Learning to live by faith is a process, isn't it? We start with small steps. We crawl before we walk, right? It is a process. Faith is a process.

And we get better at it as we practice. If you look at Mark 8, 17 and 18, it says, Mark 8, 17 and 18, it says, Mark 8, which precedes this blind man's healing, Jesus being aware of their reasoning about the bread. Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? Having eyes do you not see and having ears do you not hear and do you not remember? Can you not process? Can you not meditate? Can you not learn to walk by faith? Can you not benefit and implement this process? Benefit from it, implement it in your life.

It's a process. You have eyes, but you're not using them. You have ears, you're hearing, but you're not really hearing.

Now, having eyes, verse 18, do you not see? Having ears, do you not hear? It is no accident that you have ears at the end of chapter 7 and you've got eyes following this in chapter 8. Ears that do not hear and eyes that do not see. Jesus fixes the ears and fixes the eyes, but there is a problem with what happens afterward, right? In the first case, the man can't use his mouth properly even though he has been given its function. He doesn't understand its purpose.

He doesn't stick around to listen to Jesus. He doesn't say, Lord, let me be with you always. Now that I can hear, I'd really love to hear this teaching.

He wants to go off and make himself a celebrity, right? He wants to listen to other things and talk out of turn. He's been given the function, but he hasn't learned what to do with it and doesn't appreciate what its purpose is. Same thing we have with the blind man.

He looks up and he says, I see men like trees walking. Now, he says, I see men, so he knows what he's looking at. He doesn't understand what he's seeing, right? He can identify them.

I see men, but they look like trees walking. I don't understand what I'm seeing. Trees don't walk.

I'm seeing men, but they look like trees walking. I have a perceptual ability, but my comprehension isn't there. I'm not understanding and interpreting this information

correctly.

I'm seeing men, but they look funny. Trees fade into smaller and smaller things, and apparently, being blind, he has felt a tree, and here's the trunk, here's the leaves, big stuff in the center, small stuff on the outside. Men, they seem to be a blur.

They're like trees walking, and it's just not possible. I can't properly interpret what I see, so Jesus put his hands on his eyes again and made him look up. Now, the first time, Jesus did not pray like he does with the deaf mute.

The deaf mute knows ahead of time. This power is coming from above. Here, Jesus says, all right, you want me to touch you? I'll touch you.

Well, that touch alone is not sufficient to give him complete sight, because there's been no incorporation of what is above. You say, well, Jesus is God incarnate. Why isn't that enough to just see Jesus? Jesus doesn't say, I'm the way, the truth, and the life.

See you later. What does he say? I'm the way, the truth, and the life. You come to the Father through me.

You don't come to me, and that's good enough. You come to me, and I'll take you to the Father. That's where you need to end up.

You need to be looking up. When he puts his hands on his eyes again and made him look up, he's restored and sees everything clearly. The man's problem here is that he can't see.

The people know that Jesus can touch someone and make them whole, so they bring him to Jesus, and they ask Jesus to act on his behalf. Jesus isolates him just as he did the first man, takes him out of the town. Why? Because Jesus has already crossed the threshold where national rejection has been manifest, and he's no longer making this public appeal.

So it's counterproductive for people to go around making the public appeal. This is like somebody running around saying, hey, everybody, get in the ark, get in the ark, when the door to the ark is already shut. It was open for a week.

You didn't go in. Now the door has been shut by God, and now some cousin of Noah's is running around saying, hey, everybody, come to the ark, come to the ark. Not the time for that advertisement.

That time has passed. But these people want to noise it abroad. Jesus has a different mission now.

What does he want to do now? He wants to take the people who have already responded and have some hearing or have some sight and teach them how to use it, teach them

how to perceive with it. He's not advertising for people to come get sight. He's saying, you that have sight, which are a tiny minority here, not enough to save the nation, but let me take you on.

We can't wait for the slow, it's not like public school now where everything moves at the rate of the slowest student. We're going to take you that understand, and we're going to move on. We're not going to wait for every straggler in the formation.

We're going to take those of you that are still in shape and still able to perform the mission, and we're going to finish this thing, and we're just going to have to leave the stragglers behind. Well, you don't send somebody back and say, come on, stragglers, come on, come on. The stragglers have already demonstrated they can't make it.

You can't waste your time on them anymore. We're going to take the few and finish. That's where Jesus is in His ministry.

And these people are creating a false impression, doing a futile thing. So, Jesus applies saliva to the man's eyes, lays His hands on him. Like the deaf man, that which comes from Jesus' mouth and His personal touch are identified with the healing, even though they are not the means.

There is identification. This is part of the process. Jesus does touch.

Jesus does interact with the man, but that alone doesn't complete the healing process. Jesus is a way to the power of the Father. Now, this is unique in this one.

Jesus asks the man, have you ever heard of any other healing in Jesus' entire recorded career where He said, hey, did it work? Has Jesus ever said, yeah, did it work? Do you see anything? Do you hear anything? Can you walk? How heavy is that mat you're picking up there? Do you think you can carry it? Lazarus, do you think you can come forth? Can you hear me? How are those bandages? This is unique. In the entire annals of healings, when has Jesus ever said, hey, I've worked on you some. Did it help? Jesus knows exactly what's going on here.

All of this is pre-purposed and pre-known in His mind. Jesus says, do you see anything? And He says, I see weird stuff. I see trees walking, but I know they're actually men.

The man can identify men, but he cannot perceive them properly. He can see them, but he can't understand them. He can't get the details and properly interpret what he is seeing.

There is seeing he sees, but he does not perceive. The previous man hearing, he hears, but he doesn't understand. He doesn't understand in the sense of response.

Was this not a prophecy back in Isaiah chapter somewhere in the vicinity of 6? Turn back

to Isaiah. When Isaiah is commissioned to be a prophet, Isaiah chapter 6 verse 9, go and tell this people, keep on hearing, but do not understand. Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.

The heart of this people is dull, their ears are heavy, their eyes are shut. Otherwise, it's not lest, it's otherwise, they would see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts, i.e., obey with their hearts, respond positively with their hearts, and return and be truly healed. This is a physical enablement that doesn't result in an actual healing.

From God's perspective, it does no good to open someone's mouth or their ears or their eyes if they're not going to enter into God's plan and purpose. What's the point? Well, it was great for him. He likes it, but how does that advance God's purpose? It doesn't.

In fact, it runs counter to God's purpose. I don't want people noising it abroad. You're noising it abroad thanks to the gift I just gave you of speech.

You've used it to abuse it. This is a two-stage healing, and this is what Jesus is doing with the disciples. To cut to the chase here, this picture is an illustration of what Jesus is doing with His own disciples.

You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. They have identified Jesus, but go to Jerusalem and be crucified. Lord, far be it from you.

This is the same man. Peter says, You're the Christ. To whom shall we go? You have the words of life.

They've identified Him, but they do not understand His purpose. They're not ready to be apostles because they do not understand yet. They perceive, but Jesus is like a man, like a tree walking.

What are trees good for? Fruit, shade, benefit. Hey, this guy is very beneficial, but wait a minute. He's a tree walking.

He's going somewhere. Where is He going? The disciples themselves, Israel in general, see the Lord Jesus, but they do not properly understand Him. They perceive, some of them even identify Him, but they can't get past that.

So what does Jesus do? Puts His hands on His eyes again and made Him look up. Jesus takes a hold of His face and points it toward heaven. How can you be more graphic? Look, man, you're not thinking in God terms.

Look up. Then His sight is restored and He sees everyone clearly. It doesn't say He saw everything clearly.

He saw everyone clearly. This is what God gives us enablement for, to see ourselves, to

see each other, to see the human race in God's terms, from God's perspective. What is important? So this is my summary.

This healing and the one previous in chapter 7 emphasizes personal intimate contact with the Lord Jesus. These are not distance miracles. Personal intimate contact with the Lord Jesus as a process, the goal of which is new ability for the recipient, those abilities to be used in the service of God, to be used in obedience to God.

It's not just an end in itself. Oh, you're blind? Oh, you poor thing, here, have some sight. Oh, you're deaf? You can't speak? Oh, you poor thing, here, talk, here.

I don't care what you do with it. Nobody should be without these facilities. There's a purpose in it.

Jesus restores these things and then gives instructions along with. There's a reason for it. You're not supposed to just identify the Messiah and say, hey, great, the Messiah, be our king, give us this bread always, feeding of the 5,000.

There's a purpose. You need to understand the larger picture, what is going on, this enablement. You don't hand a bunch of troops weapons and ammunition and chow and transportation and say, hey, every troop ought to have a weapon and bullets and C-rations and Jeeps or in the modern day, MREs and Humvees or whatever they're driving now.

I think even the Humvees have gone away. Here, just have these things and go do what you want. It's given for a purpose.

So the disciples are engaged in this process. Jesus is giving them insight. He explains the parables to them.

They walk with Him. He teaches them to pray. He's giving them knowledge about Himself and about the larger plan of God for a purpose.

And like the blind man, they were brought to Jesus by others. Remember John the Baptist is the one that pointed out Jesus. Andrew brings Peter to Jesus.

Others point out Jesus and they are brought, just like the blind and deaf man, brought by others, introduced by others. And Jesus has called them out from the multitude, from the city. You're going to be different.

You come with Me out here where there's not the crowd, where there's not the multitude. And He has begun the process of opening their eyes to the truth of who He is. This is what He's doing with us.

We have been introduced to the Lord Jesus. The Gospels have been shared with us. We've accepted it.

We've put our faith in Him as our Savior. Now we are in the process of perceiving and trying to understand who Jesus is and what God the Father is up to. Jesus is pointing our eyes heavenward to the Father.

And if we remember this, that this is what's going on in our life, this is why we have the circumstances we have. This is why we face the challenges we face. This is why we have the opportunities that we're given and the blessings that we have, the enablements and the facilities that we have.

Whatever we have, whatever our gift is, whatever our opportunities, whatever the grist for the mill of our life, it's given to us for this purpose. This is what is going on. We are the deaf man.

We are the blind man. God has given us these things, and it comes with instructions. You can't just disregard the instructions and say, wow, this is great.

I'm a believer. I've got a ticket to heaven. Wonderful.

There is a process that has been started that we are supposed to complete. So in the very next episode here, after the blind man, look at what happens. This is our closing observation.

Look at verse 27 of chapter 8. Right after the healing of this blind man, this two-step process, and it is a process and it is very much emphasized as a process, Jesus and his disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi. On the road, he asked his disciples, saying to them, Who do men say that I am? They answered, John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets. People see you, but you're like a tree walking.

He said to them, Who do you say that I am? Peter says, You are the Christ. And just like he told the deaf man, just like he told the blind man, don't tell others what you have perceived. Why? It's not the time.

He doesn't give them a big, long explanation. Why? He says, Look, you need to follow this command. Don't tell anyone.

He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about him. What's he going to tell them in Matthew 28? As you go into the world, preach the gospel to everybody, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son. It's a great commission.

There is a time to proclaim, but they're not yet ready. That information, this is not the time. He strictly warned them that they tell no one.

We need to be sensitive, not until they have seen and heard more about him, until their understanding has kicked in, particularly the gift of the Holy Spirit to enable that understanding. Are they going to be commissioned to go forth and tell? So the Lord is

the best judge of time and place for us, and we want to be looking for that, praying for that, asking for that wisdom. And separation, Jesus removing these individuals from the multitude, from the city, Jesus removing his disciples from their personal context may be necessary to achieve this spiritual growth.

We may be called away from. God may put distance between us and others who do not share that appreciation, that perception. And we need to be willing for Jesus to take us by the hand and draw us away from the crowd.

Not going to be as comfortable, not going to be as much hospitality, not going to be some alienation there, going to be some distance. And as they like to say now, you need to be okay with that. You're not going to get the perception, you're not going to get the understanding as long as you stay in the village, as long as you stay in the crowd.

Jesus draws us away so that we can cultivate and perfect our understanding of him. Well, there's a lot more we could say about this, but that is some of what you can see by laying these miracles side by side. It reminds me of my stereopticon.

It's two black and white pictures from olden times, and you've got this crude little device with a handle and a slide holder. It's like some of you have seen the, what do you call that, stereo vision thing? Yeah, View Master. It's like that, only older.

But you need both views, and when you merge them together, you can see in three dimensions. And these two miracles side by side and looked at together give us this dimension of what Jesus is doing with his disciples, of what God is doing with the nation of Israel, and ultimately what God is doing with us. And it is a fruitful ground for meditation on our need not only for appreciation of what God has done for us, but recognition of its purpose and the instructions that come along with, and that we may be called not only to separate from the crowd, but not necessarily to go back and tell them everything that we've learned or everything that we know or everything that we think is important.

There is a time, and it is God's time. And we'll know, God very clearly communicates through the Lord Jesus Christ to the apostles when it is time for them to evangelize. And this is specifically and manifestly not it.

This is something the Christian world in general has largely forgotten. Well, we'll pick up our study of the miracles next two weeks from this morning, but we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your Word.

Thank you for the incredible amount of information and revelation that we have at our fingertips, available to us not only to perceive but to understand through the ministry of your Holy Spirit. We pray that as we meditate on these things and think about their meaning and application in our individual lives, that your will and your purpose will

become clear to us, that we will have the self-control and the patience and the dedication, the commitment to our lives before you to heed the call and heed our instructions and be sensitive to the opportunities that you bring us and have a knowledge of when it is time to be aggressive and be forthright and be active in the prosecution of our faith. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.