

A Strange Healing and a Good Confession

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 August 2024

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0 : 00] Mark chapter 8. I will begin reading at verse 22. This is God's word to us this morning.

They came to Bethesda, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him.

He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the blind man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, Do you see anything? He looked up and said, I see people.

They look like trees walking around. Once more, Jesus put his hands on the blind man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened. His sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

Jesus sent him home saying, Don't go into the village. Or that could be translated, Don't go and tell anyone in the village.

[1 : 24] Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way, he asked them, Who do people say I am?

They replied, Some say John the Baptist. Others say Elijah. And still others, one of the prophets.

But what about you? He asked. Who do you say I am? Peter answered, You are the Christ.

Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. Let's hear God's word. If you wanted to throw a crowd of Galileans into an argument with themselves, you just need to ask them, Who is Jesus of Nazareth?

Who is Jesus to you? And you'd soon see the crowd divided into many different groups. Well, I think this. I think he's that. One thing and another. And the same would be true of a crowd of people today, I'm sure, if you asked them, Who is Jesus of Nazareth?

[2 : 42] And we would probably find even more than the three answers that were given to Jesus in this passage. You know, one of the most telling things about you is your answer to that question, Who do you say that Jesus is?

What is Jesus to you? We've been following Jesus during the first two of the three years of his public ministry, as recorded in Mark's gospel, and we have both heard and seen evidence of who he is, the Christ, the Son of the living God, the mighty God, and the perfect man in one person, the hope of the hopeless, the Savior, the only Savior of sinners.

But before we get to that, we have this strange healing to consider. And I say strange because nowhere else in the Gospels, anywhere in the New Testament, do we find Jesus healing people in two steps, like we do here.

Rather, the hallmarks of Jesus' healing ministry are that his healings were done immediately and completely. But here, the healing is at first partial and incomplete.

And only after a second touch is it completed. Something else that makes it unique is that only Mark records this miracle of the four Gospels.

- [4 : 17] And we're not explicitly told why he did it in this way. So today, we have two things. We have a strange healing, and then we have a good confession. From Peter.
- So, the strange healing. After the miraculous feeding of the 4,000, Jesus and the disciples got into a boat and went to the other part of the lake.
- They come to Bethsaida, a large village on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. And verse 22 tells us that here's some people brought a blind man, and they begged Jesus to touch him.
- He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. The passage ends with Jesus saying, don't go back into the village.
- Matthew Henry suggests that this might have been a judgment upon those villagers because of their stubborn refusal to repent of their sins and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, even though he had preached there and had done many miracles among them.
- [5 : 31] Earlier in his ministry in Galilee, we're told in Matthew's account, chapter 11, then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed because they did not repent.
- Woe to you, Chorazin. Woe to you, Bethsaida. That's where we're at now. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, those pagan Gentile cities, well, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.
- But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than it will be for you. You who have seen and heard so much from me but still just go on in the same old way that you've been living.
- You don't stop and turn and trust in me to forgive your sins. You see, to whom much is given, much will be required. So it could be that Jesus is withdrawing as a form of judgment from those who don't want him.
- And so he goes outside the village. Whatever the reasons were, we find him outside the village with his 12 disciples and this blind man. And when he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, do you see anything?
- [6 : 58] And he looked up and he said, I see people and they look like trees walking around. Well, that kind of vision will not get you to pass your license vision test, will it?
- And it would have been a sad case for Jesus to have left this man in that condition, seeing people as trees. Yes, he can see, but ever so poorly.
- His vision is cloudy. It's blurred. It's unclear. But Jesus wasn't done, was he? Not at all. Once more, Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes.
- Then his eyes were opened, his sight restored, and he saw everything clearly. Ah, I see. Those legs are not a trunk of a tree.
- They're people. And those arms are not branches of a tree, but they're the arms of your disciples. And Jesus sent him home, saying, don't go into the village.
- [8 : 08] So, the question for us this morning is why the two-step healing when he's never done it that way anywhere else? Well, let me say, first of all, what it wasn't.
- It wasn't because Jesus failed in his attempt to heal. This was no botched miracle that Jesus needed to quick fix. There are no botched attempts by the Son of God.
- All his works are perfect, the Bible says. Unable to be improved. Which means that this two-step process of healing was intentional on his part.
- He did it this way on purpose to teach a lesson to the twelve and to us. I think we have a similar thing in Genesis chapter 2, a familiar text to us all.

They're in the creation of the world. Remember God's assessment. At each point of his creation week, God paused and he saw what he had made, and we have this statement, and God saw that it was good.

[9 : 14] And then at the end of the six days of creation, God looks at all that he has made, and we have this statement. God saw that all that he had made, he saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

And then chapter 2 of Genesis goes back over day 6 of creation when God made man and woman in his image.

And so chapter 2, after God formed the man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life, but before he had made Eve, the Lord God said, as he looks at the situation, it is not good.

It is not good for the man to be alone. Therefore, I will make a helper fitting for him. Now, this was no botched work of God either, was it?

Oops, that's not good. We better fix that situation. No, no, not at all. Rather, it's simply God pausing between his creation of the man and his creation of the woman.

[10 : 26] And it was done intentionally that when he did create Eve and bring her to the man, he might appreciate her, and that he might appreciate the sheer goodness of God in making her such a match for him.

It'd be like you wives making a birthday cake for your husband and you just got all the ingredients mixed together and poured into the pan and hubby comes into the kitchen and takes his finger in for a taste test and he says, ew, it is not good.

Not good. And you'd say, get out of here. Come back in an hour if you want to taste something that's good. And you'd put it in the oven and bake it. Then he would see, it is very good.

You hadn't botched it. He was just interrupting the steps between step one and step two. And sometimes God does that intentionally to teach a lesson.

Husbands, do you appreciate your wife? Spend some time without her is the lesson for Adam. And he sees there's no match for me in these animals that I'm naming.

[11 : 33] And then God brings one to him that perfectly suited him and matched his needs. Well, the two-step healing then is done intentionally to teach a lesson.

Well, what might that lesson be? Well, we're not told explicitly, but I do believe the lesson is clearly implied. And this is where we need to employ one of the most important rules of hermeneutics, which is simply the study of how to interpret the Scriptures.

Just as the three most important things about real estate are what? Location, location, location. So the three most important things about interpreting the Scripture are context, context, context.

That is the location of the text in the midst of the verses around it. What comes before it? What comes after it? Just like your house. What's beside it over here and what's beside it over here?

It affects the value of your property. So, context. Well, what came right before this two-step healing of the blind man?

[12 : 47] Jesus' rebuke of the 12 disciples for not seeing and not understanding who he was. Remember, a multitude of 4,000 men in a remote place without food and Jesus says, I don't want to send them home hungry lest they collapse on the way.

And the 12 say, where in the world, where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them? They're at a complete loss at what to do with no resources matching their great need.

But just months earlier, there had been a crowd of 5,000 men in a remote place. And Jesus says, feed them. And again, they're nonplussed. They're confused.

Where can we ever find that kind of food to feed them? You remember Jesus did feed the 5,000. Miraculously.

And yet here they are months later with the same lesson on repeat, testing their faith again, now with 4,000 in a remote place needing food.

[13 : 53] And we learn that they've not progressed in their knowledge of Christ, have they? They're no further along in the school of learning of Jesus and living upon Him and seeing Him as the one who meets all of our needs.

So that was strike two. And then after He fed the 4,000, they got into a boat and Jesus warned them in the boat as they were leaving, beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and their error and their false teaching.

As soon as He said yeast, they're thinking, Brad again. Brad, oh no. We forgot to bring bread with us. We've only got one loaf for the 13 of us. Again, they're confused.

Oh, what are we going to do now? He's rebuking us. We forgot the bread. As if Jesus, who fed the 5,000 on the five loaves and the 4,000 on the seven loaves could not feed the 13 of them with the one loaf.

That's strike three. And then, notice what Jesus says to them in verse 17 of our chapter 8. This is the context right before this strange miracle now where this blind man sees blurry vision.

[15 : 13] Verse 17, aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them, why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see? Do you still not see or understand?

Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see? And ears but fail to hear. Don't you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the 5,000, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?

Twelve. And when I broke the seven loaves for the 4,000, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up? Seven. And he said to them, do you still not understand?

They'd not only forgotten bread, they'd forgotten who Jesus is and how he had met all their needs in the past and therefore how they could trust him in the present need to meet all their needs.

Do you not see? Do you not understand? Now, what we need to realize is that what the eyes are to the body, the mind is to the soul.

[16 : 19] It's the faculty of understanding. The mind is the faculty of seeing things spiritually. So kids, maybe your teacher, your mom or whoever it is, is teaching you a new concept in math and they put it up on the board and you're just not getting it.

And the teacher says, don't you see? No. She's not asking, can't you see that far from your seat to the board? She understands that you have eyeballs and can see.

What she's asking is, don't you understand? Seeing is understanding, you see. And that's what Jesus is here asking his men.

And that's what he's illustrating the condition of his men by this two-step healing of the blind man. He's illustrating their own spiritual condition, their failure to see and understand who Jesus is and to then live in the light of who he is, especially in their trials that expose their own inadequacy and lack of resources to deal with their problems.

Don't you see? Don't you understand who I am? You're like this man after step one of the healing. Oh yes, you see more of who I am than this blind crowd out here, this spiritual blind world.

[17 : 44] They see nothing in me. But you understand more than them. But your sight of me is still so incomplete and blurry. You're seeing people walking around like trees though you've been with me for over two years and you've heard my preaching and you've seen my miracles and you still don't get it.

You still don't see clearly. You have so much further to go in knowing who I am and living upon who I am. You see how the twelve then are just like this partially healed blind man.

That's the picture of them that our Lord is giving to them. And I believe it's meant especially for them and that's perhaps one reason he took them out of the village. This is for you, not for the crowd.

But brothers and sisters, we too give the Lord many reasons to say the same to us. Do you not see? Do you not understand who I am?

Many of us have walked with him for more than two years. He's rebuking the disciples after two years for not knowing him better. Some of us have walked with him for decades.

[19 : 01] And we've still given the Lord reason to say, John, don't you see? Didn't I do something in your life months ago?

Maybe weeks ago? Even days ago? To show you my fullness for all your emptiness? And yet here you are as if you hadn't learned anything.

Don't you see? We're like that half-healed blind man. We see so little of who our Savior is and what he could be for us in every situation of every day of our lives.

He's more than enough for anything we'll ever face. Now, ever since the fall of man in Genesis chapter 3, we all come into the world spiritually blind.

Unable to understand. Remember, seeing is understanding. Unable to understand the gospel, the things of the Spirit of God. It's foolishness to us as we saw in 1 Corinthians 2.14.

[20 : 12] And 2 Corinthians 4.4 says that the God of this age has blinded the minds. There it is again. He's blinded the minds of unbelievers.

All of them. So that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God. They can't see glory in Jesus Christ.

The problem is not a lack of glory in Christ. He's full of glory. He's awesome in glory. Working wonders. The whole earth is full of His glory. He's the radiance of God's glory.

He's the exact representation of His being. There's nothing displeasing about Him. Not a blemish. He shines with beauty. Fairest Lord Jesus. Altogether lovely.

And yet, we were so blind spiritually that as we sat there in church and this beautiful Jesus was set before us in the preaching of His Word and His beautiful gospel was held before us.

[21 : 15] We saw nothing. We were blind and could not see. There was nothing in Him that would attract us to Him. Nothing that we should desire Him.

Nothing that I should want Him to be my Savior, my Lord, my friend, my King. Nothing that we would seek Him and turn away from our way and to follow Him and to be His disciple.

We were in love with ourselves and our sin and we saw Him as the enemy. You talk about blind. We saw the greatest friend of sinners as the enemy who was out to ruin our fun.

To ruin the good life, the spoiler of good things. Oh, dear brothers and sisters, how spiritually blind we were. Darkened in our understanding, separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that was in us due to the hardening of our hearts.

Ephesians 4.18 Now that's simply the truth of the Scripture and we confess it every time we sing amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

[22 : 28] I once was lost, but now I'm found. I was blind. I was blind.

But now I see. But now God in sovereign mercy has opened up my spiritual eyes and given me sight for a look at the Savior and oh, what I see in Him now.

For God who said in the beginning, let light shine out of darkness, made His light to shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

And where do we see the glory of God now? In the face of Jesus Christ. We now see glory in Jesus where we saw none at all before in our blindness.

We now see grace and mercy like we find nowhere else. We now see His loving kindness and it draws us after Him.

[23 : 30] It woos us and wins us to faith in the Lord Jesus to say I'm done. I'm done with my way and my sin. I want Him. And now we can't get to Him soon enough, fast enough, and nothing will satisfy but Him.

You see, our eyes have been opened and we now see the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ. So once again, Jesus is showing here in Mark's Gospel that He's the one who gives sight to blinded eyes.

He's the one who came to us in our blindness and opened our eyes that we might see Him and want Him and receive Him as Lord and Savior.

But by this two-step healing of the blind man, Jesus is also showing us the progressive steps and the understanding of His disciples. They don't go from blind to 20-20 vision in one step.

You don't go from spiritually blind and then you're born again and you now see everything with 20-20 vision. No, it doesn't happen that way at conversion.

[24 : 49] There's still very much that these 12 disciples do not see clearly about the Lord Jesus and the truth as it is in Jesus.

Yes, they see, but there's so much that is still blurry and unclear. So it is true of you and I when we're converted. Yes, conversion brings us out of darkness and into light.

We now see. Do you see anything Jesus would say to us? Yes. Yeah, I see things I didn't see before. But people look like trees to me. That's the way it is with you and me.

We're still seeing trees where we ought to see people. We're not seeing everything about Jesus, our Savior, and about the truth as it is in Jesus as we ought to.

And so it goes on by degrees. Proverbs 4 and verse 18 says, The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining brighter and brighter until the full light of day.

[25 : 54] Maybe some of you were up this morning at dawn. It's light, isn't it? But it's not noon bright. But you go brighter and brighter till you get to noonday bright.

And that's the way it is with the Christian. We see. We see things in Jesus we never saw before. Enough that we would cast all of our hope for heaven on Him and none on ourselves.

And we enjoy Him. We're delighted with Him. But there's still things about Him we see so unclear, clearly and blurry. It's a gradual progression.

And so this two-step healing describes the remaining spiritual blindness of the disciples. And we saw it going before, didn't we?

The context before this healing, we saw that blindness in operation. They don't see who Jesus is enough to trust Him with their need for bread.

[26 : 53] And now we'll see this same blindness coming afterwards. This same theme of sight. And that's what comes after this healing is a good confession.

And this is the last part of these two points. This morning, verse 27 and 28, Jesus and His disciples then went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. And on the way, He asked them, who do people say I am?

And they replied, some say John the Baptist. Others, Elijah. Still others, one of the prophets. Now here we are encountering the spiritual blindness of the world.

These are those that are left to their own reasoning, their own blind minds that are darkened. These are just the popular opinions of man without the spiritual illumination of the Holy Spirit of God.

And boy, do they miss it as to the identity of who Jesus is. Who is Jesus of Nazareth? There was no formal pull taken, but these disciples had heard the people talking and they give three of the most common answers that they've heard men give.

[28 : 02] John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets. That's a whole group of men. And these were not all the answers given.

And we remember from our studies of Mark that the Pharisees and the spiritual leaders of Israel believed he was a demon-possessed man, a blasphemer, doing his miracles by the power of Beelzebub.

But they give these three favorable suggestions as to who Jesus is. Now all of the three listed were godly and good men.

John the Baptist, none like him, Jesus said, born of women. Elijah and all the other prophets, they were good men. They were godly men, supposed to have come back to life.

But all of them had a ministry of pointing to the coming Messiah. None of them were. the Messiah, the Christ.

[29 : 07] And though these mentioned were all great men, they were yet, at the end of the day, mere men, at best. None of them were the God-man.

Oh, but Jesus Christ is so much more than man. Yes, he's man, as much man as we are mankind. But he is more. And we needed so much more if he was to save us.

So Jesus, turns to the twelve again and says, but what about you? Who do you say that I am? This is no speculative question for a few theologians in seminary to discuss and argue about like they were in Jesus' day.

No, it's a question for every one of us to answer. Who do you say that I am? And Peter, probably speaking as the spokesman as he often did for the twelve, says, you are the Christ.

That is the Messiah, the anointed, prophet, priest, and king, the mediator, the Savior. His fuller answer is given in Matthew's account.

[30 : 19] You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And in Matthew's account, Jesus responds to his good confession by saying, blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by men, but by my Father in heaven.

Do you see again what Jesus is teaching us? If we really know Jesus, if we really know his identity and have embraced him for who he is, that is not taught by man.

You didn't come to that on your own. We don't get there from where we start as fallen sinners with a fallen, darkened man. No, it comes down from heaven. Special revelation.

God who said in the beginning, let there be light, said let there be light in that soul that they might see my glory in the person of Jesus Christ. Peter, that's what happened.

God said, let there be light in your heart and you're now able to say, this one that we have been in the boat with, that we have been on the waters of the Sea of Galilee, that we've walked the towns of Galilee, he is none other than the promised Messiah, the Son of the living God.

[31 : 31] Taught by man. No, taught by God. You see, when God opens your eyes to this reality, it's more than just a right answer on the quiz.

Oh, he's the Messiah. No, when he opens your eyes to this, he's the one you then fall on your face and worship and adore and trust and obey and serve the rest of your life.

God had opened their eyes to who Jesus is. He had taught them so that they can seize this long promised Messiah, the Savior of the world. And what a difference that is from the opinions of men who, left to their own understanding, are spiritually blind and cannot see him as anything more than a mere human being.

And to this day, there are many who cannot bring themselves to believe that Jesus is anything more than a man. They cannot believe that he is God, the eternal God, the Son.

Oh, but they would pay him some homage. They would pay him some compliment. Though he's merely human, he's a good human. He's a good teacher.

[32 : 48] In his book, Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis says that's an impossible position. And I quote him, a man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher.

He would either be a lunatic on the level with a man who says he's a poached egg or else he would be the devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was and is the Son of God or else he's a madman or something worse.

You cannot shut him up for, you can shut him up for a fool. You can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God.

But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that option open to us. He did not intend us to.

A liar, a lunatic, or the Lord of glory. You see, if Jesus is not God, he cannot save us. We have a God-sized problem.

[33 : 56] Every one of us, we are sinners who have sinned against an infinite God. No man can save us from the offense we've made to an infinite God. It will take infinite God to save us from that offense that we've made to an infinite God.

And so the Lord Jesus gives spiritual sight to Peter and his disciples to know who he is, the Messiah, the Son of the living God, the promised Savior. And yet, and yet, though they see clearly about his identity as the Messiah, they do not see clearly yet about his mission as Messiah.

And we're going to see that next week when Peter draws the Lord aside and rebukes him forever talking about dying on a cross and being crucified. What is Peter showing us?

And he's just speaking for the twelve. What is it teaching us about these men? Oh, they see, but not clearly yet about everything. They don't understand the mission of Messiah, why he's come from heaven to earth.

It's not to raise a band of soldiers and to throw off the yoke of Rome like everyone thought Messiah was going to be. They had swallowed that Kool-Aid as well.

[35 : 15] They thought he's coming to save us from the Romans. He can't die. He's got to be the victorious captain. They're seeing trees.

They're seeing blurry about his mission, though they do see clearly about his identity. that he will save his people not by military or political force, but by suffering and dying and rising again.

The most unthinkable way to save his people. Well, let me just leave you with a few quick applications.

This two-step healing of the spirit of the blind man is a picture of our remaining spiritual blindness as disciples of Christ. And first of all, it should humble us.

It should humble us and then make us patient toward others who do not see clearly, especially young believers. You know, I'm embarrassed to think of the things that I once believed that this book taught.

[36 : 26] It didn't teach the things that I was thinking. I saw men as trees. Now I see some of those things more clearly.

But there's still much in this life that we all still see blurry. It's easy to see a statement in Scripture and to make more of it than what is warranted.

To push it and to make it say too much to an extreme. Not balanced with other biblical texts. We fail to see the context of the whole Bible.

Yes, it says this here, but it also says this here. And we've got to keep it in balance and it takes time for us as disciples of Jesus to learn who he is and the truth that is in Jesus.

To keep his teaching in proportion to its God-given weight. Not treating lesser things as greater things. And so on and so forth. It's a warning to young believers.

[37 : 26] Draw near to experienced believers who have walked with God. Who know the Savior. Who have drunk deeply of his word and learned from them.

And remember, as A.W. Pink said, that the greater part of wisdom is the consciousness of ignorance. That when we come to this Bible, we are never so far along in the Christian life, but that we still need to pray with David, open my eyes, Lord, that I might see wonderful things in your law.

I want to see the glory of God revealed in Jesus from Genesis to Revelation. And I know that there's still a residual blindness and prejudice and preconceived ideas that maybe I was taught from boyhood and what the popular opinions are and all the rest.

Open my eyes, Lord. Teach me, Lord. Put your truth in my inward parts. So it's not just head knowledge so that I really know you and live in the light of it.

knowledge puffs up but love builds up and the man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. Well, that's the first lesson.

[38 : 48] Realize none of us sees perfect 2020 vision yet. Be patient with each other, especially young believers. Secondly, disciples of Jesus should ever be increasing in their knowledge of Christ.

You know, Jesus rebuked his disciples for not seeing. You mean you don't understand? You've been with me two years? In the upper room, it's been three years.

John chapter 14 and verse 9, he says to Philip there, Do you not know me, Philip, even after I've been among you such a long time? Three years? As I said before, many of us have been walking with him with Bibles in our laps longer than three years.

Jesus expected them to be advancing in their knowledge of him and of their living upon their knowledge of him.

He expects growth in his followers who are installed in the school of Christ, who have put their neck in the yoke with Jesus, to learn from him. He expects us to be growing.

[39 : 54] Peter says, Make every effort to add to your faith goodness and to goodness knowledge. And he ends that second letter with the best way to not be carried away by the errors of false teachers and godless men by saying, Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The best way to be kept from falling aside to false teaching is to grow in grace and in your knowledge of Jesus Christ. The ever adding to your stock of knowledge.

So I ask you, Are you growing in your knowledge of Jesus? Not just head knowledge, yes, we must have that, but your knowledge of him that you're living on. That might be the best barometer of what you really believe.

What you really live on when the trials come and the troubles and temptations of the world press on. That's what you really believe. Oh yes, you have your confession of faith on the shelf, but the practical reality of what you believe is what you're living on.

Are you living on Christ in ways that you didn't a year ago? Do you know Jesus better today than you did a year ago? What are you doing to get to know him better?

[41 : 13] What are you doing to add to your faith knowledge? Are you reading your Bible every day to find some time to take a verse, a section, a chapter, something from God's word about his son to grow in grace?

You come into Sunday school, you come in Sunday night, come in Wednesday night, these are wonderful opportunities for us to be increasing in our knowledge of Christ, you see.

And that's ever so important as we see it in this picture of the disciples. You know, it's interesting, the apostle Paul, who was converted on that road to Damascus when he met Jesus face to face, he was able to write 30 years later.

He's been a Christian for 30 years. He's been a missionary like none other. And he writes to the Philippians and he says in chapter 3 and verse 10, I want to know Christ. We're tempted to say, well, Paul, you already know him.

Remember, you met, there is so much more to know about my Savior. Do you know, I don't believe we'll ever know fully in all of eternity we'll ever be seeing new glories in our Savior.

[42 : 35] and yet we can easily think, I know Christ. Paul said, no, I don't mean just a few facts.

I mean, I want to know the power of his resurrection in my life. I want to know the fellowship with him in my sufferings. I want to be made conformable to his death that just as he died to sin, I want to learn to die to sin.

I want to know Christ that way in ways that affect everything that I do. So at the end of his life, he's in a dungeon in Rome and he's writing to his friend and son in the faith, Timothy, and he says, bring the cloak with you when you come to me.

Hurry, get to me. Winter's coming. And he says, and bring my scrolls and especially the parchments, which were thought to be fragments of Scripture. Here he is just days away from meeting his Savior and his heart still saying, I want to know Christ.

Give me the word. I want to know him. The English Puritan Richard Perkins preached a sermon on assurance of salvation and he gave some marks of what are the marks of a true Christian, somebody that's really born again, really knows Jesus savingly.

[43 : 51] And he ended with this one. Everyone who belongs to Christ has this mark. They want to know Christ better. If you don't want to know Christ better, don't count yourself a Christian because to know Christ is to love Christ.

To know Christ is to be hungry and thirsty, to know him better. And even if it's just the smallest amount, do you find that in your heart? Is that what's got you here today?

I want to know Jesus better. Is that what drives you to your Bible during the week? Is that what drives you to your knees saying, oh, reveal yourself to me. Teach me that I might know Christ and walk with Christ and live for Christ.

[illegible]