

Introduction

I have had the privilege of being around a lot of great teachers. My father did not set out to be a teacher, but he became a great teacher. He taught people how to be good supervisors. He taught people HOW to conduct meetings, HOW to plan various drilling operations, and HOW to communicate. Notice all the “how’s.” That is one of the things teachers do.

Karen’s grandfather was the same way. In college Karen would occasionally take me over to her grandparent’s house. They lived in Fort Worth, about twenty minutes from the TCU campus. Her grandfather had been a pilot, flying for the Air Force during World War II, and then for American Airlines. He was also an avid bird hunter, and a member of a hunting club, where they would practice with clay pigeons. He was always teaching us something. He taught Karen HOW to drive on his farm in Colorado. One day he took me aside and showed me HOW to load your own shotgun shells. He was always teaching us HOW to do things. He had the heart of a teacher.

Jesus was the same way. During His earthly ministry He was always teaching and training His disciples, the future leaders of the church. He showed them HOW to do things. They referred to Him as Rabboni, which means, teacher. One example is in John 20:16, which is after Jesus had been crucified. Mary went to the tomb on Sunday morning to anoint Jesus with spices. After Jesus revealed Himself to her by the way He called her name, “Mary!” she turned and said to Him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!”, which means teacher. Mary and the other disciples called Jesus, Teacher, because He was teaching and role-modeling how ministry should be conducted.

(John 20:16) “Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher).”

In our text, Jesus and His disciples had just crossed over the Sea of Galilee and come to Bethsaida, where some of the disciples were from. They brought a blind man to Jesus for Him to heal. Jesus did not immediately heal him. He personally led him by the hand outside the city, spit in his eyes and prayed for the blind man. The man’s sight improved, but it was not 100%. Then, Jesus asked Him, “Do you see anything?” The man replied that he could see men like trees walking around. Jesus laid His hands on him again and the man began to see clearly. Jesus told him to go home and not to enter the village. It is a wonderful story about the healing of the blind man, and there are many ministry principles that we can learn from it. How did Jesus minister to the blind man? He ministered with a personal touch, persistent determination, and parting instructions.

How Did Jesus Minister to the Blind Man?

1. Personal Touch
2. Persistent Determination
3. Parting Instructions

(Mark 8:22-26) “And they came to Bethsaida. And they brought a blind man to Jesus and implored Him to touch him. {23} Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?" {24} And he looked up and said, "I see men, for I see *them* like trees, walking around." {25} Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and *began* to see everything clearly. {26} And He sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village.”

1. Personal Touch

The disciples came to Bethsaida. They had crossed over the Sea of Galilee from Dalmanutha (or Magadan) to Bethsaida. While in Dalmanutha the Pharisees had come to him, arguing and demanding a sign. Jesus told them that no sign would be given to them. Jesus had been performing lots of signs and they had personally observed many of them. They were simply trying to tempt Jesus. Then, Jesus and His disciples left and they got into their boat to cross over to Bethsaida. In the boat Jesus warned them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. The disciples were in a different room and they were discussing the fact that they had not brought but one loaf of bread. Jesus asked them a series of questions, and He wanted them to understand that He is the Bread of Life and that He could provide for them. He did it for the five thousand, and He did it for the four thousand. But, the disciples had not fully grasped that lesson. Jesus and the disciples have now crossed over and are in Bethsaida.

(Mark 8:22) “And they came to Bethsaida. And they brought a blind man to Jesus and implored Him to touch him.”

In John 1:44 we find that Philip, Andrew, and Peter were from Bethsaida, so this is home to a number of Jesus’ disciples. Peter and Andrew were fishermen, and this is a fishing village. The name, Bethsaida, means house of hunting, but it has been called the town of fishing. It is important to note that Peter, Andrew, and Philip were from Bethsaida, because they personally brought the blind man to Jesus, and implored Him to touch him. This man had been blind for some time and this is a small fishing village, so the disciples knew this man. The disciples are personally involved. This is someone they know, and they have brought him to Jesus.

(John 1:44-45) “Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter.
{45} Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

In our lives, who are the people that need healing? Are we bringing them before Jesus to be healed? Who are the people in our lives that do not know Christ? Are we bringing them before Jesus? As priests, we are all called to intercede. We bring a broken people before the Lord and a holy God to a broken people. We need to be interceding and bringing them before Jesus. We also need to do what the disciples have done and physically brought the blind man to Jesus.

They implored Jesus to touch him. The laying on of hands was a well-known practice to all of them. They had seen Jesus lay hands on lepers, deaf men, mute men, paralytics, and lots of other people. There is an impartation of power in the laying on of hands. The laying on of hands is used to confirm and to identify, but in this setting, the hands were to be used to impart healing. After they had brought him to Jesus, He did not immediately lay hands on him. But He did take the man by the hand and took him out of the village. There were lots of times that Jesus had the disciples pray for people. When they were baptizing people at the Jordan River, Jesus did not baptize any of them; He had His disciples baptize all the people. But, in this case, Jesus personally took the man by the hand and led him. Then, Jesus laid hands on him.

(Mark 8:23) “Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, “Do you see anything?”

Jesus brought him out of the village. Our text does not say why Jesus took him out, but there are several explanations. First, this is not Jesus' first trip to Bethsaida. We saw that He went there in Mark 6. In Luke 9:10-11, we find more details about that account and Jesus had spoken to them about the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing.

(Luke 9:10-11) "When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. Taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called Bethsaida. { 11 } But the crowds were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them, He *began* speaking to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing."

But, we see in Matthew 11:21 that Jesus said, "Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." Even though Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom and did attesting signs and miracles, they did not repent and follow Jesus. It could be that Jesus had already performed many signs and they had rejected Him. Therefore, Jesus was not going to do any more public miracles there.

(Matt 11:21) "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."

A second reason could be that He did not want to do this in the presence of mockers. When Jesus was with Jairus' daughter, He put out everyone but the parents and His disciples. The crowd of people were laughing at Jesus, which was not a very conducive environment.

(Mark 5:40) "They *began* laughing at Him. But putting them all out, He took along the child's father and mother and His own companions, and entered *the room* where the child was."

A third reason may have been that Jesus had just said to the Pharisees in Dalmanutha that there would be no more signs given to you. There could have been some Pharisees there in Bethsaida, and Jesus had just told the Pharisees that no sign would be given to them. So, Jesus may have been keeping that promise to them that no sign would be given. He was going to perform this healing away from the crowds and the religious leaders.

(Mark 8:12) "Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, "Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation."

There were times that Jesus took people aside to minister to them. Sometimes, He ministered to the multitudes, and sometimes He ministered in a more private setting. When we minister to people, there are a variety of settings. If something is personal, like marriage counseling or a specific sin issue, a private setting is better. Most people don't want their dirty laundry hanging out for the world to see, so they would prefer one-on-one situations. In prophetic ministry, there are corporate words, and there are also private words. We need to use wisdom in all of our ministry situations.

Jesus was sensitive and careful about how He ministered to the blind man. He took him by the hand and led him. The blind man could not follow without someone guiding him, particularly outside of his normal routes in a city. This shows how considerate, thoughtful, mindful, and

tender that Jesus is. These are things that personal ministry allows you to do. In larger settings it is easy for people to become a number. Jesus fed the five thousand or the four thousand. This blind man is not a number; he is a friend of the disciples and this is personal ministry at its best.

We see a ministry model here. The disciples reached out to the people that they knew and brought them to Jesus. In this case it was a blind man. They personally got involved. Jesus was very personally involved, taking the blind man by the hand. We have to be willing to get involved in peoples' lives. We must be willing to reach out, take them by the hand, and bring them to Jesus. There are lots of lost people who are spiritually blind. The only way that they are going to find Jesus is if we take them by the hand and lead them. We have to get personally involved. The vast amount of people that are saved do not get saved at Billy Graham crusades. I greatly appreciate Billy Graham and the ministry he had, but that is not how most people get saved. Statistically, nearly 90% get saved through people like you and I getting personally involved with the people around us and bringing them to Jesus.

2. Persistent Determination

Jesus ministered with persistent determination. He did not stop ministering to the blind man. After spitting and laying His hands on the blind man, Jesus asked him, "Do you see anything?" The man looked up and said, "I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around." Something happened, as the blind man looked up. Blind people don't look; they may turn their heads but they don't look. Then the blind man said, "I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around." The blind man could see, but not clearly yet. Then, Jesus laid His hands on his eyes, and the man looked intently and was restored. He began to see everything clearly. So, more healing occurred the second time that Jesus laid hands on him and prayed. The man was now completely healed. Jesus was determined and He persisted until the man was healed. He did not stop until the man was completely healed. I think this whole event was for our behalf. Jesus had the power and authority to heal the man instantly. Instead, Jesus healed the man in stages. After the first ministry effort, Jesus asked if he could see anything at all. Jesus knew that the man did not see clearly yet.

(Mark 8:24-25) "And he looked up and said, "I see men, for I see *them* like trees, walking around." {25} Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and *began* to see everything clearly."

Before we pray for people, we need to inquire of the Lord what He wants to do in the situation. We should avoid making assumptions, and we should listen to what the Holy Spirit tells us to do. Jesus commanded us to go heal the sick. There is a sickness unto death, but that is an exception to the rule. I believe that God wants us to heal the sick. I believe He wants us to be full and empowered by the Holy Spirit. I believe He wants us full of faith. But, we should inquire of the Lord. Jesus said He only did what He saw the Father doing. Ask the Father what He wants to do. We are His servants, His representatives, who are to do His bidding here on earth.

(John 5:19-20) "Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. {20} For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and *the Father* will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel."

There are times that we pray for people and nothing seems to have happened. We should not assume that it is not God's will. We should not assume that God does not want to heal the person. What did the Holy Spirit tell you or lead you to do? We need to persist and ask them if there is any change. We may need to lay hands on them and pray again. Then, we need to ask them if there is any change. The example that Jesus gave us is that we need to be persistent.

In 1 Kings 18:41-45, Elijah told Ahab that it was going to rain. He crouched down and began to pray. He sent his servant to look and there were no clouds. He kept praying. His servant said there were some tiny clouds. Elijah kept praying until it poured. He persisted. We need to persist until we see the rain coming. We need to persist until people see clearly.

We don't want to make the situation awkward for anyone, so at some point, we should pray God's blessings on the person, and encourage them. My exhortation to be persistent is to encourage us not to quite too soon, but to be more persistent. I confess that I have too often given up too soon. It is great when God heals instantly, and I have experienced that, but sometimes it will take two or more times before the person is restored. This is a great example for us to learn from.

I want to talk about Jesus' methodology for just a minute. Jesus spit on the man's eyes. A couple of scholars said one possibility is that his eyes had gummed together and the spittle was used to clean the eyelids so that they could open. Some scholars believe that the man's eyes had been blind a long time and perhaps they were dry. The spittle would moisten the eyes. We just don't know why Jesus spit on the eyes of the blind man. If you recall the healing of the deaf and mute man, Jesus spit on his tongue (Mark 7:33). There are those that think that the mute man's tongue was dry and needed the moisture. We don't know why Jesus spit on these two men. If you have the power to heal a man's eyes, open ears, and loose a tongue, you certainly have the power to heal the tear ducts that moisten the eyes.

I see something beautiful in this story today. There is a blend of the natural and the supernatural. In the natural realm, the disciples brought the blind man to Jesus. Jesus took him by the hand and led him. Jesus spit on his eyes, and this may have been used to clean the gummed up eyes. There is nothing supernatural about those actions. In the supernatural realm, Jesus healed the man's eyes. Only God can open the eyes of the blind. There is nothing natural about that. We have to do what we can in the natural and trust God to do the things that only He can do.

As I reflected on this, I thought of Smith Wigglesworth. He was an apostle and he once punched a man in the stomach, and the man was healed of his sickness. My caution is that you had better be 100% sure that the Lord has told you to spit or punch someone before you do that. Just because Jesus spit in a man's eyes or on a man's tongue does not mean that every time someone is blind or mute we should spit on them. We need to hear clearly from the Lord and be Spirit-led in our ministry. When God told me to heal Lee Griego, He told me exactly how He wanted me to pray, and I did exactly that.

(Mark 8:23) "Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?"

3. Parting Instructions

Jesus was not done ministering to the man. After the man confessed that he could see everything clearly, Jesus gave him some parting instructions. He sent the man to his home, and told him not to even enter the village. The man's testimony would start at his home, not in the village. Our ministry should begin at home. It will spread to those outside, but it starts at home. I was once told by the Senior Pastor and also by one of the deacons that I needed to get a vasectomy. They both said that I had too many children. The Senior Pastor said that my large family was preventing me from ministering in the church. He was dead wrong. Our most important ministry is to our own family. Our ministry to our family comes before our ministry to other people.

(Mark 8:26) "And He sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."

In Paul's instructions to Timothy and to Titus about the qualifications of elders, he said that if a man cannot manage his own household, how will he manage the household of God. We have to first be able to manage our own homes. Our homes are a proving ground for our ability to manage. It is not just a proving ground for management; it is the best place to grow and mature in our ability to lead, teach, and manage. Ministry is developed and confirmed through faithfully taking care of your responsibilities at home.

(1 Tim 3:2-5) "An overseer...{4} *He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity {5} (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)."

Karen and I took our family camping in Cherokee, North Carolina one summer. We had a nice Coleman Sequoia pop-up camper that slept seven. So, we used a combination of a tent and our camper. We thoroughly enjoyed our family camping trips. I did a lot of the cooking on those trips to give Karen a break. We fished, hiked, and always managed to take in an amusement park like Six Flags Over Georgia, or Carowinds. While we were in Cherokee, there was a robin's nest in the tree over our campsite. It was towards the end of May and the mother and father robin were busy from sun-up to sun-down feeding their baby robins. When the mother flew to the nest with food in its mouth, the father bird would leave and search for food. When the father robin came back with food, the mother would leave. All day long those robins worked hard to feed their children. While I was watching them one morning, the Holy Spirit spoke something that changed my life. He said that if I will work hard at feeding my children like these robins, he will develop and mature my teaching gift. From that point on, I was very diligent with family devotions and teaching times. I studied and prepared every day so that I could spiritually feed my nest full of hungry children. I went through the entire New Testament with my children. I went through Proverbs and many other Old Testament books. I made outlines of passages, and wrote them in the margins of my Bible. And God did exactly what He said He would do. He grew and developed my teaching gift. Later on, when I was doing prison ministry, all those outlines in my Bible really helped me preach in season and out of season.

God will use our ministry to our wife and children to help us grow and mature as leaders. We should not try to bypass our ministry to our family in order to minister to the church body. There will be a time for that. Our priority needs to be with our family. This man had a powerful testimony to give to his family.

In addition to ministering to his family, this formerly blind man was going to go through a process of learning what he is seeing. This is a new world in living color that he has not seen. He is going to put faces to names and voices. The best place for this man to start this new beginning is at home with his family.

Conclusion and Applications

Before I wrap things up, I want to turn to Isaiah 42. The prophet wrote that the God who created the heavens and stretched them out, and who gives breath to the people on it would hold us by the hand and watch over us. He would appoint the Messiah as a covenant to the people and a light to the nations to open blind eyes, and to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those who dwell in darkness from the prison. The blind man today was in prison. He was walking around in darkness. Jesus took him by the hand and led him out of the village and then opened his blind eyes. Our passage today is a partial fulfilment of this prophecy in Isaiah 42. I believe God still wants us to lead people by the hand, set the prisoners free, and heal the blind.

(Is 42:5-7) “Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it And spirit to those who walk in it, {6} I am the LORD, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, {7} To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.”

Notice why Jesus did this. He said, “I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images.” When Jesus opened blind eyes, it was a proof that He is the Lord God. It was to bring glory to the Father. When we minister to others, it is to bring glory to God. It is to be a sign and wonder that reveals that Jesus is God. Healings are not to bring us glory; God is not going to give His glory to another. Our motive in ministry is be out of compassion and it is for the glory of God.

(Is 42:8) “I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images.”

In John 9, we have the story of the man who was born blind. After he testified that Jesus had healed him, he was put out of the temple. Jesus found him and told him that He is the Messiah. The formerly blind man said, “I believe,” and he worshiped Jesus. The miraculous healing of the blind man revealed to this man that Jesus was the Messiah.

The Pharisees and religious leaders were upset that this man was healed and was testifying about Jesus. Then, Jesus said, “For judgment I came into the world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” These Pharisees were blind. They saw and heard Jesus say all of this, and they asked, “We are not blind too, are we?” Jesus answered, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.” The Pharisees could physically see, but they were spiritually blind about their sinful condition. Jesus could heal the physically blind, and He can also heal us of our spiritual condition of blindness. He came into the world to save our sins and spiritual blindness.

(John 9:39-41) "And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." {40} Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" {41} Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

This morning, what has God been speaking to you about? Has He been encouraging you to reach out to your friends and neighbors that are walking in darkness? Is He asking you to get personally involved? Is He asking you to intercede for them and bring them before Jesus in prayer? I believe the disciples had this man in mind when they got to Bethsaida. They may have even gone there for the sake of this man. Are your friends and neighbors on your heart and mind? Is the Lord asking you to bring them to Jesus, who can open their eyes, physically or spiritually?

Is the Lord encouraging you to be persistent in your prayers for healing, salvation, and other things? I find this passage to be very encouraging to me about being persistently determined, not easily deterred from seeking healing or salvation for others.

If there is anyone here today or listening today that has not had a personal touch from the Lord, I want to encourage you this morning. You may believe in Jesus Christ, and may be living a good life, but you have never entered into a personal relationship with Christ. Jesus told Nicodemus that unless one is born again, he cannot SEE the kingdom of God. Jesus wants to open your eyes this morning so that you can see the kingdom of God. Jesus went on to tell Nicodemus that we have to be born again spiritually. Paul tells us in Romans 10:9-10 that we must believe that Jesus came, died for our sins, and was raised again, and we must confess Him as Lord. This morning, do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Do you believe that He came and died for our sins? Do you believe that the Father raised Him from the dead? If so, I want to encourage you to confess Jesus as your Lord. That is how we are born again and see the kingdom of God. We have to believe and receive. It is not by works. We will never be able to enter heaven by our good works. It is by believing that Jesus paid the price for our sins, and putting our trust in Him. If this is your desire, I invite you to pray with me.

"Jesus, I do believe that You came and died for my sins. I believe that You were raised from the dead. I want to see the kingdom of God and to be born again. I ask you to come into my life, and this morning I confess You as my Lord. I pray this in Jesus' name. Thank You Jesus for coming into my life and I thank You for my salvation. Amen.

Introduction (John 20:16, Mark 8:22-26)

1. Personal Touch (Mark 8:22-23, John 1:44-45, Mark 5:40, Luke 9:10-11, Matt 11:21, Mark 8:12)

2. Persistent Determination (Mark 8:23-25, John 5:19-20, 1 King 18:41-45, Mk 7:33)

3. Parting Instructions (Mark 8:26, 1 Tim 3:2-5)

Conclusion and Applications (Is 42:5-8, John 9:39-41, Rom 10:9-10)