

Making a decision

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Preacher: Mark Fossey

[0 : 00] Now this morning's reading is taken from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 8, verses 11 to 30, and you'll find that on page 1017. In Mark, chapter 8, starting at verse 11.

The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, Why does this generation seek a sign?

Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation. And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side. Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat.

And he cautioned them, saying, Watch out, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread.

And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand?

[1 : 07] Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?

They said to him, Twelve. And the seven for the four thousand, How many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up? And they said to him, Seven.

And he said to them, Do you not yet understand? And they came to Bethsaida, and some people brought to him a blind man, and begged him to touch him.

And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the village. And when he had spat on his eyes, and laid his hands on him, he asked him, Do you see anything?

And he looked up, and he said, I see men, but they look like trees walking. Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again, and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

[2 : 15] And he sent him to his home, saying, Do not even enter the village. And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way, he asked his disciples, Who do people say that I am?

And they told him, John the Baptist, and others say Elijah, and others one of the prophets. And he asked them, But who do you say that I am?

Peter answered him, You are the Christ. And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him. Now this has been a fantastic sermon for me to be thinking about this week.

I've really enjoyed it. Let me ask you a question as I start. How well would you say you know Jesus? If you could put yourself in beginner or intermediate or advanced in your knowledge of who Jesus is, where would you put yourself?

Just in your own head, where would you put yourself? As for me, I've been a Christian a good 17 years. I reckon in that time, I've heard thousands of talks. I've preached hundreds.

- [3 : 23] I've worked in churches for years. I've been to theological college and got a theology degree. And so I think I probably arrogantly would have said, I've got an advanced level. Of all people, you know, I'd say I've probably advanced. Have a look down at verse 18, verse 17. This is what Jesus says today to us. He's talking to his disciples and he said something about leaven.
- Okay. And then he says, Why are you discussing the fact that you've got no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes, do you not see?
- And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? Look, when I broke the five loaves for the 5,000, how many basketfuls of broken pieces did you take up?
- And they said to him, um, 12. And the seven for the 4,000, how many basketfuls of broken pieces did you take up? And they said to him, um, seven.
- [4 : 22] And he said to them, Well, don't you understand? And I read that and I went, no. I haven't got a scooby-doo, as they'd say in East London.
- I've not got a clue. No understanding of that. So, for me, this week, it's been brilliant because I've learned something new about Jesus. It's great being a Christian. You never get to the bottom of the ocean of understanding the Bible and about Jesus because it's infinite.
- So, it's been a brilliant week for me and I hope it's a great 20, 25 minutes for you as well because we'll learn something about Jesus. And one of the things we're going to learn in a minute is that Jesus is the one who opens the eyes of the spiritually blind.
- See, this week, Jesus has helped me see something that I was pretty blind to. I praise him for that. So, we need his help to understand it. So, I'm just going to pray again now that he'd help us to understand.
- So, let's just pray. Lord Jesus, you are a great God. We worship you and honour you and love you. And we ask that you would help us to see, you'd open our eyes to understanding who you are.
- [5 : 21] Please be with us. Spiritually, to open the eyes of our hearts so that we see who you are, so that we can say, yeah, we understand in half an hour's time. Please be with us, we pray.
- Amen. Great. Well, let me read from verse 11. We've got this issue with the Pharisees. And the point that I'm going to make here, the first point, and it's actually on your sheet.
- If you look on the back of your sheets, there's two points. And the first one will be the longest. So, don't despair if we've been going for a while on the first one. And it's simply this, watch out that you don't have a hard heart against Jesus.
- The Pharisees had hard hearts against Jesus. Let me show you from verse 11 of chapter 8. Under the bit where it says, the Pharisees demand a sign. So, the Pharisees came to him and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him.
- And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation. And he left them, got into the boat and went to the other side. So, the Pharisees have come to him to test him.
- [6 : 23] They're in their testing mode. And they've said, show us a miracle. Now, if you were here last week, you look at your headings at the beginning of chapter 8. He's just fed 4,000 people. Now, that's pretty impressive as far as miracles go.
- But the reason they've come to him and said this is because they're arrogantly, they want to test him. And look at Jesus' reaction in verse 12. He sighed deeply in his spirit.

Oh, this generation. Why do they just want tests? Why are they so hard-hearted against me? What's wrong with what I've just done? Why don't they hear what I've been saying and see what I've been doing?

Why are they so blind and so deaf? And I find that with people in our generation today. Most people in our culture have got churches on their street. There are churches everywhere, aren't there?

There are Christians in every part of society. People have got access to the Bible and the Gospel like no other nation perhaps in the world. And yet, in my experience, most people have never even been in, they've even darkened the door of a church because they're hard-hearted.

[7 : 24] They're just like the Pharisees. They're not interested. But you see, ironically, at this stage, his own disciples are a bit like that as well. Look at verse 14. Now they'd forgotten to bring bread and they only had one loaf with them in the boat.

A loaf is like a baguette so they haven't got much bread at all. And he cautioned them saying, watch out, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.

And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread. And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Don't you understand? Are you thick? Are you not getting it? Jesus is talking in parables about bread.

He's talking about leaven. And he's saying to them and he's saying to us, watch out. Watch out. Be careful. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.

Just in your head at the moment, how many of you are watching out at the moment in your life for the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod? Is that something you sort of worry about when you're crossing the road?

[8 : 32] Or when you're at work? Oh no, you've got to be careful of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. See, your laughter, I'll take it, is exactly like mine because it's never actually occurred to me that leaven was an issue.

But that's exactly what the disciples are doing. They're not getting it. We're not getting it. There's something we're not getting. And what we're not getting is, and what I've been thinking about very much this week is this whole parable of bread is really important biblically.

If we get this idea of bread, then we can get this idea of what Jesus is talking about. Now, the last couple of weeks we've looked at the feeding of the 5,000, the feeding of the 4,000. And one of the things that was mentioned, and there's a really important background here, is that many thousands of years before this when Moses was leaving the people of God, Israel, in the wilderness, in the desert, where there is no food, he rained down bread.

So every morning, they got up in the morning and there, like dew on the ground, outside their tent was some bread. Now, you need that in the wilderness because there isn't, there aren't, there's no co-op in the wilderness, you see.

You can't just go and buy, they were desperate for food and God provided them food. But then, and if you maybe remember this, when they did Deuteronomy, God explained why he did that, why he took them through the wilderness and why he fed them bread when they needed it and were desperate.

[9 : 47] This is what he says in Deuteronomy, listen to this, God humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, that's this bread, why? That he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone but man lives, has life, by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

This bread that they got up in the middle of a desert that they desperately needed was a parable about God's word because when they're in spiritual wilderness, that God's word is what keeps them alive and sustains them and makes them strong.

See? Bread, biblically speaking, parable speaking, metaphorically speaking, it relates to God's word, to Jesus' word. So when we're looking at bread, we're thinking words.

That's what we're thinking. Okay? So in Mark's gospel, we've seen a lot of bread in the last few chapters. Jesus fed the 5,000. These were 5,000 Jewish people. Okay? And he fed them, he prayed, he produced the bread just like God did in the wilderness.

So Jesus is God. He produced bread out of nothing. The disciples distributed it like they distribute his word and everyone fed and was satisfied. And how many basketfuls were left over?

[11 : 03] Twelve. Now if you know your Bible numbers, the Jews are big on their numbers, the Bible number 12 represents Israel because there were 12 tribes, there were 12 bits of Israel, if you like, different, you know, people groupings within Israel.

So what's he done? He's fed 5,000 people in a wilderness, they're all satisfied at the end of it, and there's 12 basketfuls left over. Enough for the whole of Israel.

What's going on in this miracle? Jesus is teaching us that his word gives life and satisfies all of Israel. All the Jews have got enough and it's Jesus.

Jesus is the one. It's his words that make everyone satisfied in Israel. Then we've got an interesting account, remember, of the Syrophenician woman in chapter 7, verse 24. She's a Gentile.

She's not Jewish. And she comes to Jesus because she's got a problem with her daughter. And look at what Jesus said, do you remember, back in verse 27 of chapter 7, chapter 7, verse 27, he says a really rude thing.

[12 : 08] He says, let the children be fed first, that's the Jews, for it's not right to take the children's bread, the words for the Jews, because I'm the Jewish Messiah and this is for them, and it's not right to take their words and toss it to the dogs.

That's the Gentiles. That's us. He came for the Jews. It's not right to take what's for the Jews and give it to the dogs. But this Gentile woman, she gets the bread metaphor. She's not stupid.

Look what she says, verse 28. Ah, but Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. See, she knows that the Messiah, who's come for the Jews, has got so much, his words is so bountiful that it just falls off the Jewish table and over to the edge.

And us non-Jews, well, we get the scraps. And look what happens next. He feeds the 4,000. In the Decapolis, that's Gentiles. That's us. That's non-Jewish people. He does the same for them.

And they're all fed. And they're all satisfied. The bread falls off the table and we get it. We can have life and satisfaction because of Jesus' words. Again, Bible numbers, the 4,000, the Bible number four represents the world.

[13 : 21] You have the four corners of the world, the four winds of heaven, the four points of the compass, north, east, south, west. Four often symbolically means the world. When Jesus feeds the 4,000, it's saying here, I'm feeding the whole world.

I'm feeding all, not just the Jews, but everyone. And how many basketfuls were left over? Seven. Now, I'm slightly scratching here because I'm not sure what this means at all, actually, still.

I've read all the commentaries, no one has a clue. But, when you think about it, where does the Bible number seven come up? Where do you see the number seven in the Bible? You see it in creation.

God made the world in six days and he rested on the seventh. What happened on that first seventh day, if you like? The whole of creation, everything that God made, rested and was satisfied.

The whole of creation went, yeah, brilliant. This is, this is great. And Jesus feeds 4,000 people and they've all eaten and at the end of it, just like creation on that seventh day, they all sit back and go, this is great.

[14 : 26] Fantastic. Rest. Satisfaction. Jesus feeds the whole world and the whole world can be fed. The whole world can have life. The whole world can have satisfaction.

Do you see what's going on here in this parable? The point is, or this miracle, which is metaphorical, we all can have life and satisfaction by Jesus' words.

So let me ask you a quick question as we start. Have you got satisfaction? That's a Mick Jagger song somewhere, isn't it? Do you feel satisfied? And I don't just mean in your life, I don't just mean is your job going well or is your family good or is your relationship good or is, I don't know.

I don't mean in the externals. I don't mean in the physical bread, if you like. I mean in the spiritual bread. I mean in your soul, in your heart. Could you say of yourself right now, yeah, everything is good.

Everything is right. Do you know what? Could you say that of yourself when actually your job and your family and everything else is going to pot and everything's going badly? Because Jesus is saying that whatever's going on in life, good or bad, you can have life and satisfaction if you come to Jesus, if you feed on his word.

[15 : 43] Do you know that's why lots of Christians get sick spiritually? It's because they stop coming to church, they stop reading their Bible, they stop listening to anything that Jesus is saying to them.

Maybe you've known that, maybe you know that right now, maybe you know that spiritual sickness because you stop listening to Jesus. His word gives you life and sustains you and if you stop eating it, then you get sick.

Do you know that feeling after Christmas dinner? I always go to Lucy's family and after Christmas dinner, you know, you can imagine, remember the time you've eaten massive foods, more food than you've ever eaten the whole rest of the year.

Turkey, stuffing, desserts, just food, food, food. And you go in the lounge and you sit in a big comfy chair and James Bond's on the telly and the kids are playing with their new toys somewhere and you've got no work for a couple of days and you just sit in that chair and you just go, oh, rest.

Do you know that feeling? Jesus is saying is if you feed at my table, if you feed on my word, your soul, your very deepest part of you can have that satisfaction, that rest, that life.

[16 : 56] So let me ask you, do you have that? And if you don't, you can have it if you have Jesus' words. If you feed on Jesus' words, if you gobble it down like a kid gobbling down chocolate on Christmas, on Easter Day.

If you gobble Jesus' word, well, you have life and satisfaction. So, given that ringing in our ears, let me warn you again. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.

Be careful of it. Now, I didn't know what leaven was until I went to Simon Dowdy's house about a week ago because he makes bread every week. He's got a bread maker. I'm from London.

I just buy it in the shops, me. But leaven is yeast. I thought yeast was marmite, but he showed me what leaven is. It's like, it looks like salt and you only need a little pinch of yeast, of leaven, and you put it in the dough in the bread maker and the yeast sort of spreads through the whole of the dough and makes it all nice and big and fluffy.

And you know what unleavened bread is like? Unleavened bread, unyeasted bread. It's like pita bread. You know, it's that flat sort of, it's not the same, is it? So, beware of the leaven, of the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod, which will get into Jesus' bread, his word, which he's fed you, and spoil the whole lot.

[18 : 15] Spread through, gradually, and spread through the whole lot and spoil it. Beware. Now, what is the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod? That's a big question, isn't it? The leaven is their attitude, it's their hearts.

They've got a hard-hearted attitude. We could do this for hours, but I'm just going to do a quick one. What's the attitude of the Pharisees? We looked at it earlier. They're testing, they're the arch-sceptics, they're the people that have got all the questions, but actually, deep down in their heart, they don't want to hear the answers.

They're the people that look like they're asking about Jesus, but really, deep down, they've no interest, because they've already made up their minds. They don't want Jesus. So the questions, they're false.

And I've got lots of friends like that. Oh yeah, what about other religions? Yeah, you can't trust the Bible. Oh no, you know, and science, well science has disproved the whole thing. And, oh gays, you know, the way the church deals with gays, you know, that's why I can't deal with Jesus.

Or, I've had this really bad experience of church, me, and that's why I don't want anything to do with Jesus. Or, I've heard, oh the Crusades, yeah, the Crusades. And actually, sorry, I've said that in a bit of a patronising tone of voice, because, actually when they ask me, it sounds like real questions.

[19 : 31] But I know with some of my friends, they're not asking, because I answer them. I answer those questions. And they've still got another one, and there's another one, and another one. And the reason that they're not satisfied, the reason they haven't gone, oh, Jesus, he's the Messiah, I should follow him, I should worship him, is because they don't want to.

It's not intellectual, it's a moral problem. The problem's in their heart. They're hard-hearted. Now, beware that attitude doesn't creep into your heart. I had a lovely young lad I used to read the Bible with, who's now given up the faith.

And he used to ask questions like that. He starts, out of the blue, he started asking questions like that. What about Noah's Ark? I remember him asking. But the real reason he started asking questions is because he wanted to sleep with his girlfriend.

It was a moral, he didn't want Jesus to be his Lord. And I want to say to you now, if you see in your heart, if questions have begun to be asked in your heart, and they're not questions you really want answering, but actually they've become smokescreen questions, or you see this in another Christian, I just want to say, be careful, because that attitude spreads like wildfire, like yeast, and it'll ruin the bread that you've got.

So if you see that in yourself, be careful. Well, there's the leaven of Herod. Herod didn't really come into touch with, Jesus so much, as John the Baptist, a few chapters earlier. I'll just quickly, Herod basically heard John the Baptist, who taught similar things to Jesus, and he thought he was a really great guy.

[20 : 56] He loved what he taught. But there was a point at which his daughter-in-law had done something really good for him, and so he said in front of all his mates, do you know what, daughter-in-law, I'll give you whatever you want.

And she said, I want John the Baptist's head on a platter. And what he should have said at that point is, no, John the Baptist, his words are like bread of life to me.

They're fantastic. I love what he's got to say. I follow what he says. They're so important to me. No, he doesn't say that. He says, oh no, I've said in front of all my mates that I'll do it, so I've got to do it.

So he has him killed. And I come across people like that all the time, where the leaven of Herod has ruined the bread in their hearts that Jesus has given them, his words. Because they hear the teaching about Jesus, they've read their Bibles, they've been to sermons, they've been to a course, and they're really positive about it.

But they're more worried about what other people think of them. And it just ruins the bread. My husband or my wife, my mum or my dad, my work colleagues, my friends at school, I'm more worried what they think of me than what Jesus thinks of me.

[22 : 09] And that attitude gets into my heart, and it spreads through my heart just like yeast, just like leaven does. And it ruins all the things that I've heard and taught. I've seen lots of people like that.

And I want to say to you, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. Because if it starts in your heart, if you can see the little bit of that in your heart now, that's when you really want to beware.

And if you can see any of that in your heart today, can I encourage you, I'd love to speak to you afterwards and chat to you about it. Or speak to another Christian, because the time to do it is when it hasn't spread and corrupted the whole thing.

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod. The second thing, and more quickly I want to teach you this morning, and this is wonderful, is that Jesus opens the eyes of the spiritually blind.

And if you're spiritually blind, or even a bit blind, this is brilliant news. Let me read from verse 22. Jesus opening the eyes of this. And as I read this miracle, just ask yourself, what's weird about this?

[23 : 12] Okay? Verse 22, what's weird about this? They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought him a blind man and begged him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, he led him out of the village, and when he spat on his eyes, imagine if you spat on your eyes, and laid his hands on him, he asked him, oh, do you see anything?

And the blind man looked up and said, oh, I see men, but they look like trees walking. He didn't quite see properly, see? Then Jesus laid his hands on him again, and he opened his eyes, and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

What's weird about that? Loads of things are weird about that. Jesus doesn't normally take two goes to heal people. He's quite good at healing people in other countries, by speaking. He doesn't normally take him a couple goes just to heal a blind man.

And why is this here? What's the point of this miracle? What's this got to do with anything? What's this got to do with the price of fish, I would say, back home? Well, Jesus' miracles, and we've seen this with the feelings of the 5000s, they're not just clever tricks.

They're not David Blaine or Derren Brown, okay? They're not just sort of wowing the nation about how clever they are. Every one of his miracles has a deeper significance. They're signs. They point to something about him.

[24 : 28] And just as you don't look at the sign, oh, look, M25 on the right, oh, that beautiful blue sign, you just, you follow its direction. And so with his miracles, he's fed, he's healed a blind man.

What's the, what's the deeper truth, the deeper significance? Well, you might remember last week, chapter 7, verse 31, he healed a deaf man, if you look over. And he, it is a very similar miracle.

It's weird. He spits on his hands, which metaphorically is about him speaking, because it comes from his mouth. He puts his hands on him. He touches the deaf man, just like he touched the deaf, like the blind man, which again, metaphorically is, is showing, is over expressing the point that he's doing it.

He wants you to see that he's really doing this by touching it. And, and the deaf person can hear, and he can speak, he's mute, and the blind person can see. Did you notice earlier what we read in the Bible today, a bit about deafness and blindness?

Have a look at chapter 8, verse 17 again, what I read at the beginning. He said to his disciples, why are you still discussing the fact that you've got no bread?

[25 : 40] Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes, do you not see? Having ears, do you not see?

Don't you get it? See, when he heals a blind man, and heals a deaf man, he's, he's actually doing something for his disciples, because he's showing them, that it's not physical blindness, or physical deafness that's their problem, but spiritual blindness, spiritual deafness.

They're not getting it, they're not seeing, they're not hearing. Now they've seen loads of amazing things that Jesus has done. They've heard a lot of amazing teaching, but they've just not got it.

They're still talking about bread, they're still talking about their bellies, frankly. They've just not got it. Can I ask you a question? I'd like to ask you a question, particularly if you're here today, and you're not yet sure if you're a Christian.

And I want to ask you a really rude question. Let me ask it, and explain why it's a rude question. Okay. Well, it's obvious it's rude. Are you spiritually blind? Are you spiritually deaf?

[26 : 47] Do you see that that might be you? I'm sorry if that's a rude question. Let me explain what I mean. Jesus Christ is the Messiah. He's done it.

He's shown it amazingly. Do you know that for thousands of years, God promised there would be a bloke that would come to save the world. And Jesus fulfilled every one of those prophecies. Something like 60 to 80 odd prophecies.

Because it was so important to God that when he sent his one and only son into the world, that it would be so obvious that it was him, that you couldn't mistake it. And that's why he said it loads of times for hundreds of years before he came.

And Jesus did it. He fulfilled all his prophecies. Where he'd be born, where he'd grow up, what his mum would be like, how he'd die, what he'd do in his life. So that you'd be in no doubt that this is the bloke that God was going to send to save the world.

And then in his life, Jesus did amazing miracles. If you were there, you'd have seen some amazing things. Do you know what? Jesus was able to raise dead people by speaking a word. Do you know that he could heal AIDS and cancer and paralysis and leprosy just by going, yep, stop.

[27 : 55] Do you know that Jesus could heal people in other countries when he wasn't even there? Do you know Jesus could stop weather by just going, no, stop. He could make summer happen by just going, yep, summer.

Do you know that Jesus could feed 5,000 people just by making it happen? He could fill a stadium full of people. He did amazing, amazing things. There's no way that a bloke like this, David Blaine could not do that.

Jesus brought himself back from the dead. I'd love to see, I'd love to see Derren Brown bring himself back from the dead. No one is like Jesus Christ.

He's the only one. He's definitely the man from God. And he taught amazing things. Not only do we have to see what he's done, we have to hear what he taught. You know, Jesus changes lives.

He turns lives upside down by his words. This room is full of people whose lives have been completely revolutionized by Jesus' words. Right now, in the world, there are a billion or more people meeting in rooms just like this, in huts, in big grand churches, on beaches, and their lives have been completely turned around because of Jesus' words.

[29 : 08] Is that something you see? Is that something you've heard? Do you get that about who he is? Can I just say to you, just quickly, if that's you, and you think, do you know, I think I've been a Christian for years, but I don't get this.

Or I'm not a Christian, and I really don't get this. We do a course called Christianity Explored, which you will properly love. Okay? We just sit around a table, we have a talk, we have discussion, and we just chat and think through who Jesus is, and I'd love you to come on that.

So if that's something that would interest you, come and speak to me afterwards, or speak to a Christian friend you've got, and tell them to come and speak to me on your behalf. That'd be fine. And we'd love you to do this course.

You'd really like it. But can I just finish by making the further point, that not only do we need Jesus to give us spiritual sight, we need Jesus to keep giving us spiritual sight.

Let me just show you in verse 27, the very last bit of the passage. Chapter 8, verse 27, on page 1017. Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi, and on the way he asked his disciples, who do people say that I am?

[30 : 19] And they said, well, some say you're John the Baptist, come back from the dead. Some say you're Elijah. Others, just one of them prophets. And he said to them, but what about you?

Who do you say that I am? And Peter answered him, well, you're the Christ. You're the Messiah. You're the man that God was going to send into the world to save the world.

And suddenly the pennies dropped. His eyes are opened. His ears are opened. He sees and he hears. He gets it. They get it. Now we won't go into this, but actually he doesn't get it. He partly gets it.

Just like the blind man partly saw, he doesn't see that actually what we'll find out is that being a Christian is not just about getting who Jesus is, but by being transformed into being like Jesus as a person.

Jesus came into the world to die for people, to serve people. And being a Christian is someone who dies to others, serves others, is a lover, is a servant.

[31 : 17] And it took me years to get that and it took Peter a number of weeks more to get that. But what I want to help us understand as we finish here is that Jesus is the one who touched and healed the blind and the deaf man.

He is the one that gives spiritual sight and spiritual hearing. And he's the one that continually opens your eyes and continually opens your ears so that you keep getting it more and more and more and more.

I think back to when I became a Christian in my late teens and I was an arrogant whatnot and I thought I had all the answers. And do you know what? I heard some great talks and I spoke to some really helpful people, some really helpful conversations.

I did seek after God in some manner, but I realise now it was only Jesus that made me really see. I couldn't have done it on my own because I was too arrogant to set my ways.

And even now, in all the years since I've been a Christian, I've understood so much new stuff and I'm so excited that for the rest of literally forever, I'm going to continue learning new stuff.

[32 : 22] And every time my penny has dropped, even this week doing the sermon, I've had to go, do you know what, Jesus? You've just opened my eyes a bit more. I've just realised something I've not seen before. Can I say to you, I know some, it's easy to slip into the attitude when you do your Bible studies or you listen to your sermons that there's great techniques you do.

It's all about knowing the context and about knowing the sections and knowing some of the ideas and reading the commentaries. And that's true. That's really helpful and really good.

But you will not get anything about who really Jesus is unless he opens your eyes or opens your ears. I know people who have heard literally thousands of sermons and have not the foggiest clue what Jesus came and why he died.

No idea. Maybe that's where you feel you are. And here's the key. Lord Jesus, would you please open my eyes? That's all the blind man did.

That day, that blind man went home. Can you imagine what day that must have been like? Right? He's gone there not seeing anything for years. And going home, he must have, the colours, the trees, the houses, my family's faces, my kids' eyes.

[33 : 40] It must have been an amazing day. He must have gone home going, thank you Jesus so much. Thank you so much. And do you know what? His physical blindness is exactly our, that's what we should go home and say.

Thank you Jesus. Jesus, because you gave me sight. We're going to sing Amazing Grace in a minute. And Amazing Grace has that line, I once was blind, but now I see. And that was written by a bloke, who's just praising, he's just saying, thank you so much Jesus, because I get who you are.

And I couldn't have done that without you. You've, you've spat on my eyes, and touched my eyes spiritually, and I get who you are. Thank you so much. And I wonder if that's your heart, if that's your attitude.

Because I think, isn't it easy to slip into mechanics, and functional ways of reading the Bible, and of knowing that you've become a Christian? It all happened, because Jesus has done it.

Jesus has given us eyes to see, and ears to hear. So, why don't we pray, and just thank him. I think that's what we should do, isn't it? Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we want to say, with capital letters, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

[34 : 50] Thank you so much, that you have opened our eyes, to see who you are. We get that you're the Messiah. And I thank you, that every day of our Christian lives, you've opened our eyes more and more, to see you deeper and better, and to see and understand ourselves better.

And we need you, we need you to keep doing that, Lord Jesus, please do that. Please keep feeding us your bread, which gives us life, and nourishment, and satisfaction in our souls.

And Lord Jesus, for those of us who probably might, for the first time, be realising that we, maybe are spiritually blind ourselves, and we don't get it. Lord Jesus, for us, those of us who think that way, we pray, would you be kind to us?

Would you do for us, what you did to that blind bloke? Would you open our eyes, so we get who you are, so that we have your bread, we eat your bread, and have life, and life to the full, and satisfaction, and joy in our hearts, and rest.

And we ask that, because you're generous, and you love to give good things. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.