

Mark 8:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

Analysis

He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town—Jesus's personal touch (ἐπιλαβόμενος, epilabomenos, 'taking hold of') demonstrates compassionate guidance, leading one who cannot see. Removing him from the town may indicate avoiding public spectacle (note verse 26's command to silence) or escaping the unbelieving atmosphere that characterized Bethsaida (Matthew 11:21).

When he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him—The use of saliva (πτύσας, ptusas) appears in only three healing miracles (here, Mark 7:33, John 9:6). In ancient Near Eastern culture, saliva was thought to have curative properties, but Jesus transcends mere folk medicine. The combination of spittle and touch creates tangible contact points for faith. His question *ei ti blepeis* (εἴ τι βλέπεις, 'Do you see anything?') is unique—the only recorded instance where Jesus checks healing progress mid-miracle, emphasizing the pedagogical nature of this two-stage restoration.

Historical Context

In the Greco-Roman world, saliva was widely believed to possess healing properties, documented in medical texts by Pliny the Elder and Tacitus. Jewish law permitted healing actions on the Sabbath when life-threatening, though spitting

could render someone unclean. Jesus's methods engaged contemporary cultural categories while demonstrating power beyond natural remedies.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Why might Jesus use physical means (touch, saliva) when He could heal with a word? What does this reveal about incarnational ministry?
2. How does Jesus's patient, incremental approach here contrast with our demand for immediate results in spiritual growth?
3. In what areas of life might God be asking you, 'Do you see anything yet?'—checking on spiritual perception still in progress?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἐπιλαβόμενος	τῆς	χεῖρας	τοῦ	τυφλοῦ	ἐξήγαγεν		
And G2532	he took G1949	G3588	by the hand G5495	G3588	the blind man G5185	and led G1806		
αὐτόν	ἔξω	τῆς	κώμης	καὶ	πτύσας	εἰς	τὰ	ὄμματα
him G846	out of G1854	G3588	the town G2968	And G2532	when he had spit G4429	on G1519	G3588	eyes G3659
αὐτόν	ἐπιθεὶς	τὰς	χεῖρας	αὐτόν	ἐπηρώτα	αὐτόν	Εἴ	
him G846	and put G2007	G3588	by the hand G5495	him G846	he asked G1905	him G846	G1487	
τι	βλέπει							
G5100	he saw G991							

Additional Cross-References

Mark 7:33 (Parallel theme): And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;

Mark 5:23 (Parallel theme): And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

Isaiah 44:2 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.

Isaiah 51:18 (Parallel theme): There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up.

Acts 9:8 (Parallel theme): And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.