

## Finished Work

*“And he looked up and said, ‘I see people, 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.” Mark 8:24-25.*

Here we have the only recorded occurrence of a gradual miracle in the ministry of Jesus. In every other instance, the cure is instantaneous, whether it is the curing of blindness, deafness, lameness, or even death. Since this is an odd situation, it naturally draws a lot of attention.

In Mark 8 we read that people bring a blind man to Jesus and beg Jesus to touch him. Jesus does not do as they ask, but instead takes the blind man by the hand and leads him out of the village, spits on the man's eyes and then lays hands on him, after which the man says, “I see people, but they look like trees, walking.” So Jesus lays his hands on the man's eyes again, and after this his blindness was cured.

The first and foremost conclusion is that Jesus did not heal the man gradually because He was unable to heal the man instantaneously. It is not because of a lack of power in Jesus. So what are some of the theories surrounding this? And what can we safely conclude from this?

One common idea is that Jesus is making a point to His disciples. Just before the healing of this man, Jesus chided His disciples for not understanding His power. So, as a demonstration to the disciples, Jesus expresses the depth of their blindness.

Another common idea is that the gradual healing is a commentary on the blind man's faith. After all, the blind man did not find Jesus, the people brought the blind man to Jesus, most likely only to see a miracle performed. Maybe the blind man has some belief but not enough belief, so Jesus is healing according to the man's faith.

While there may be many different theories surrounding this strange passage, there is at least one concrete conclusion we can draw: Christ has the power to stop a work before the work is done but also the grace and the patience to fully complete the work in the person. When Christ changes us, He does not stop until the work is done. During the in-between stages, we may feel partially blinded to our surroundings – we may only see the people as trees – but we can be assured of the total power of Christ and the completion of His work in us. **[DJR]**