

Seeing Clearly

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: 12 July 2026

Preacher: Dr. Daniel Heeringa

[0:00] Today is confession day. It's time for you to fess up. If you wear reading glasses, have you ever searched all over the house looking for your glasses! Have you ever looked all over for your phone that you were talking on at the time?

That's pretty rough. This will get you. Have you ever walked in a room and forgot why you walked in there? Later it suddenly hits you, hopefully.

All of that, or at least most of that, it may not be, but most of it should be due to distraction. It's easy for us to be distracted.

Distracted people miss the most obvious things. We're not the only ones who've been distracted.

The disciples were distracted as well. And in Mark chapter 8, Jesus confronts that.

If we're not careful, folks, we can be easily so spiritually distracted that we miss how God is working around us.

[1:11] The disciples did. I want to show you what I'm speaking of. It's in Mark chapter 8, beginning in verse 14. It says this, Now they had forgotten to bring bread.

They had only one loaf with them in the boat. Now Mark always refers to it as the boat. So I think they had a dedicated boat just for their ministry.

It says, And he cautioned them, speaking of Christ, 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 didn't have 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? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes, do you not see?

Having ears, do you not hear? Do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the 5,000, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?

[2:17] They said to him, Twelve. And seven for the 4,000, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up? They said to him, Seven. And he said to them, Do you not yet understand?

Folks, what Christ was telling the disciples was that they needed to see some matters that needed to be seen clearly, and they were too distracted to see it.

In a distracting world, and we live in one, it's all about seeing the truth. Jesus said in verse 15 of this passage, Watch out.

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. Now, the disciples were in the boat. They were talking about lunch. They were hungry.

Maybe a hangry, but they were hungry. And Jesus is actually warning them about two wrong ways of thinking. And he speaks of leaven.

[3:28] Now, leaven, and some of you know a lot more about it than I do, but leaven is speaking of yeast that you put in dough to make it rise. You work it in, you knead the dough, and then you let it sit.

And when you do, it spreads throughout the dough, and it causes it to rise. In much the same way, and Jesus often uses this illustration, if we let the corruption of the world influence us, get mixed up in our lives, and sit enthroned upon our mindsets and in our actions, spiritual corruption, like leaven within dough, spiritual corruption will spread.

We will not be what God intended for us to be. We will miss the movement of God, like in this passage. We'll miss the lessons that God teaches us through the everyday.

We'll be corrupted. He speaks of two different types of leaven. One he speaks of is the Pharisees. The Pharisees were, by most people's standards, good people.

We typically talk about the evil of the Pharisees, or the problems of the Pharisees. But I'll just tell you, in that society, in that day, when most people looked at Pharisees, they thought they were

good people.

[5:03] They were religious people. They were respected people. They were moral people. They were upstanding citizens.

As a matter of fact, of the groups of leaders, religious leaders of that day, Pharisees would most align with Christ. Christ would most understand him.

Why? Because they believed in the afterlife. That's one thing. Sadducees did not believe in the afterlife, and that's why they were sad, you see. They thought this was all there was.

And so I believe that's why Jesus is so harsh, sometimes, on the Pharisees. Well-deserved, I will say. They were moral people.

They were upstanding citizens. However, they didn't believe in Christ. They believed their hope was found in keeping the law, and they demanded that God give them signs to prove what they believed, and they felt like they were quite a bit better than everyone else.

[6:09] And if you didn't think they were better than anyone else, just ask them. They'll tell you. And then he speaks of the leaven of Herod. He is talking about Herod Antipas, and Herod Antipas is often brought up in Mark, primarily in Mark chapter 6.

He was a man that was driven by power, by popularity, by self-preservation. Someone was always looking out for Herod, and his name was Herod. He was always looking out for himself.

That passage in Mark chapter 6, where we know so much about him, is the one that John the Baptist is beheaded in. And it's a power move for Herod. We discussed it a few weeks ago.

I won't go into great detail with it, but it was a power move, but it was a power move, and an effort to win the favor with his friends at a banquet, and not to be embarrassed.

And he did it because his wife's daughter told him to do it. She had done what he wanted. He offered her a favor, and that's what her mother told her to ask for.

[7:15] And the reason why Herodias, his wife, wanted John the Baptist beheaded was because John had spoken out about Herod and Herod's adulterous relationship.

Josephus, a historian of that day, tells us that they got together on a trip, and she was married to Herod's half-brother and had an affair with Herod.

So they married, and John the Baptist spoke out about it. She didn't like it, and he was beheaded.

Herod was a weak, worldly, wicked man, and that's a different kind of leaven.

So Christ is saying, beware of the wickedness of the world. However, also beware of the corruption of church folk. I'm not talking about us.

I'm talking about other people. Church folk trying to be something that they're not. Putting others down to make themselves look better.

[8:20] Be careful of the corruptions. Both will see you, will keep you from seeing the truth. Let me tell you what the truth is.

The truth is a person. It's Jesus Christ. That's the truth. When it says the truth shall set you free, he's talking about Christ shall set you free.

It's the personhood of Jesus Christ. Both Herod and the Pharisees missed it from two different angles, but they still missed it. And if we get too busy looking at this world and what people want from us and how we can impress them, it'll be like an untapped cancer growing in us.

We will miss the main thing, and Christ is the main thing. If we get too caught up with ourselves, feeling too good about ourselves, feeling too sorry for ourselves, feeling too focused upon ourselves, we'll miss the main thing.

And the main thing is the truth, and the truth is Christ. However, we must stay focused on Him. It's a distracting world. And in a distracting world, we must not only see the truth, but we also must see the blessing.

[9:33] If you're not careful, you'll miss the very thing that God has done right now, doing in your life right now, and how He's working around you.

The disciples were hungry, and they were in a boat with Jesus, wondering, how are we going to eat?

They were traveling with Jesus, who had just fed 4,000 with seven loaves.

We're not talking about big loaves here. The word speaks of small loaves. Cathead biscuits is what it was, all right?

Not really, but some of you know what that means, and you're happier for it. And a few fish. We're not talking about tuna here.

[10 : 39] Not huge fish. We're talking about something a little larger than a sardine. Very little. And he fed 4,000 with that.

And he had seven baskets left over. Now, that's a huge basket. A hamper-style basket. As a matter of fact, that same word is used in Acts 9, verse 25, when Paul is put in such a basket and put through an opening in the wall in Damascus for escape.

That's how large the basket was. And he filled seven of them. Not only that, but the disciples had also witnessed him feeding 5,000 men and their families.

And when he got done feeding all of those folks, he had 12 lunch baskets, is what I'd call them. Smaller baskets. Individual baskets. Two different words. Two different texts. Twelve lunch baskets of bread and fish left. And that, I don't believe it's ironic.

[11 : 53] A lot of theologians don't. It's just enough baskets for every disciple to have lunch. Just enough for them to have. He gave us just enough. It's a whole other sermon, but he gave us, they gave them just enough to take care of everybody.

The same apostles who picked up those baskets are now worried about where their next meal's going to come from. Isn't it amazing how God can be at work right in front of us and we don't even see the personal ramifications of it.

It's strange, really. It could be we have a bad, get a bad case of amnesia. When I was growing up and watching TV, I thought there were going to be two things that were a lot more common than they ever turned out to be.

One of them was quicksand. I was really under the impression, from the sitcoms that I watched, that every forest was filled with quicksand and you would slip into it without even knowing it.

Tarzan swung through the jungle on vines, wrestled lions, called elephants for help, but if he had ever ran into quicksand, it would have done him in. Steve Austin was nearly dead, but \$6 million worth of surgery gave him perfect vision, telescopic zoom, night vision, even an infrared capability.

[13 : 19] He had his arm replaced and had supernatural strength. He could lift a car, break chains, tear off a steel door. He had bionic legs and could run 60 miles per hour.

He was the bionic man and he was amazing. And he married Charlie's most famous angel who also sold more posters than anybody else did in the 70s. But I don't know anything about that.

But all of that was because he never ran into quicksand. I've never seen quicksand, but I thought it was going to be a lot bigger deal than it is when I was growing up.

The other syndrome that I thought would be a much bigger deal was amnesia. Gilligan's Island was about a three-hour boat tour that turned into a shipwrecked hodgepodge of people stranded on an island.

But Gilligan, the captain's helper, lost his memory more than once by getting hit on the head by a coconut. And the good news is even though amnesia was quite common on those type of shows during those days, the problem was always solved within 25 minutes, right after the last commercial break.

[14 : 29] It's taken care of. I've never known anyone who battled quicksand. Maybe some bog, thick mud. I know some rednecks got some stuff stuck before.

I do know that. I've never known anybody suffer the traumatic temporary amnesia that TV warns us about. I'll tell you what I have seen.

I've seen many cases of spiritual forgetfulness. This is what happens here. Jesus says in Mark 8, verse 21, Do you not yet understand?

The disciples had already forgotten what he had taught them or maybe they never got it to start with. We often question God about matters that we do not understand and that we cannot see his hand at work in.

However, what makes that worse is failing to recognize his hand at work even in the small things. What have you thanked God for today?

[15 : 40] What blessings has he bestowed upon us even this very day that we've missed? I woke up at 3.30 this morning.

I grabbed my phone and I saw a headline announced about an hour earlier than that, I believe, was the death of Lindsey Graham.

I found out just a couple hours later that it was due to chest pains. If you don't think that brings back a memory for me who 14 months ago had a cardiac arrest three times and was brought back, I couldn't help but say, Lord, I pray for the Graham family and I pray for the state of South Carolina.

Thank you. Thank you for spirit. And not only that, I mean, I got a friend that had a cardiac arrest right about the same time I did. He had more health problems than I did, but he was in the hospital for months.

I listened to this beautiful choir and orchestra this morning. Brian, you did such a wonderful job leading. Mike, I hope I'm not overstepping here, brother, but it ain't been long ago when you had a stroke and I listened to that trumpet play this morning and I said, thank you, Lord, because I remember us praying when there was a concern whether he'd be able to blow that trumpet.

[17 : 29] I went to see him in the hospital right after that stroke and he had a trumpet sitting inside. Then we began to pray for dexterity in his fingers to make sure he could play.

And I have one of those songs this morning. I caught it in the first service. I heard it again before the second service. I don't think you have any problems, brother. You are. You're hiding it well. I thank the Lord today for what I've seen him do.

Have you thanked God today for a blessing? Or have you got so caught up in the hustle and bustle of getting in your place, trying to get there on time and all those things that you miss out on seeing those things?

What blessings has he bestowed on us even this very day that we've missed? Not because they were not there, but because we never bothered to notice them. But when we fail to acknowledge those blessings, whether miraculous or ordinary, we fail to recognize his hand at work.

And that leads us to stop seeing what God's doing right in front of us. The blessing is often what God is already doing right in front of us. We must not become so distracted that we fail to see it.

[18 : 58] However, even in a distracting world, even when we face the problems that come from us not seeing what we need to see in the midst of not seeing the truth and not seeing the blessing, I am thankful today that Christ can help us to see clearly.

I want you to look at what happens next. As soon as they dock that boat, it says, 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 spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, do you see anything?

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.

And he sent him to his home saying, do not even enter the village. So as soon as they come to shore, Jesus is healing again.

[20 : 15] And I want you to notice that this is a two-touch healing. First, the man had very blurry vision. He did not clearly see what was in front of him.

Jesus touches him again and with that his sight is perfectly restored. You will not find another two-touch healing in Scripture. One touch is all Christ needed.

He spoke and the centurion servant was healed. He touched the leper and immediately the leprosy was gone. To the point that he told him, go check with the priest and have him look at you because they're the ones that could clear you religiously.

He tells the paralytic that they lower down through the roof to take up his bed and walk and the man gets up, takes his bed and walks out. He raises Jairus' daughter with a word.

He called Lazarus from the tomb. And as I've heard other better preachers than me say, if he hadn't called Lazarus by name, they all would have got up out of the tomb. He healed some at a distance.

[21 : 23] He healed some with a touch of his garment. Yet here is a two-touch healing. Why? I believe and I'm not alone with this.

That it's a very graphic illustration for the apostles as well as for us. They knew he was the Christ, but they were not seeing the whole truth of who he was and is.

They knew he did mighty works, yet they were so disconnected from the message of the miracles. And by the way, just a little soapbox I've got, make sure before you get so caught up in the miracles of Scripture that you get the message of the miracle.

Because there's always a message that goes along with the miracle. Sometimes it's implied and sometimes it's direct, but there's always a message there. And we get so caught up sometimes trying to figure out how that miracle took place and what exactly happened and all the semantics of all that, that we missed the message that was in it.

That's exactly what happened to the disciples. They knew everybody got fed that time, they knew everybody got fed this time, what are we going to eat? They missed it.

[22:44] And yet here, if we're not careful, we'll become disconnected from the message of the miracles that they will miss seeing the blessing.

They had been touched, they had been changed. However, they needed a second touch to bring partial sight to full sight, to understand who Jesus really is.

They needed to see clearly who it is they committed to following. So if you need a touch of Jesus today, my question is this, have you ever received his salvation touch?

Have you ever surrendered your life to follow the Lord Jesus? Have you ever confessed that you're a sinner and you need his forgiveness? Have you ever turned from those sins?

Have you ever committed your life to follow Christ? Has that ever happened in your life? God, I'm glad you're here this morning. You don't get credit in heaven for your attendance here this morning.

[24:04] I'll tell you, one of the greatest burdens I have in ministry, not to point out anybody in particular, but one of the greatest burdens I have in ministry is lost men that attend worship on a regular basis.

hear me preach the gospel again and again and never give their heart and life more. I don't know who they are.

But I've always been concerned about guys who go to church with their family or with their wife to make things easier at home instead of having a personal relationship with Christ.

I'm just going to tell you, if there's any man in here like that, you don't get heavenly credit for your attendance even if you wore your vest and behaved yourself on the way.

You need Jesus. That's the first touch. first touch is how Jesus changes life.

[25:17] And if you are a Christian, do you need a touch from Christ today? Not for salvation, because if you're a Christian, that's been settled. That's been settled. I mean a touch of clarity.

I like the way I heard Adrian Rogers put it years ago. He was talking about how charismatics believe in a second blessing. They believe that when you get saved, you don't get everything. Something happens after salvation, you get a second blessing they call it, where you receive the Holy Spirit. And when you receive the Holy Spirit, you have the evidence of that, the gift of time. And in referencing that, which we don't believe, because I believe when you get Jesus, you get everything you're ever going to get. This is what Adrian said. He said, but I believe in the second blessing.

The second blessing is when you realize that you didn't realize everything you got with the first blessing. And in reality, you got it all the first time, but you didn't even realize everything you got when you got Christ.

[26:27] And then you come to an awakening one day and realize how much more you have in Christ than you ever realized before. And he said, you know what? I believe there's also a third blessing. And the third blessing is that you didn't realize it all in the second blessing.

And not only that, but there's a point. And God just keeps blessing and blessing and blessing, showing us how much we have when we got Christ.

need a touch today. A touch of recommitment, a touch of clarity, a touch of cleansing, a touch of renewal, a touch of repentance, a touch that allows us to see the world and our situation clearly from a Christian standpoint.

It is not to see things like the typical Christian season as we think of the typical Christian. It's to see them like the committed Christian is to see them. As Watchman Nee put in his book, it is the normal Christian life.

Not the common one, the normal one. To see things like Christ season. If that's why Jesus touched him twice, may we pray that he will touch us again.

[27:50] Clean up any confusion in our lives. Straighten out the mess of our mind, wake us up, clarify the parameters of our Christ centered life. It is my prayer that Jesus gives us a fresh touch so that our eyes would really be open to everything that we have when we have Christ.

Christ, I want to ask you this morning, do you have Christ? Have you ever come to know him as your personal Lord and Savior? If you never have, I want you to know.

If you'll come this morning and say, Pastor, I need to receive Christ, I need to be saved, I want to commit my life to follow Christ, or anything like that. Don't you worry about the time, don't you worry about what people may think, don't let anything come in the way of you coming to Christ.

All of hell wants you to not come to Christ. You come. Maybe you're here this morning and you do know you're a Christian, but the reality is you need a touch.

Touch of clarity. Touch of newness. Whatever that may be. I'll be happy to pray with you. Pray at this altar. Pray at the place you stand.

[29 : 18] Get it right with the Lord before you leave. Maybe God's drawing you to be a part of First Baptist Church. God's blessing us in a mighty way and I'm thankful for that. God's leading you here. We'll be happy to guide you in what that means.

Maybe you're a Christian and you know that, but you never acknowledge that publicly through baptism. Baptism is the physical representation of what happens to us spiritually. And it is the first step of obedience.

obedience. You don't get baptized to get saved, but when you get saved, you get baptized.

Whatever it is, you speak to your heart and life about it.

Do business with God. Lord Jesus, thank you for the love that you have for us and I ask your God that you'll guide us right now to simply be obedient and follow you in every way.

Jesus, precious name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.