

Mark 8:22-33

Mark

By Pastor Damon Young

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Bible Text: Ephesians 1:15-23; Mark 8:22-33
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Grace and Peace Presbyterian Church
22646 Benswood Road
California, MD 20619

Website: gppopc.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/gppopc

Please open your Bibles to the book of the prophet Isaiah 35. We'll read the first 10 verses. Isaiah 35:1-10.

1 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; 2 it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. 3 Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. 4 Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; 6 then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; 7 the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. 8 And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. 9 No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. 10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The word of the Lord.

Beloved, I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Paul's letter to the Ephesians 1. Paul's letter to the Ephesians 1, and we'll begin reading at verse 15 to the end of the chapter. Ephesians 1, beginning at verse 15, and as you're turning there, let me say to you what we heard this morning in Isaiah 35, I declare to you has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, which we'll see in the gospel this morning, that he is the one who opens the eyes of the blind, he is the one who opens the ears of the deaf, he is the one who makes the dumb leap and

sing songs of joy, thus he is the Christ. But what I want you to see this morning in Ephesians 1, which we'll also see in the gospel as Paul's prayer for Christians who have had their eyes opened but still may not be seeing distinctly, and they need further enlightenment. And that is a big part of the gospel this morning so hear Paul's prayer and his words in Ephesians 1, beginning at verse 15, hear the word of the Lord.

15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

And let's turn together to Mark's gospel where we've been reading and studying now for a number of weeks. Mark 8, and we'll begin at verse 22. We'll read through chapter 9, verse 1 for the context, but I do only intend to preach through verse 30. So Mark 8, beginning at verse 22. See Isaiah 35 being fulfilled here. See the need for Paul's prayer seen here. Isaiah 8, beginning at verse 22.

22 And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. 23 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?" 24 And he looked up and said, "I see men, but they look like trees, walking." 25 Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. 26 And he sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village." 27 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?" 28 And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." 29 And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." 30 And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him. 31 And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For

you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." 34 And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? 37 For what can a man give in return for his soul? 38 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

1 And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power."

This is the word of the Lord.

Beloved, let's seek the Lord for what only he can do and give us minds to understand his word. Let us pray.

Almighty God, we bless you for the word that you have given to us of your gospel and your grace spoken to us through your prophets and apostles and by the mouth of our Savior, the Lord Jesus. We thank you for preserving that word infallible and throughout the ages, that we might hear it today. O Father in heaven, assist now with the preaching that your word may be spoken faithfully, your gospel proclaimed clearly to the honor and glory of your name, and grant, O Lord, ears to hear and eyes to see the glory of Jesus Christ and your gospel and your grace, that the Saints gathered here this morning might receive greater sight or receive sight and be built up in their most holy faith. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Before we look at our text, I'm going to read you a passage from Acts 10. You don't have to turn there, but this is Peter's account of Christ's ministry, and Mark's gospel, in essence, follows this in its order that we're hearing today when we've reached a midway point in Mark's gospel, but I want to remind you of, in a kernel, what the apostles saw and professed of Jesus Christ as they lived with him for three years on earth. Peter writes this beginning at verse 36, "As for the word that he sent," that is, God, "to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him." And let's go back, then, to the gospel, for that is what we see here today, the anointed Lord Jesus Christ healing the eyes of this man, but we know doing far more and restoring spiritual sight to the blind eyes of sinners.

Now for the last two weeks in Mark's gospel we have been occupied looking at the horrendous condition of unbelief or of spiritual blindness and spiritual hard-heartedness

That has at its cause the evil in men's heart because they love not God and have made idols for themselves and are wise in their own eyes and do not want to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ. We saw that in the Pharisees who want nothing to do with Jesus and come questioning if he is the one sent from God, asking for more signs, attacking the perspicuity of what they are seeing. Clearly this is the hand of God freeing everybody from illness, freeing everybody from Satan's power, casting out these, clearly this is God's scripture being fulfilled if they but knew and can see Isaiah 35, could understand the word of God and were blinded to it. So they attack the clearness of its message and its efficiency, wanting something besides the fulfillment of scripture, wanting something besides what God would give to them to set up their own criterion to judge the word of God. Evil. Spiritual hard-heartedness You might think that could never find its way in the church of God and amongst God's people, but then Jesus gets in the boat with his own chosen disciples and they're still blind. Their vision is still filled with the cares and anxieties of this world. They cannot see that Yahweh has come and is redeeming them, loves them, will care for them, has plans for them because they take not the time to reflect on his word. And so he has to, we saw, lead them back to himself, "Remember what I did."

Now it is not without significance that from that rebuke this further miracle and the time it took to travel 25 miles by foot with Jesus from Bethsaida up to Caesarea Philippi, that something was at work in the hearts of these men, that the grace of God has been doing something to open their eyes to see and know clearly, or begin to see as we actually see in the gospel, not so clearly yet who Jesus Christ is. At our first look at the passage, this story of Jesus healing this blind man and then the account of Jesus questioning his disciples, you may be asking yourself the question: how do the two correlate? Did Mark randomly put them together or is there some fitting them together that makes sense? And even as I read further because even going on after that we see they professed Christ and yet they're not seeing clearly yet the Christ of the Bible, the one that must suffer and be rejected and killed and rise again. And yet they do have true sign.

So what's the relationship between this healing miracle and their profession of Christ? And it is this, that this kind of two-stage restoration of sight by this blind man, these two touches of Jesus, these two stages of restoring sight to this man, signifies the ongoing work of Jesus to illumine the minds of these disciples in the gospel. Really, you might say, and as I'll show you as we're going to now look at this in more detail, we've reached a turning point, reached halfway through Mark's gospel, you might then say this has been touch 1 by Jesus on his disciples and they've made a true profession, and they're seeing clearly, but they only see Jesus as a tree right now. It's not distinct to them, the Messiah, but there's real sight. And then stage 2 is the rest of his gospel as he goes on to fulfill it but to teach them what it means to be God's Christ.

So this two-stage restoring of sight to the blind signifies this ongoing work of Jesus to illumine the minds of his disciple. So looking here at verse 22, what you see is Jesus comes to Bethsaida, Sada, however you pronounce it. It's on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee. Obviously, word of him has spread there, his power has been made known, and they bring to him a blind man, probably a beggar in the streets of the village, that's

why Jesus says, "Go home. You're not a beggar anymore. You don't need to go back into the village. You have sight. You can live."

They bring in this man because the Messiah has been conducting his ministry. God has appointed him to do this work, as we read in Isaiah 35 this morning. And Jesus has a dialogue with him, right? He puts his hands on him and heals him and then he asks him the question, right, "Do you yet see?" Now it's very interesting if you read commentators on this, they're trying to make sense of this, and they're going is this like a really tough case? Was Jesus having an off day? Was this something difficult for him to do? No. He's showing something to his disciples here. He's using this healing as a greater sign of what he's doing to his disciples in the gospel thus far. But he's essentially, right, Jesus is asking this man a question to find out, "Do you see clearly yet." wanting to know when he sees clearly. And he indicates, "I see but I don't yet see clearly yet?"

Now, and this is another wonderful thing about the gospel of Jesus Christ, this is another wonderful thing of hope and encouragement to you saints who've had your eyes opened, I pray, and see something of Christ, but you may be going, "I wish I could see more. Things are fuzzy. Things are difficult. Faith is hard." Well, the office of Jesus Christ has not been instituted to leave you seeing him in his glory as a tree walking but to restore you clearly to sight, greater sight as you walk with him and to be fulfilled in glory as you see God face-to-face and see and know as you are known. Okay, so good news for this man. Jesus finishes the healing on him, restores him clearly to sight, and sends him not into the village but to his home where he's not a beggar anymore. So they see this man. Jesus touches him once, he sees but not clearly. Jesus touches him again and he sees all things clearly. Remember, the apostles are watching this.

Well, they leave there and they travel 25 miles north. Caesarea Philippi. Let me say a word about that town real quick. That's at the foot of Mount Hermon. It's in Phillip's tetrarch, that's why it's called Caesarea Philippi because there's a Caesarea down in the coast of Palestine as well, that's full of the book of Acts, many things happened there. But this is Caesarea to the north 25 miles, well outside the region of Galilee. It was rebuilt. I believe it was Herod the Great right around 3-4 BC in honor and dedicated to Caesar. Now, if you are a Roman Christian reading Mark's gospel whom he wrote for in there in the first century, and you lived in Rome, you knew who everybody said was Lord. Caesar. "Who do they say is the Lord?" So it's not without significance you'd be greatly encouraged if you're a Roman Christian, you should all be greatly encouraged that we have a good Lord, there is a good Lord who rules over the earth, there's a good Lord who rules over the destinies of men and the times of men on earth who can be loved and served. His name is Jesus and he's the Christ.

So they go up to Caesarea Philippi and notice what Jesus asks them while they're there. On the way doesn't mean on the way up there, but on the way as he's conducting a ministry amongst the area there in Caesarea. He asked them a question, kind of like he asked the blind an the question, "Who do men say that I am? They say you're John the Baptist. They say you're Elijah. They say you're a prophet." Now they're seeing something of Jesus, right, they're seeing that there's some power in Jesus. God has come

amongst them in some way, but they don't see clear at all, do they, because the thing about John the Baptist, the thing about Elijah that they're missing out, these are preparatory figures. To say that he's only John the Baptist, to say he's only Elijah is to say the kingdom of God hasn't come but Jesus is preaching the kingdom of God has come. It's preaching that the Lord hasn't yet come yet. How did Mark begin his gospel? Isaiah 43 saying, this is being fulfilled through John the Baptist's ministry as the voice in the wilderness saying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." It's to say as much the Lord hasn't come amongst them. But they know better.

Then Jesus turns and asks them a question, "Well, who do you say that I am?" Mary asked the same probing question to find out. This is a spiritual checkup, you might say. It's to find out, right, there's been great damage done to the eyes of men in the fall and apostasy and rebellion of man from God in the garden, right? I forgot to mention this, but I'll mention it now: this is a restoration of sight. The text says clearly Jesus restored his sight, but this man knew enough about trees to say, "I see men as trees." He has seen trees before. Great damage has been done to the eyes of men, which is very clear in the gospel. Jesus has come to Israel, the people God has prepared for millennia through the prophets and prophecies to prepare for his coming to receive him, and yet hardly anybody knows who he is and his disciples don't even know who he is. Great damage has happened to the eyes of men, but good news, right? What is the answer to spiritual blindness? The personal touch of Jesus Christ taking you by the hand by the Spirit of Christ and dealing personally with your soul through the preaching of his word, through the admonitions and rebukes of his word. "Do you see yet?" Opening your eyes to understand the Messiah that then you might be saved and receive the gift of life.

So he asked them essentially the same question, "Do you see yet?" And good news, they do see. "You are the Christ." And if we stop there, we might think these guys have perfectly clear sight and that's why we read on through the rest of the chapter to realize they don't know but what Jesus has shown them, "You guys are seeing me truly, yes, but you are seeing me as a tree. You don't have yet a distinct view of me." But what has Jesus just shown them? "Suffer me to put my hands upon you again and I will restore you to clear sight."

So this is the midway point of the gospel of Mark, this confession of Jesus as the Christ in verse 29. It's essentially a spiritual check-up on these men's lives. Two years of ministry of Jesus amongst them and he wants to know. "In two years, have you seen anything," because we know in earnest as he's about to begin the rest of his ministry in this final year or half a year that's left, it's a march to the cross to face his predestined destiny as our Savior, and he wants to know, "How are you doing spiritually? Do you see me?" So it might be good for us, beloved, to pause for a moment at this halfway point of Mark and review what we've seen together in the gospel of Mark, to see are we seeing clearly? When we profess Christ, what are they exactly, what have they seen? What are they saying, right? What does it mean for the apostles to say, "You are the Christ." Well, if you're following me in your Bible, you can turn back to Mark 1. What does it mean to have Jesus put the question to you and ask you, "Who am I?" And what does it mean

then, to say truly, "You are the Christ." What should you be seeing to say that in a true way?

Well look at Mark 1:7 at John the Baptist preaching. Notice what he says, "And he preached, saying, 'After me comes he who is mightier than I,'" and the keyword there is "comes." We saw that others are saying, "You're just John the Baptist. You're not the coming one." So the first thing what it means to profess Christ is to say, "You are the coming one," and what that also means and closely linked with that, is that it's really a technical term for Jewish Christians who were waiting for the Messiah because they knew he was coming, remember the Samaritan woman even knew that, "We know that when Christ comes he will tell us all things." Well, how did they know Christ was going to come? Because he's also the promised one. He is the one whom God promised. Go back to Genesis 3:15, go through all of the scriptures. So Jesus is the coming one because Jesus is the promised one and he's also, then, the sent one. He is the one sanctified by God and sent into the world.

So to profess Jesus as Messiah is to say, "You are the one sent by God the Father, promised through all the prophets. You are the coming one. We look for no other." And you who have eyes to see and ears to hear and know Jesus to be God, who else could he send? How do you top sending God? You couldn't send a better one. You couldn't send a more faithful one. You couldn't send the stronger one. You couldn't send the holier one. To say, "He's the coming one," is to say, "I'm not looking for another deliverer. He's come, the promised one and the one sent of God." So that's what it first means to profess Jesus as Christ, that's what these disciples are saying, "We believe you're the one sent to us by God. We're not looking for a sign like the Pharisees to know. We believe you're the one sent to us by God in fulfillment of all the prophecies. You are the coming one. We're not going anywhere else." And what Jesus will say to them on one occasion, "Are you going to leave me, too?" "You have the words of life, where are we gonna go?" What about you, beloved, are you tempted to leave Christ? You want to go away? Where are you going to go if you leave the preaching of Christ in the gospel? Which one are you looking to come, or do you not need a deliverer? To profess Christ, then, is to say God has sent his Son.

Well, very closely linked up with professing Jesus then as the coming one, because he's the promised one and the sent one, is to see them and to confess that he is the one in whom Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled. If you're still there in Mark 1, look at verses 2 and 3. "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face,'" right? That's Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 43 are being fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He is the Lord who has come. He is the one who will be coming to his temple to cleanse it and to pure it, and who can stand before his face, if you would read the rest of Malachi 3. You can also go down to verses 10 and 11 in Mark 1, that after Jesus came up out of the water, they immediately saw the heavens being torn open. That's in fulfillment of Isaiah 64:1. Excuse me, that didn't make any sense, Isaiah 64:1. When they're praying, "Send your deliverer," and God says, "I will rend the heavens and come down and deliver you." So to see the heavens rent at Jesus' baptism and confess, "You are Almighty God. Come down to deliver us," you are fulfilling in earnest this new exodus that Isaiah wrote about, "to

deliver your people." Read there in verse 14 or really in verse 15, Jesus says, this is his own words, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come." Jesus says to you, "All of scripture with my coming has been fulfilled and is being fulfilled and will be fulfilled. I am the one whom all the Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled."

So that's what it means to confess Jesus Christ is the coming one because he's been promised of God and sent of God and the one in whom all Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled. Now don't get the idea that I just read a few here, that there are a few. I don't have two hours to go through the rest, you know, get to remind everybody of Mark and all the ways that we've seen it here, but just pointing you can see right at the very beginning of chapter 1 as Mark is laying out for us he is the sent one who fulfills all the prophecies of God. And then, as I've already mentioned, but just to make crystal clear to us, as the one in whom the prophecies of God are fulfilled, and if you've read those, the men's Bible study has been reading through Isaiah now for a number of weeks, a constant theme is God sending his deliverer to deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, to redeem us and restore us and bestow life upon us. That's why he's also to profess him as Christ. They're saying, "You are the hope of Israel. You are the..." Remember, Israel's in bondage, right? Israel's in bondage in Egypt. Israel is in bondage. They were sent into captivity in Babylon and they still didn't come out, and they were dispersed to the nations, and they live under the bondage, but they think it's just the tyranny of Caesar they live under and Jesus comes and says, "No, I'm a deliverer in a far bigger way. I've bound the strong one. I've bound Satan and I spoil his goods, and I open the eyes of the blind." To confess Jesus as Christ is to say, "You are our hope. You're the one we've been yearning for, as God has promised him to us since the beginning of mankind's aberrant history when he rebelled against God. You're the mercy of God manifest in the flesh to us."

Let's talk a moment, too, about this word Christ. What does that word mean? That word means anointed, right? I'm sure familiar it's most of you. Christ is just the Greek word for the Hebrew Mashiach, which gets transliterated as Messiah. Messiah, Christ, anointed, all equivalent terms just depending on what language you want to say it in but they all mean the one who's been anointed. Notice that's passive. You don't anoint yourself. It means that he is God's chosen servant. God elected him to this office. He did not put himself forward. And God anoints him as he anointed the kings in Israel for a task, as he anointed the priests in the house of Aaron. Remember, Aaron didn't choose himself, God chose Aaron and his line to be priests to him. God chose Saul first and he sinned and rebelled against God, and he rejected Saul, and he chose David and promised to David the kingdom. God chose David, a little shepherd boy, couldn't even hope for aspirations in the kingdom but God chose David and anointed him to be king. And God chose the prophets. Jeremiah, "Before I knew you, Jeremiah, or before you were formed in the womb," excuse me, "I knew you. Before you were conceived and came forth, I ordained you a prophet to the nation." Wow, talk about predestination. Where's Jeremiah's choice in being a prophet? God chose Jesus and the Father anointed his Son by the Holy Spirit to execute our redemption as our king who laid down his life for the sheep. As the prophet, he has told us clearly the will of God for our salvation. "Don't do a thing but take what I give you. Believe." And a priest who offered himself on the cross so you can draw

near to God, who reigns in heaven to intercede for you on the days when you don't feel worthy at all, how near to God. That's what it means that he's the Christ.

Let me say a word briefly here too, because it's important. A large thing of what we've seen, and this makes up a large part of the mystery of the Messiah, you notice, beloved, as we read in the gospel, you notice, beloved, as you live as Christians in this world, not all believe, do they? Not all see and can see what you see that Jesus is this one. It was particularly difficult for them to see because there's these two lines of prophecy that merge in Jesus. We've seen him declare twice now, we've seen him declare twice, we've seen him show it amply through his miracles, right, he's the son of man. It means, right, he is the Lord from heaven who's come down and taken on human flesh, right? He's that in Daniel 7, that figure in the clouds and the heavens like man, meaning he's the God. God is the one who rides on the clouds, going before the throne of God and receiving the kingdom, right?

Jesus has said, "So you may know that the Son of man has authority to forgive sins on earth, I heal this man." So Jesus has declared himself to be the Son of man. He says the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath. So what we've seen, what it means to profess Jesus as Christ, he is Lord of all. He has shown his authority over men. He tells you, "Do this," and you should say, "Yes, Sir." And when he got up in the synagogue and didn't talk like scribes, didn't give deference to Moses, but said, "I tell you, do this," they were thrown back. Jesus has authority over all spirits, "Be quiet. I don't want you making me known. Get out of that man and go." Jesus has authority of all flesh, opens ears, takes away leprosy and skin diseases, takes away your infirmities. He is Lord of all. He's Lord of the winds and the waves. He says, "Hush and be quiet, my disciples are afraid." He's Lord of God's ordinances. We don't celebrate the Sabbath on the last day of the week, do we? We celebrate it on the first day of the week because he is Lord of the Sabbath, and he can move it. Now that's great authority. You better be God if you're gonna move a holy ordinance of God. You'd better be God if you're gonna forgive sin, and of course, he is.

So to profess Christ is to profess him as Son of God. The Son of man took upon flesh. But I said there's a great mystery is and this is what we're about to see in earnest as we go on through the rest of the gospel. There's this line of prophecy as the Son of man being joined with the line of the servant of the Lord, this weak figure, this mute figure like a sheep led to the slaughter. And that's what's so baffling because they're just seeing a weak man like themselves, and yet there's unmistakable power, God-like power and authority radiating out from his words and his works, and the disciples are finally starting to get it. But then you start talking about suffering and this servant of the Lord and how does it match up? Well, we'll look at that in detail as we go through the gospel for the rest of the time. But to profess Christ is to profess him as Lord of all, as Son of God.

So to say intelligently, beloved, as we've seen in the gospel, if you're going to say Jesus is Christ, that means you're saying he is the one sent of God because he was the one promised of God, and he is the coming one and we look for no other deliverer, that he has done it. He is my prophet. I listen only to his word for my salvation. He is my king. He lay down his life to redeem me. He rules my life. He conquers my enemies and subdues

them, restrains them. He is my priest by whom I draw near to God and stay near. And he is the Son of God.

We don't have time, but I know when we profess Christ, I have to fill this out so we don't get half the picture because today when we say he's Christ, we're also professing that he's fulfilled Isaiah 53, right? He's gone to the cross to redeem us. He has risen from the dead, right? He has raised forever out of the powers of sin and death in this evil world and is safe forever entering into the presence of God which gives us hope to be saved out of this evil world. He's ascended and is seated and reigns and he hath sent forth the Holy Spirit which has created you, beloved, the church of Jesus Christ, and has given you eyes to see. It seems that's actually one of the interesting things, as they're professing him as Christ which is right, the fact that he's opened their eyes to see Christ proves that he's Christ because that was his office as he was sent to Israel to open the spiritual blindness of the eyes of God's people that they might be of actual use to him in this world. Because remember, the servant of the Lord is fully fulfilled in the church of Jesus Christ. He is the head and we are his body. God has a purpose in this world for his church to serve him as we profess Christ.

Let me leave you with some application, although I hope that was enough to just see Christ in his glory again. Let me ask you, beloved, how was that spiritual check-up? Has that been what you have professed when you get up and say the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in Jesus Christ"? Is that what you see? Is that what you say back to God? Is that your spiritual sight? I pray that it is. Let me say something, a word here of encouragement, particularly to our parents, I think, or to anybody. These disciples see Jesus as a tree, right? "Yes, you're the Messiah." But it's clear they don't see him distinctly yet. Well, what's the hope? Jesus is going to put his hand on them again. Beloved, as you are raising your children and telling them who Jesus is by reading to them the gospel, reading to them God's promises and prophecies, and as you are constantly asking them questions and it's clear, it's not distinct. Yeah, they've got something but if they're just seeing Jesus as a tree, what's the hope? Continue preaching. Continue admonishing. Continue rebuking. That's what Jesus does. He admonishes. He rebukes. He teaches. Continue that, applying the word of God through their lives.

Also, I think we should learn here, too, the importance of regular check-ups, especially right, let's remember the context, especially when our children are exposed to the leaven of unbelief. Let's say you go to a big worldly event, you go to an area where there's concentrated unbelief, you'd better come home and do a spiritual check-up and find out who is Jesus and make sure they haven't got a bunch of nonsense in their heads and fix it. Spiritual check-ups, a simple question: who is Jesus, because that will tell you everything about a person's spiritual state. If they do not profess who God reveals him to be, they're blind.

Let me encourage all of us to maintain contact with Christ right by his ordinance. You might think, wow, how great, how privileged these disciples to be personally touched by Jesus, led around through the land of Galilee, hear his words from his mouth, see his miracles, be brought to see and understand through his words and his works who his

person is, you might think, we are greatly disadvantaged today. No. The preaching of God's word is Christ's ordinance to give you sight. The administration of the sacraments is Christ's ordinance. He has appointed them in his church. That's why he's given gifts to silly men like myself to get up and do it by his power. This is Christ's goodness to you. This is Christ's personal touch to you. Maintain contact with it that you might see and grow in sight.

And finally, let us remember the words that we read in Ephesians 1. Beloved, I challenge you to make it a prayer every day this week, pray for the enlightenment of Grace and Peace. Pray for the spiritual sight of the members of Grace and Peace. Pray earnestly for it. See what God will do with greater sight given of Christ amongst us. Remember, Paul is praying for believers there. Yes, they have sight, but they need more sight. Pray for enlightenment for the members of Grace and Peace. And now may Christ hold all your hands until he comes again to touch you in glory and give you perfect sight. Amen.

Let's pray.

Almighty God, we rejoice triumphantly to make this profession before you that Jesus is the Christ, the deliverer, our hope. We look for none other. We pray that you would strengthen us in our faith, strengthen our eyes, give us greater sight to see the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask this in his name, Amen.