



The hopeful parent & teacher

*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 aught.
And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees walking.*

Mark 8:23-24

How would you describe the condition of the man in this passage? Could he see clearly at this time? No, people looked like trees to him. But was he still blind? No; he could now see. Previously, this man was totally blind. But now, as a result of the miraculous touch of Jesus, there is hope. Blurred as his vision may be at this point, he is seeing something. Hope has replaced hopelessness!

A person in this type of spiritual condition can be a puzzle. Is one's new sight the work of the Lord or not? If it is God's work, why is it so faulty? Doesn't Jesus grant full deliverance? Doesn't the Holy Spirit perform a complete work? But this man's sight is quite imperfect. The man who was blind is now seeing; this cannot be denied. Some real change has taken place, and this change is nothing short of miraculous. The man could not have produced this change himself.

In a similar way, dear teacher, your student can be a puzzle. You may have observed some signs of spiritual sight. It seems like there is a real change. Your student was blind before, but now he sees. And yet, on the other hand, his view of some things appears so inaccurate and mistaken that you question whether this can really be God's work. Spiritually speaking, your student "sees people as trees walking."

This is so puzzling! How am I to judge my child's state when he or she is in such a condition? What a blessing, dear parent, that you do not need to judge! God knows. It is His judgment that matters, not yours. You may go forward with hope – hope that God will grant further light and clarity. Hope that He who begins a saving work will finish it. Hope that clearer fruits of repentance, faith, and obedience will appear. Let hope spur you on to believing, praying, and working all the more.

God most often performs His miracles gradually, step by step. Consider the first light of a new day. A new day does not instantly change from midnight to noon, from total darkness to midday sun. No, first just a glimmer of light is seen so gradually that you may not know the exact time of sunrise. It slowly becomes lighter and clearer and then you know that a new day has dawned. Or think of a human being. When a baby is born, can this infant recognize objects, convey meaning in words, or even understand that he is a human being? Of course not, but he is really human nonetheless.

God can grant instant cures, great knowledge in a few moments, and full assurance of faith in an instant. It is His normal way, however, to work gradually. Dear child of God, is this not true in your life? Did God teach you all that you know by experience in one day? Were there not many errors that still needed to be corrected after God began in your life? Was there not much that had to be rooted out during the following years and much that needed to be planted? And is there not more growth and pruning required, in order for you to bring forth more fruit to God's honor and glory?

Do not become overly confused, discouraged, or depressed when your son appears to see some things spiritually but clearly mistakes other things, or when your daughter appears to spiritually see "men as trees walking." Hope in God. Be encouraged. Plead with Him in prayer. Pray that, if these are the first signs of His work, He will nurture and cause it to grow. Pray that this first faith may take

root downward and bring forth fruit upward. Pray that the tree of your child's life will become more clearly recognizable by its fruit.

In *Pilgrim's Progress*, when Christian crossed the Jordan River of death, it was Hopeful that held his head above the water until Christian could see God's deliverance more clearly. The problem was not in God or in His Word or in the Lord's promise of salvation. The difficulty was with Christian's perception of it. He could not see it the way he expected or with the clarity that he wanted.

Do not rush God. Do not prescribe to Jesus how He must save your child or student. Do not grieve the Spirit by doubting His work because it does not fit your timeline. Trust it in God's gracious hands; He will perform His saving work in His way and in His time. Allow the day to slowly dawn, and look forward with anticipation to His deepening and clarifying work.

Are you a hopeful parent, an anticipating teacher?

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