

Signposts

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[0 : 00] Signposts. I'm sure we all know signposts. A signpost is a post bearing a sign that gives information and guidance on a particular thing.

And if you're a reader of a signpost, you don't stand on that signpost, but you follow the direction where the signpost is actually pointing you to.

This is basically how we should understand the miracles that are recorded in the Gospels, all the miracles that the Lord Jesus Christ has been able to perform.

They are not miracles performed for the sake of miracles, but they are miracles standing as signposts, pointing to something much bigger than the miracles themselves.

So when we stand on the miracles and get lost and stuck, then we lose the whole purpose of the miracles themselves because they stand as signposts.

[1 : 05] If you recall probably well in the Gospel of John, the last chapter of the Gospel of John, you realize that this is exactly how the writer is able to describe all the miracles of Jesus.

They are signs pointing to the identity and the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. So when you read a signpost, so you stand and follow the information and follow through where it's pointing you to.

exactly with the miracle that is recorded with us here, the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida. It's standing as a signpost, pointing to the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, more especially about his person and his mission.

There are many people that do not really agree that this miracle of the healing man at Bethsaida is actually pointing to the person and the work of the Lord Jesus.

But I want you to see so closely together these two stories, the story of the healing of the blind man and the story that comes after that, Peter's confession of Jesus Christ being Christ, and see how there are a lot of parallels, a lot of similarities in them.

[2 : 30] And you will be able to see that exactly the healing of the blind man is really a signpost pointing to what the Lord Jesus Christ is about to do with the disciples.

Have a look with me when we are trying to see and compare these two stories together. For instance, in the story of the blind man, you see there is a question that is directed to the blind man. In verse 22, Jesus asks, Do you see anything? If you've been following all the miracles in the book of Mark, this is probably the first time that the Lord Jesus Christ will stand and ask someone if they see or they don't see or if something has happened.

Because Mark's favorite word, whenever he describes the miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ, is immediately. Whatever the Lord does happens immediately.

There's nothing like the Lord will inquire from the person that is receiving the healing or a particular miracle. But in this specific one, the blind man, Jesus is asking this person, Do you see anything?

[3 : 45] There's a question that is directed to the person. And look at the next story, the story of Peter's confession. There is a question in verse 29, which is directly to the disciples.

But what about you? Jesus asked, Why do you say I am? A question directed to the blind man and a question directly to the disciples.

Simply showing that probably the miracle of the blind man was meant to be a signpost directing to what Jesus Christ is doing. It's not only that. There is a command.

Look at the story of the blind man. After he has received fully his healing, in verse 26, there's a command that the Lord Jesus Christ brings to him.

Jesus sent him home saying, Do not go into the village. And this is what happens also in the next story, the story of Peter's confession.

[4 : 48] We hear the command after Peter has managed to say who Jesus was, the Christ, and he warns them. Verse 30, Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

It's pretty like a command. The other thing that shows that these two stories have been put together so much that one stands as a signpost. Look at where the miracle happens.

In two stages. This is the first time we see Jesus doing a miracle that happens in two stages. It's pretty like Jesus is trying once again.

He goes to this blind man and tells him for the first time, Do you see anything? And the blind man says, Yeah, I can see people.

They look like trees walking around. And Jesus tries again. And this time around, for the second time, he manages to see everything clearly.

[5 : 52] There's an attempt. And the second attempt is full restoration of sites. It's more like what the story of Peter's confession as well.

The first question is an attempt. Look at verse 27 there. Jesus is asking them, Why do people say I am? There is an attempt there.

Some people say that you are John the Baptist. Some people say that you are Elijah. And others still say you are one of the prophets. It's more like the first attempt, which is good, but not really good.

Wrong one. Just like the first sight of the blind man. It is the second one when Peter comes up now and says, You are the Christ.

That was now the correct answer that he brought. So I'm convinced that the blind man's story stands as a signpost, pointing to what the Lord Jesus Christ is actually doing with the disciples in this story.

[6 : 57] So for today, we would like to go through the text by answering three major questions. And by the end of our sermon, my prayer is that we will be able to get the right answers to these three questions.

The first one, Who is Jesus? It seems to be an obvious question that would give you probably an obvious answer.

This question is trying to disclose the identity of the man we worship, the man Jesus Christ. Who is he? If you've been reading the book of Mark from the beginning up to this point, this is what Mark has been trying to convey to his readers, building a story that will convey the full picture, the identity of the man Jesus.

Because it was not obvious for people to recognize and see his true nature and his true identity. Just like we see in the story here, there are a lot of attempts to the nature and the identity of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Jesus.

The reason why Mark has put the story of the blind man just next to the Peter's confession, just as I said, as a signpost, you'll wonder why Jesus had to try the second time for the blind man to recover full sight.

[8 : 31] Should we say that probably Jesus' power was in short supply? I don't think so. Jesus Christ is God and his power is never in short supply.

Probably you should think maybe the problem was on the side of the blind man. Maybe his faith was not good enough for Jesus to perform such a miracle.

I don't think that will be the proper answer to give because if you read the Gospels, you'll understand that in terms of miracles, in terms of whatever Jesus Christ is doing to people has nothing to do with the size of people's faith because at some point Jesus says even when your faith is as little as the master said, the problem is not the size of the faith, the problem is location.

Where do you put your faith? It doesn't matter whether your faith is little or big, but what matters is where your faith is. If your faith is in Jesus, it's what matters.

So this is not the problem of Jesus' power falling short or the size of faith of this blind man being small or big.

[9 : 51] I think this story, Jesus has done it intentionally as a signpost to show that disciples have got still some problems when it comes to the understanding of who Jesus is.

they still need full understanding. That's why if you remember well, we've started our text on verse 21 with the question of Jesus, do you still understand?

Which means up until this point, disciples, they have a problem when it comes to the understanding of Jesus and his true nature. Who is the Lord? Jesus Christ. If I may ask you, I think I will receive a number of answers to this question.

Some will say he's my savior, some will say he's my king, some will say he's my father and all sort of questions. We may say this is pretty obvious. But look at the attempt that the disciples have tried to bring to the question of who Jesus is.

They've tried to bring about three ways of understanding and interpreting the Lord Jesus Christ. some say he's John the Baptist. Why John the Baptist? Probably because John the Baptist was a great man, was a prophet who appeared after 400 years of silence.

[11 : 06] People have been waiting and waiting. There was no prophet before that. And when John the Baptist appears, but he never took long and he was killed. For those who believe in the resurrection of the dead, they probably thought Jesus coming up is John the Baptist who was resurrected.

and the other thing you see with Jesus which you didn't see with John the Baptist is miracles. Jesus is the performer of miracles. And probably they thought this is a blessed John the Baptist who has come back because of the miracles that Jesus Christ has been performing.

The other attempt they say is probably is Elijah. Just like the text that we've read in Old Testament text in Malachi. People have been waiting for the coming of Elijah before the great day, the day of judgment.

And they probably thought Elijah has come back again. Why? Because there are a lot of similarities when it comes to the ministry of Elijah and the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ has been performing miracles of feeding people miraculously.

So it is with Elijah. Elijah's risen people are from the dead. So it is with the Lord Jesus Christ. And people thought probably Elijah has come back again by trying to see the miracles and how Jesus was a great man.

[12 : 28] That was a good attempt but was wrong to the question of who Jesus is. And others thought probably he was one of the prophets because when Moses at his death he promised that the Lord would raise one day a great man like him and you know Moses was a very great man among the people of Israel and there was never a prophet like him afterwards.

And he promised that there would be a prophet like me. Being also a miracle worker people thought probably Jesus is falling into those categories.

They've tried to answer the question who Jesus is but they got it wrong. But the second attempt that comes from Peter he says you are.

when Jesus says what about you? What do you say I am? And Peter answered you are the Christ. He got it right. You are the Messiah.

It was not obvious because when you sit and you can say no I'm sure Jesus was a Christ looking at all the miracles that he's been doing how could the disciples fail to come to the conclusion that he was really the Messiah after all the miracles he's been doing.

[13 : 43] then we are wrong because the followers of Jesus Christ were not expecting these things when it comes to Christ when it comes to Messiah. The Christ or the Messiah that the disciples were expecting was not just an extraordinary figure like Elijah like John the Baptist or one of the great prophets was not just like a God or maybe a miracle work these are marvelous things and the disciples were very happy to see all the amazing miracles that the Lord Jesus Christ was able to perform but these are not the things that we're expecting when it comes to the Christ to the Messiah.

They modeled the Christ to somebody like David somebody like to the extent of Solomon someone that would come and establish the kingdom of Israel as a great and superpower on earth forever be able to destroy all the enemies of the people of Israel and establish a kingdom of peace and prosperity.

this is the kind of the Messiah they were expecting from not just a miracle worker. They were very happy with all the miracles that Jesus could perform but they didn't see in Jesus someone establishing a kingdom forever that will destroy all the enemies and establish peace.

This is the reason why they had to go the other direction that Jesus is just one of the miracle workers because this is what he's been doing. He is not establishing is not looking like David who has come to establish a kingdom.

He's not looking like Solomon who has come to establish a physical kingdom of peace and prosperity. He's not standing against all the Roman emperors and all the Roman rulers and destroy them.

[15 : 35] He's not doing all these things. Therefore he could not fit the categories of the Christ. So for Peter to come with this answer to say despite all your appearance not looking like one of the great people that we've been expecting for you are the Messiah this has been done by the help of God himself.

If you read the same story in other gospels like Matthew for instance Jesus would reply back to Peter and say it's not flesh and blood that has revealed this to you.

It was not something obvious to just get it right that Jesus was Christ because it wasn't looking like one. Looking like one. But for Mark the way he has put it this happens to be the second touch. Once again back to the signposts. It is the second time when Jesus touched the blind man that he will be able to recover full sight. So this is what Mark is trying to convey to us that for Peter to come up with the right answer that has been done because the Lord Jesus Christ has helped them has touched them for a second time.

So what does that mean for us? We have brothers and sisters who aren't Christians we've been praying for them. We've got friends, we've got co-workers who are not Christians and we've been praying for them.

[17 : 06] But unless the Lord Jesus Christ himself touches them and opened their hearts they won't be able to discover the true identity of who Jesus is, the King.

We pray for our people, we preach to them, but we pray also that the Lord Jesus Christ himself will perform a miracle of opening their eyes so they may recover full sight and come to the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There wasn't any effort that you did, that I did, to come to this realization of who Jesus is. It was a touch of the Lord Jesus Christ himself to bring us closer to his true identity.

You may sit down and think probably that the disciples were very dull. How could they miss to understand that Jesus Christ is the Christ?

But don't you think that even us, we stand in the same shoes like we can also miss that because we have got our own definition of who Jesus is.

[18 : 17] We are not expecting this King, the King who is there to rule your life in total. Because disciples were expecting a physical kingdom, were expecting a physical rule of Jesus Christ on earth, destroying all the enemies.

But they could not think of how Jesus was operating in a spiritual realm as the King of God's people who has come to establish the kingdom of righteousness.

And the greatest enemy of God's people is not Rome, but sin and the devil. And when Jesus came in order to establish the kingdom of God, he had to go the route of death, to die and pay for the sins of men.

Nobody could have a clue of that. Because of their definition of who Jesus was, looking at Jesus in the physical realm, they felt to get Jesus in the spiritual realm who has come to establish the kingdom of God in a sense of destroying the power of the devil and paying for the sins of men. men, what about us? What about you? What about me? We are very much comfortable with Jesus being the king of the church.

[19 : 45] Who is Jesus? He's the king of the church. He's the king of my life. He's the king of my life. We are very comfortable. We are very happy with the idea that Jesus Christ is the king of your hearts.

You are very happy and I'm happy too with the idea that Jesus Christ is the king of my inclinations. But it's not easy to believe that Jesus Christ is king of every aspect of your life. He's not just the king of the physical realm.

He's not just the king of spiritual realm. He's the king of everything. So to say Jesus Christ is my king is to submit and pay alledges to him from every aspect of your life.

That makes us uncomfortable because we don't expect Jesus to have the final say in our relationships, in our marriages, in our money, in everything.

[20 : 47] We don't want that kind of a king. And so when we say Jesus is king, we've got our own rooms and categories where we put him. We don't want him to come and rule every aspect of our lives.

And yet when we confess that he's king, he demands commitment, allegiance, loyalty, fidelity to him from every aspect of life.

That's the king we follow. The one who has come to pay for the sins of men. Who is Jesus? Jesus is our king.

He's our master and he's there to direct everything in our life. We should get that answer correct.

Jesus is not just the king of our private life. He's also the king of our public life.

He's also the god at the marketplace. He wants to have the final say from every aspect of our lives.

That kind of a king makes all of us uncomfortable.

[21 : 53] the second question, what has he come to do? If Jesus is the king, what then has he come to do?

What is the mission of the king? Have a look in chapter 31. Jesus begins now to explain he's the king, but he explains his mission.

He explains what he has come to do. Look at verse 31. Now he then began to teach them that the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by elders, chief priests and teachers of the law and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

What? That could be probably the astonishment of disciples. You are the king. They were not expecting the king to go this route.

everybody was happy to follow the king with an idea of probably thinking of positions and posts because they were thinking in a physical realm that Jesus Christ has come to establish a physical kingdom.

[23 : 10] And therefore, people like Peter, who stand as a spokesperson of the disciples, probably was thinking of a bigger post in that kingdom like a minister of home affairs for instance.

Everyone was happy for that. To hear this king telling them that no, the king has come to die, that was a shock to them.

And it shows clearly that even though they attempted to get right the first answer of who Jesus is, but they did not understand what he has come to do.

The second question, what has he come to do? He has come to suffer many things. He has come to be rejected. He has come to suffer shame and pain and to die.

This is the only way that he will be able to establish the kingdom of righteousness because he will pay for the sins of man and he will be able to restore everybody back to God.

[24 : 14] It's only after that he will be able to establish a physical kingdom of righteousness. They had no clue with this idea. It's like Jesus is taking them in the second road.

Remember the sign post again? They need to see everything clearly. They've got it right that I am the Messiah but they still have to understand why I have come on earth as a Messiah.

I have come to die. Death was central. Death was the mission. It wasn't an accident. I remember one day we were watching a movie, the passion movie.

My mother was one of the viewers we were watching and when Jesus was dying on the cross she was crying. Crying not for our sins because afterward we had a conversation but crying like a dead man, like someone has died, like we have a funeral.

Many times we approached the death of Jesus as if it was an accident, as if it was something that he was not expecting. That was his mission.

[25 : 31] He came to die. He came to be rejected and to die. That was the only way that he could bring the glorious kingdom on earth by paying for the sins of man.

This is the mission we should get right. He came to die. When you get the first answer correct and the second answer correct then you'll be able to get the last one correct as well.

But when you get the first answer, who's Jesus wrong and what he has come to do, you get it wrong and the next answer will be wrong as well. But just before we go to the last question, do we fully understand the mission of the Lord Jesus?

Do we really know that he has come to die? He has come to be rejected? Not really, because practically speaking, many Christians don't expect their king who has come to die.

We are happy with the idea of Jesus coming to us and helping us, taking care of us, and for sure he does that. we are very happy when we are sick to call upon our king and take care of us, whenever we are in difficulties.

[26 : 45] But we are not very happy to hear that our king has come to die. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ is the victory over the most dangerous enemies of the people of God, death and sin.

we must get it right that he came to die. And what about the last question that we need to get right in the story? Now that we know that the right answer to question number one, who is Jesus, he is

the Christ, he is the Messiah, and the second question, that he has come to die, now the last question is what kind of followers does he desire?

desire? What kind of followers does he desire? This is a Christian corner. If we are following a suffering king, then what kind of followers we ought to be?

There is another misunderstanding here because Peter never expected all these things because they had a very wrong view of who Jesus was and his mission.

And therefore, even following him, they followed Jesus with wrong expectations. They needed to get it right so that they understand the cost of discipleship.

[28 : 16] We are all followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, our king, therefore we all have to understand the kind of followers he desires. Look at verse 34.

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said if anyone would come after me he must deny himself and take up the cross and follow me.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world yet forfeit his soul?

Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and in my words in this adulterous and sinful generation the son of man will be ashamed of him when he comes in the father's glory with his angels.

Jesus now explains what it means to be his followers. We need to deny ourselves. Now that we know that we are following a suffering king we must be ready to follow him in shame suffering even in death.

[29 : 31] We should be ready to follow him that route. That's the call of every Christian. And when Jesus says we should pick up our cross and follow him we should understand that the cross wasn't something that people could associate with something good.

It was the punishment that was reserved only for rebels and non-Roman citizens. The Roman citizens could not die like that.

One of the writers even put it like this that it was a taboo to even think about it, to even talk about the cross. Now when Jesus says you should pick up your cross and follow me, he is promising his disciples shame, suffering, and death.

This is the route that we follow, but we get encouragement, he gives us peace. He's with us all the way. He will never leave us in this road, but whenever we want to run away the road of pain and suffering, then we lose it.

But when we follow Christ in the road of pain and suffering will definitely gain our lives. These are the three questions, brothers and sisters, that wanted us to reflect on who he chooses.

[30 : 54] What has he come to do? What kind of followers does he desire? He is the Christ, our king of every aspect of our lives.

God has come to die on the cross in order to pay for the sins of many. That way will establish the kingdom of righteousness. He demands loyalty, commitment to all his followers, readiness to suffer, to follow him as a Messiah and a king.

Amen. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much that you came to die, to pay for the sins of the world, to restore us back to you.

Thank you, Lord, that you will establish the kingdom of righteousness. We pray that God, just like you did with the blind man, that you will do it this morning by giving us full sight and understanding of your identity.

and mission in Jesus Christ. We pray. Amen.