

A Second Touch – Transparency

Jesus spit on the eyes of the blind man and put His hands on him.

He asked, “Do you see anything?”

The blind man looked up and said, “I see men but they look like trees walking.

Jesus put His hands on the man’s eyes again and told him to look up.

Then he was healed and saw everything well.”

Mark 8:22-26

This miracle is unique in that it happened in stages: 1) “I see men but they look **like trees walking**” and 2) “Then he was healed and saw **everything clearly**.” What’s the point? I believe Paul saw it: “We don’t yet see things **clearly**. We’re squinting in a **fog**, peering through a **mist**.” 1 Corinthians 13:12) Our vision of God, self and others is **distorted by spiritual cataracts**! This is our dis-eased condition (Medicine of Life)! Ask one hundred people about God. Less than 10% will speak of **God as Father** and yet, Jesus taught his disciples to begin conversation with God thus: “**Our Father**” (Luke 11:1-3)

✘ One of the Reformers of the 16th century, John Calvin, (doesn’t he look friendly?) began his masterpiece, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, with this statement: “Nearly all the wisdom which we possess consists of two ✘ parts: the knowledge of God **and** of ourselves.” (Institutes 1.1.1) In other words one can’t know oneself without knowing God and without knowing God one can’t know oneself ! Granted, this is deep theology; nonetheless, it’s common sense! For example, our knowledge of a coin: one can’t know one side (God) without knowing the other side (self).

Calvin proceeded: *"While joined by many bonds, which one precedes and brings forth the other is not easy to discern."* I want to proceed along the lines of **self-knowledge**, one side of the coin. From the Genesis story (Genesis 3:7-10) it's easy to discern: **there's no healing in hiding!** In our dis-eased condition what's required is: nakedness, honesty, risk, transparency, vulnerability, and exposure, all of which produce profound **fear!** (Genesis 3:8-10). Fear is that which prevents us from knowing God, self and others! I'm not a betting person; however, you can take this fact to the bank: we are basically afraid of God, others and, yes, of ourselves.

Please allow me to provide several citations. *"To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will not change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable."* (C S Lewis). *"Vulnerability is basically uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure."* (Brene Brown) *"Following Christ is a wild adventure full of risk, frustration, excitement, and setbacks. It is not an evening stroll in a planned community along a well-manicured path. (Larry Crabb) "Quit keeping score altogether and surrender yourself with all your sinfulness to God who sees neither the score nor the scorekeeper but only his child redeemed by Christ" (Brennan Manning, Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging)*

The blind man was ruthlessly honest and transparent about his condition: *"I see men but they look **like trees walking.**"* Imagine! For the first time in his life he saw light and objects. Nonetheless, he admitted that *"he didn't see things*

clearly, squinting in a fog, peering through mist."

His candid admission about his condition produced a "second touch"! I wonder , what would have happened had if he only settled for the first touch ? *"Nothing is more opaque than absolute transparency.* (Margare Attwood)