

# When Society Begg Jesus to Touch His Church

by Carter Conlon

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*Carter Conlon emphasizes the urgent need for Jesus to renew the church's vision and purpose in a society longing for hope and direction.*

**Duration:** 36:03

**Scripture:** Mark 8:22

**Topics:** "Church Revival", "Spiritual Renewal"

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## Description

This sermon focuses on the story of Jesus healing a blind man in Bethsaida from Mark, Chapter 8, emphasizing the need for the church to regain its vision and passion for reaching the lost. It highlights the importance of not just seeking miracles but allowing God to renew our hearts and give us a deeper love for others. The message calls for a revival in the church, urging believers to see people through God's eyes and be moved by His love for them.

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## Transcript

When society begs Jesus to touch his church, from Mark, Gospel of Mark, Chapter 8, if you have your Bible with you, I'd appreciate if you could follow along. Now, Father, I thank you, Lord, with all my heart for the anointing of your Holy Spirit. I thank you, God, with everything in me, Lord, that you are always speaking.

You are never silent. No matter the situation that we are facing or the day we're living in, you are always speaking, and even more so as the day of your coming approaches. And so, Father, I ask you for an anointing of the Holy Spirit to touch my physical body and give me strength to deliver this message and touch those who have come in online and are here physically in this sanctuary to hear it.

God, change us, move us forward into something that you have for us as your people in this time in which we are living. Help us, Lord, to be doers and not just hearers of your word. God, help us to open our hearts to you in a new way.

Lord, I thank you with all of my heart in Jesus' name. Mark, Chapter 8, beginning at verse 22, Then he, that's being Jesus, of course, then he came to Bethsaida, and they brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. So 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 on him, he asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up, that's the blind man, and said, I see men like trees walking. Then he put his hands on his eyes again and made him look up, and he was restored and saw everyone clearly.

Then he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town. Now Bethsaida, the name Bethsaida means house of hunting or fishing. It was a particular town in which people were engaged in a type of work that would benefit all of society, their work, in a sense, provided food for many people outside of their borders.

It's a type of the church, may I say, that you and I are digging into the Word of God. We are growing daily in grace. As the Bible says, as we behold Christ, we're being changed from image to image and glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.

And this nourishment that we bring out of the Word of God enables us to strengthen our society. That's the purpose of the church. It's the testimony of the church.

It's why the church of Jesus Christ is in the world. If it was only about salvation, then Jesus would save us and just take us all home immediately. But he leaves us here because we are the light of this world.

It's Christ in us that becomes that light. We have the Word of life. The disciples Philip, Andrew, Peter, James, and John all came from Bethsaida.

Now interestingly, when you read this story, it was the people who brought this man to Jesus. And we presume that this man became blind while living there. You know, as this healing began to happen, it appears to us that he already knew what men and what trees looked like.

So we can draw the assumption that he was a man at one time he could see. But for whatever reason, over the course of his life in Bethsaida, he lost his sight. And one of the expositors of this particular passage of Scripture that I read says that the inhabitants of this place were notorious for their impenitence and their unbelief, their behaviors, their disregard of the things of God.

They were known for this. And the scene reminds me of the days described by Jesus in Matthew chapter 24 and verse 12, where he said, Because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. Because society will get so dark that the love in my heart and your heart for people, the work of God, for winning the lost, for even sharing, bringing that nurture to them, will grow cold.

We will draw back as the people of God and we will draw back into preserving ourselves, trying to keep our own joy alive. And we will lose the vision, the passion for the work that God's given us on the earth. The passion, of course, is to win the loss to him, to be a living testimony of the goodness of our God, to be a display of the Christ who went to a cross, and a display of the reason why he went to a cross, a people who are given, Paul says, to the Corinthian church for the needs of others.

But because of the lawlessness, because of the vileness, because of the amount of evil becoming good and good becoming evil, there can be a revulsion comes into the hearts of even the most sincere of God's people. And in that revulsion of what society is becoming, we draw back, and in a sense, we become blind to our purpose on the earth. We start looking at other things, we start looking at comforts for ourselves, we start, whatever vision we have is focused on something other than what God left us here to do, and we become actually blind to our purpose on the earth.

You know, that passage speaks to me about this, about the danger of where we are, and how we can lose our sight partially, or in some cases, we can lose our sight entirely. But even in places like this, there are moments in history when God visits again. You see, Jesus himself was in Bethsaida, but the people there probably didn't fully understand.

Some did, but many didn't fully understand who he was. But it's a moment when fallen society itself is literally begging the Son of God to touch us again, to show them the pathway back to life. It says, they brought a blind man to Jesus and begged him to touch him.

And when there's a collective groan starts to happen in society, it's a type of this. It's people crying out to God and they're saying, show me the way, show me the way. I don't know the way to life.

I don't know the way out of despair and addiction and hopelessness, and my marriage is breaking apart. I don't know how to bring healing. I don't know how to connect with you, God.

I don't know. And in a sense, I feel in my spirit that society itself is bringing with its cry, it's bringing the church, it's bringing you. Society is bringing me again to the Son of God and saying, we beg you to touch your church again.

We beg you to give your people vision. One more time, we beg you to do something so that we might know the way out of this darkness and this hopeless situation that we find ourselves in. Even when in the book of Jonah, when Jonah took a trip far away from the purpose of God for his life, even then the captain, the shipmaster came down to Jonah and challenged him to wake up.

He said, call out to your God because we're perishing and who knows, but that God will answer you and save us. And I can hear this collective groan in this generation we're living in. They don't know what they're asking for, but they know instinctively that the answer should be in the church.

It should be in the house of God. And so I feel in my heart that the unsaved, those in Bethsaida who are infamous in a sense for their behavior and their lack of faith are calling out to Jesus to touch his church one more time for their sakes. They don't fully understand it.

They can't fully realize what they're crying out for, but that's what they're asking God to do. Would you please touch your church? Would you please touch those who are called by your name? Would you give them sight? Not only for their sakes, but for our sake. There is a collective cry again, I believe going out across this nation.

In verse 23 says, he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of town. In other words, Christ is saying, I want to take you away from all around you that has contributed to the loss of your vision. I want to touch you and let you see again.

I want to take you outside of what has discouraged you. I want to take you outside of what has disheartened you. I want to take you away from what took away your vision.

I want to take you into a secret place, just you and me. Jesus says, and in that place, I want to touch you in a way like you've never known perhaps in all of your life. It says he took him by the hand and led him out of town.

The interesting thing is, I believe the blind man began to see even before he could see. He began to understand that even though he was in a disadvantaged condition himself, that he had not escaped the attention of the son of God. Rather, the full attention of Jesus in his time of need was completely and only on him.

In other words, he could see or he saw his own value in the sight of God before he could physically see. And that's something the Lord will do for every one of his children. When you and I feel like we're all alone, we're in a time of isolation.

When the Lord seems to lead us away from everything that occupied our time, everything that we're familiar with, he takes us into this unfamiliar place, but we become aware that we are the full focus of his attention. I want you to know that today. I want you to know everybody who's been led out of town in this season that we're in right now, that you are the full focus of the attention of the son of God.

He is speaking just to you to do something in your life. And even though you might be aware of your failings, you might be aware that you haven't prayed the way you should. You haven't been living the way you should.

Maybe you're aware that you're left on the earth to be a testimony of the mercy of God, but your life has been fruitless, largely fruitless for, in some cases, for many years. And you might be a man or woman that says, I don't see the reason for my life. I don't see the purpose for my life.

I see the promises of God, or at least I used to, but somewhere along the line, I lost my vision somewhere along the line. I ceased to believe that God could use me. I ceased to believe that God could make a difference through my life.

I ceased to even care somewhere along the line. I lost the passion of God for the lost. They walk by me every day and I don't care.

I'm more interested in looking at the buildings in New York city and the trees than the people. And if I were to leave New York city, if I'm visiting, people would say, when I get home, what did you see in New York city? And, and folks, you're in trouble. If all you can talk about is trees and buildings and yellow cab cars and flashing lights, because all of those things are going to pass away.

It's only the people in the streets that are eternal. And if you and I are children of God, our eyes have got to be open to what really matters again. And it's only God that has the power to touch us and give us that vision.

And in order to do it, he will take you and I into a place that we're not familiar with. Technically speaking, he will take us by the hand and take us out of town. I've been there.

I know what that feels like. Then he does something very unusual. He spit on his eyes and put his hands on him and asked him if he saw anything.

Jesus, when he spit on the eyes of this man, I believe in type, at least it means that it shows us that it's by my mouth is by that, which comes from the mouth of God, that you have the power to renew your vision. It's a time, it's a season where we simply get back to the promises of God with a humble heart and say, Lord, I'm not where I should be. And I'm not doing what I feel I'm called to do.

And I'm not bearing fruit for your kingdom. Like I ought to somewhere along the line, I went blind, but oh God, the words of your mouth have the power to give me back my vision. The words of your mouth have the power to keep me alive in the spirit.

The words of your mouth have the power, oh God, to help me to see what ordinary men can't see. And those outside the kingdom of God can't see the words of your mouth, have the power to give me a renewed vision for my life, to see what my life is supposed to be and what my life can be if I will let you continue to speak to me. And not only did he spit on his eyes, it says, but he put his hands on him.

He touched him. The touch of God has the power not only to restore our vision, but to renew within us the heart that needs to go with it. It's not enough that I just see the lost all of a sudden.

I need a heart to go with what I see. That's why he doesn't just touch the man's eyes, but he puts his hands on him. And I can see him putting his hands perhaps on his chest and say, by my power within you, not only will I give you vision again, but I'll give you a heart.

I'll give you a heart. Oh folks, if you've lost the heart of what being a Christian is all about, let him lead you out of town again. Let him touch you in a new way.

Let your life become the principal focus of the son of God. Let him touch you in a way like he never has before. And then he said to him, do you see something? Do you see any, what do you see now? And then he said, I see men like trees walking.

In other words, I see people, I suppose, to the extent that I can see them unless God helps me to see them in a different way. I never used to see the people. I used to see the trees and I used to see the buildings and I used to see the lights and I used to see the entertainment.

I used to see the restaurants, but now I see the people, but I don't see them as much more than the trees and the buildings. But at least now I see them. But then he does something incredible.

He said, I put his hands on his eyes again. And this time he made him look up. I think it was, I want you to see something that you've lost sight of.

I want you to look up beyond the buildings and beyond the trees and even beyond the people. And I want you to see something. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. I want you to see your purpose. I want you to understand why I'm touching you again.

I want you to know why I'm putting my heart back inside of you as my church. I want you to know why I'm going to give you vision and revive you one more time. Because I so loved the world.

God so loved the world. He gave his only begotten son. And might I add to that verse, if God would allow me.

God so loved the world that he left you and I here. God so loved the world that he left us as a visible testimony of not only who he is, but of the passion of his heart. For every soul created in the image of God, advantaged and disadvantaged, educated, uneducated, rich and poor, living in a palace and living on the street.

Every soul equally valuable in the sight of Almighty God who died for every one of them. I want you to see my heart. I want you to see the passion of the work that I've entrusted to you on this earth.

I want you to understand that it's all about the lost. Everything is about winning the lost out of an eternal hell and into a place where they're going to dwell with God for all of eternity. He made him look up.

I love that. He touched his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored, the scripture says, and he saw everyone clearly.

That's what I'm praying for, for myself and for you and for this church, is that God, would you revive us again? God, would you touch us again? Would you give us a renewed vision? Would you show us things to come? Would you help us to see the value of every soul, every created in the image of God? Would you give us a heart that makes us unable, because of love, to back away in fear from the message that you have placed within us for others? Would you help us to speak when we need to and to reach out where we ought to? Would you, God Almighty, give us that inner strength that can only come from the Holy Spirit of God? It says, and then he sent him away in verse 26 to his house saying, neither go into the town nor tell it to nor tell anyone in the town. A lot of people have been perplexed by this verse for many years, but I see something in it. You see, the man had just experienced a miracle.

They had brought him to Jesus for a miracle. And folks, when God begins to do the miraculous, that can become everybody's focus. During the prayer meetings that we've had recently in this church, I've heard in the last week of two phenomenal, astounding miracles that God has done here.

One young lady with type 3 cancer was completely, stage 3 cancer was completely healed of her cancer by the power of God. Another young lady that works for us had broken a bone in her hand and it was already x-rayed. It was already diagnosed.

She went in to get an MRI to determine what kind of a surgery they were going to perform because this needed to be surgically fixed. When she went in last week to get the MRI, there was no break in the bone whatsoever. It had completely healed by the power of God.

And she told me, she said, I felt in one of the prayer services, God actually speak to my heart and tell me I've healed you. And you see, here's the point. We can't let the focus turn to just healing.

We can't run immediately back into town and say, I was blind and now I can see. And everybody just simply looks at the blind man who now can see and they start running just for the provision. They start running just for the miracles.

Here's what I feel the Lord was saying. Don't run back to town and let the focus just be on your physical healings. If I start healing the sick in your midst, if I start doing the miraculous, don't let that become your focus, but let the love that I've now put in your heart for every person you meet, let that be your focus.

Let that be the testimony of what God has done for you. Jesus was not telling this man never to go back to town, but don't run now because if you run out, we'll be just all about the miracles and nobody's life will be changed. Everybody will run to the house just to get some kind of a supernatural touch from God, but they will fail to understand the full mission and ministry that I'm placed upon my church.

Let your life become the answer for the deepest cry in the hearts of the people where you live. Remember, they brought this man to Jesus and begged Jesus to touch him, and that touch on your life and that touch

on my life is evidenced by a renewed passion for not only Christ, but a renewed passion for the work of God and for the lost in our society. Let that be the reason you go back to town.

Let it not just be about the fact that you were blind, but now you see, but let it be about what you see. Let it, your message not just be about your eyes. Let it mess, the message be about the incredible value you now see in every soul that God sets before you.

Let that be your message. Let that be what God does through your life. I believe with all my heart that we are living in a season of spiritual awakening.

I believe with all my heart that society itself is begging God to do something. They're not necessarily doing it collectively, but they're doing it when they're alone at night. They're doing it when they're sighing on the subway.

They're doing it when they're crying in their cars, and they don't even know what they're doing. They don't know what the purpose is, but what they're really doing is they're bringing a blinded church to the Savior and saying, please, we beg you to touch your house again. We beg you to cause your people to live and see us and to see our worth and to see our value.

We beg you to open the eyes of those who once fished and hunted and brought provision to us, but somewhere along the line, they've lost their sight. We beg you, God, to touch them. That's what the cry is all about.

They don't really articulate it that way, but that's really what's coming from the hearts. For where do they go if we're not alive? What message will they hear when they get there? If people start running to the church, are they just going to come into a place that's just flat-lined, where nobody sees them, nobody moves towards their pain, nobody offers them a seat, nobody puts their hand on the shoulder to pray, nobody sees them as being any worth or of any value? That's why God has to touch his church first. That's why it's got to be you and me.

That's why God has taken his church out of town. That's why. That's why we're not in town today.

We're out of town. Most of Times Square church is out of town. It's not about a snowstorm.

It's something deeper than that. God is touching us again. God is bringing us back to life.

God is giving us vision. God is showing us as a people what really matters. New York City, with all its lakes and its sandcastles, is going to be gone to the wind one day.

There'll be nothing left of this. The only thing left are the people walking in the streets. When I go to Central Park, I don't want to come home with a report about the trees.

I've heard that many times over the years. Did you go to Central Park? Oh, I did. What did you see? Oh, the trees are phenomenal.

I don't want to just see trees. I want to see the people in the park. I want to see the eternal value of every soul.

I want to be moved by the compassion of God and the love of God that casts the fear out of my heart. I'm speaking to people about a God who loves them. I want the priority of my life to be brought back into

focus, and I don't want to go back into town until I see people the way God is touching me to see them.

That's why the church is out of town. Praise be to God. Praise be to God.

Praise be to God. God knew this day was going to come. God knew it on Thursday, that the church would not be able to meet today.

Most everybody here are visitors, and thank God for you. God knew the Times Square Church would be at home today. My challenge to you, the congregation of this church, and those that join with us online every week, is to let God touch you.

Let this message go so deep within your heart that when you come back to town, it's going to be all about others. It's going to be about the people and the work of God. That's what revival is all about.

Revival is God bringing us back into focus again, giving us back our eyes, giving us back his heart. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord.

I want to sing a song that the Lord gave me years ago. It was sitting in my kitchen probably 30 years ago now, I guess. I had my guitar, and I just started to worship.

He gave me a song. I never, ever want that song to leave my heart, but I want it to increase for the sake of others. It's a song called I Love You, Jesus.

I'm going to ask people online to sing with us too as well today. Those that are here in the sanctuary, we're going to stand and sing it together. If you feel that God brought you here to renew you, if you feel that God brought you here today to give you a strength that you need to serve him and to love him, if you feel that God brought you here from out of town so that when you go back to your town or your city that you want to have a deeper passion for the work of God, you want a deeper love for the lost, you want to go all the way with God, and you want his purposes alone to be fulfilled in your heart.

If that's the cry of your heart, I'm going to ask you to, when we stand, just come and join me at the front of this auditorium, and we're going to take a moment just to pray together and ask God to do that very thing. Please don't be ashamed. Just get up when we stand and just move to the front, and then we'll pray together.

We'll believe God that he will hear and he'll answer the cry of your heart. Let's stand together, please, and we're going to sing this song together. I love you, love you, love you, Jesus, and I praise your holy name.

You are the Alpha and Omega. You're the first, the last, the same. And I love you, love you, love you, Jesus, and I praise your holy name.

You are the Alpha and Omega. You're the first, the last, the same. You let them hang you on a tree.

You died for sinners just like me. I raised my voice up with a cry. You let them hang you on a tree.

Died for sinners just like me. And I raised my voice up with a cry. You nailed scarred hands to dry my eyes.

And I love you, love you, love you, Jesus, and I praise your holy name. And I praise your holy name. You are the Alpha and Omega.

You're the first, the last, the same. I love you, Jesus, and I love you, love you, love you, Jesus. And I praise your holy name.

You are the first, the last, the same. You let them hang you on a tree. Thank you, God.

You let them hang you on a tree. You died for sinners just like me. I raised my voice up with a cry.

You nailed scarred hands to dry my eyes. You let them hang you on a tree. Let's sing that again.

You let them hang you on a tree. You died for sinners just like me. I raised my voice up with a cry.

You nailed scarred hands to dry my eyes. You know, I want you to know, everybody in the sanctuary today, I want you to know that Jesus loves you with a love that you can't even begin to understand until you allow your heart to be open to it. And say, Lord, I'm asking you to touch my heart again with an awareness of how much you love me.

And I want you to put that love so deep in me that I lose the fear. Remember the Bible says a perfect love casts out fear. I want you to put that love in my heart so deep that I'm no longer afraid to talk to others about you.

But I would be moved by your love for them. Perfect love casts out fear. I'd be moved by your love for people to tell them just that, Jesus, just, Lord, that you love them and to show them that you love them.

God, that you would move my heart, especially now when people are crying out in the darkness for light. Now, Father, I pray, God, for my brothers and sisters at this altar who have come from this city or maybe other countries, Lord. They've come.

They're visiting this church today. And I pray, God, that the deep cry of their heart has been met, that as they return home, they'd not be the same again. They'd be changed.

And for those of us in the city, Lord, I pray, God, for all of us, Lord, that, Lord, give us a harvest of souls in this generation. By the thousands, bring them into the house of God. Give us the courage to love them.

As confused and dark as many may be, give us the courage, Lord, just to be there for them and to love them, God. Help us, God, as you begin to heal and do miraculous things in our midst to not focus just on those things, but to focus on that which is greater than all of these things, the value of one soul, the value of one life, the value, God, that you showed us in leading one blind man out of town and spending so much time with him. Thank you, Lord, for knowing that we are loved, that you care, that you haven't forgotten us, and you're not upset with us, Lord.

You love us. You love us, Lord. You love us.

You love us. Make us aware of that, God. Make us aware of our incredible value in your sight so that we can tell others what we know about ourselves, God.

Father, I thank you for this with all my heart. Thank you for the snowstorm. Thank you, God, for using it to bring us here today, God.

Thank you, Lord. We bless you, God. With all of our heart, Lord, we thank you.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. I see a lot of tears here this morning.

I just encourage you at the altar just to spend time with the Lord. There's no rush. There's nowhere to go anyway.

Spend time with God. Just pray it through. Just pray it through.

Talk to him until you know that he's answered your prayer. Talk to him until you know you've found the strength that you need. There's no rush.

Pray together. We'll just keep the music going for a little bit longer, and we'll sing a little bit. And David's going to lead us in some worship.

And as he does, thank you, David, for coming in. Thank you for making the effort to get here today. Thank God for Harry, for our sound guys.

Brother Chooks, God bless you. Good to see you. Praise the Lord.

Father, just, we bless you. We bless you, Lord. I don't know what else to say.

We bless you, Lord. You've been so good to us, God. We thank you.

When you bring us back together as a church, Lord, God, may we be so transformed. May the love of heaven be so filling our souls, oh, God, that we'll never be the same again. Give us the eyes to see people, Lord.

Give us the eyes to see people the way you see them, Lord. That's our cry. That's our prayer.

We bless you for answering that in Jesus' name.

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