

# Walking Trees

## Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida



“ They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man’s eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, “Do you see anything?” He looked up and said, “I see people; they look like trees walking around.” Once more Jesus put his hands on the man’s eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. Jesus sent him home, saying, “Don’t even go into the village.”

## Peter Declares Jesus Is the Messiah

Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.” Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.” Mark 8.22–30

### BETHSAIDA

A city on the Sea of Galilee. It was home to the apostles Peter, Andrew, and Philip (John 1:44; 12:21). The abundance of game and fish is responsible for the name Bethsaida, which means “house of the hunter/fisherman.” Josephus reports that under the tetrarch Philip Herod, Bethsaida’s status increased to that of a polis and was renamed Bethsaida Julias after the Emperor Augustus’ daughter. Philip is also said to be entombed at Bethsaida. Several miracles in Jesus’ ministry occurred at or near Bethsaida, such as the feeding of 5000 (Mark 6:30-44), Jesus’ walking on water (6:45–52), and the healing of a blind man (8:22–26). Nevertheless, the inhabitants of Bethsaida were largely unmoved by these wonders, as the city is cursed by Jesus for not heeding his message (Matt. 11:21-22). Excavations on the mound of Bethsaida, have unearthed many remains including several fishing implements such as anchors, hooks, and net weights.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From the Eerdmans Dictionary

## Questions

- ❖ Why do you think Jesus took the man away from the village?
  
- ❖ Did Jesus have a purpose in the partial healing? If so, what might it be?
  
- ❖ What strikes you as strange about this passage?
  
- ❖ In what way do you think the early church might have found this story an encouragement?
  
- ❖ Why do you think Jesus told the man not to go into the village?
  
- ❖ Surely Jesus knew what other people were saying. Therefore, why would he ask his disciples what they were hearing?
  
- ❖ What do you think Peter meant when he acclaimed Jesus as the Messiah?
  
- ❖ Why do you think Jesus warned them not to tell anyone?
  
- ❖ What is the connection between these two stories?
  
- ❖ What does that connection mean for you and me today?