

The Bereans...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day (Acts 17:11). "Be a Berean" will regularly cover topics that arise during Lockport Alliance Bible classes. Contact Franklyn Pfeil—pfeilmail@yahoo.com—with questions or comments.

"focus"

I hadn't taught in months and I was pumped, ramped, and amped for the first day of Sunday school. When the time arrived, I opened my Bible, adjusted a microphone, and was raring to go--ready to teach everything I know to everybody; to peer into the sun of righteousness and never blink; to look into the ark of the covenant and live to tell about it; to ride the whirlwind with Elijah and launch into ever deeper water with Ezekiel, to go the extra mile, to walk in the Spirit down the road to Emmaus...

Easy, Trigger, I told myself. Take a deep breath, don't get ahead of yourself, and remember that sometimes you've got to get them to see trees walking before they can see Jesus.

Say what?

I inhaled slowly, deeply, as I looked out over the students. There were teenagers mixed in with grandfathers mixed in with young Moms. There were doctors and secretaries, teachers and students, businessmen and laborers, ties and t-shirts, blue and white collars.

Some of them were **ready**--Bibles opened, pencils poised in the air--to be immersed, inundated, saturated, and baptized in scripture's deeper waters. Some of them didn't look like they could even swim. *Give 'em Jesus, just give 'em Jesus, I reminded myself. He'll relate on every level.*

Shelley, who'd been scurrying to get binders and class notes to every student, then scurried to the front of the room to focus the projector. When I refer to a verse of scripture, her lightning-like fingers make a few computer keystrokes and--presto--the verse is on the wall. Very often, scary often, she'll anticipate a verse before it arrives in my mind, and it's on the wall before I speak it.

"Ready, Shellster?" She nods. So I gather their attention, and say a short prayer.

"Please turn to Genesis 1:1." It's on!

Biblical clarity doesn't always arrive all at once. Jesus knows that. He even gave Sunday school teachers and students a miracle all our own! You'll find it in Mark 8:22-25. I know it's meant to encourage teachers, because Jesus "took the blind man by the hand and led him out of town." The tutor in biblical times (see Galatians 3:24) led the students by the hand to school.

And I know it's meant to encourage Bible students, because the man recovered his sight in stages--a little at a time, just like we learn! After the first stage of Jesus' treatment, the man looked around and said that people looked "like trees walking." So Jesus administered further treatment. This time the man saw clearly. Jesus the Healer could have healed him all at once. But Jesus the Teacher took him by the hand and clarified the truth one stage at a time.

All too soon the hour reached its end. As I packed up my things, I overheard a couple of Bible veterans, talking scripture as they were leaving. Two teenage boys were still in their chairs, poring over their Bibles together. In my neck of the woods, when students leave a late September Sunday school class discussing scripture and not the Buffalo Bills, it's been a good day.

Somehow Jesus had met each one of them. And from right where they happened to be, he'd led each one individually--by the hand, so to speak--to a greater clarity. The man in Mark 8 who saw men as trees walking saw Jesus, at first, in the same way. Jesus was blurry, indistinct, his features muted and melted together.

If it looks that way to you, if you sense that Jesus is out of focus, I urge you to attend a good Sunday school class. You'll find three of them listed immediately below. You might not have been to Sunday school since you were fourteen. Or you might be fourteen. Whoever you are, a welcoming hand's been held out to you. Take it. Focus.

It is our fervent hope that you will 'be a Berean' by attending one of these Bible-based classes this week—

"Behold"-- Sundays at 9:45

"Psalms for Guys" -- Sundays at 9:45

"Having a Mary Spirit" -- Sundays at 9:45