

**“Healing the Blind” Matthew 20:29-34, Sermon Notes**  
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**Saving Grace Bible Church**  
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**Morning Worship Service**

“As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed Him.<sup>30</sup> And two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!”<sup>31</sup> The crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried out all the more, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”<sup>32</sup> And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, “What do you want Me to do for you?”<sup>33</sup> They said to Him, “Lord, *we want* our eyes to be opened.”<sup>34</sup> Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.” (Matt. 20:29-34 NAU)

**Introduction**

We continue our look at God’s Word and we are with Jesus and His disciples as they head to Jerusalem for the Passover

- To this point in our study the disciples and their limitations have been on display
- Their self-love and self-will have been evidenced in their fighting for prominence
- We have seen their attempts at power plays for authority culminating in the Sons of Zebedee seeking to use their mother to secure the best seats in Heaven

Their weaknesses have been prominently on display

- Matthew has not withheld the political infighting that took place among God’s men

To some degree this is encouraging to me. Not that we can sin it up, as Christ exposed their sin and pointed them to the way of righteousness. And eventually these men learned the lessons

- What gives me encouragement is the patience and compassion of our Lord
- The very compassion demonstrated in our Lord this morning from our text

The reality is that we are sinners and even leaders’ sin. Even the men who were to be used to set the foundation of the Church were men who struggled with pride and self-will

- They sought the things of this world

Now mind you they did not remain this way. These sins were found in them and revealed to them. They were rebuked and exposed and we can tell from later books they learned their lessons

As Peter sums up in 1 Pet 3:8-12:

“To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;<sup>9</sup> not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.<sup>10</sup> For, “THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS, MUST KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT.<sup>11</sup> “HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD; HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.<sup>12</sup> “FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER, BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL.” (1 Pet. 3:8-12 NAU)

In this context Peter had just addressed Husbands and wives and their interaction with each other. He had explained how we are to respond to authorities. He had taught the pattern we are to walk in

- Now in these verses he summed up how we are to conduct ourselves
- In humility
- In harmony
- In being kind hearted

These very qualities the disciples lacked at this present stage of their ministry development

- The Lord was gracious to confront it
- He was patient with their failures
- He was merciful to forgive them and to continue to use them for His great work

Listen, God has always used sinners to accomplish His work

- Despite our sin God is at work accomplishing His great purpose in us and through us

We all grieve when our sin is revealed

- It is never fun to have our sin exposed
- It is never good to find a sin within that we were unaware existed or to be reacquainted with a sin that we thought we had put to death

Neither is an enjoyable experience

The battle with sin has produced many responses within people

- Some ignore sin within:
  - If we don't talk about it, then it does not exist
  - If we look the other way and busy ourselves with other matters then we can ignore the battle against sin
  - Don't talk about it. Don't worry about it keep seeking other things
- Some exalt Christ while continuing to sin:
  - Yeah we should not sin but if we do sin it is ok because we love Jesus
  - They turn to Christ and bring their sin with them
- Some even justify their sin:
  - This is just who I am
  - I must have this sin

We must recognize this, God has called us to be Holy. He has called us to be set apart in this world

- He called us to be zealous for good deeds (Titus 2)
- He called us to be a Royal Priest Hood (1 Pet 2)
- He has called us to be transformed (Romans 12; Eph 4)
- He has called us to walk in the Light, in the Truth
- To abide in the vine and bear much fruit
- To be Holy as He is Holy (1 Pet 1)
- To walk in love
- To put on the new man and make no provision for the flesh in regards to its' lusts

- To follow His will which is for our sanctification (1 Thess 4)
- To walk in good works which He has prepared beforehand for us to walk in (Eph 2:10)

God has called us to a life of sanctification. He has called us to a life of holiness BUT we battle with sin and sin is often found existing deep within us

- So we must not turn away from our sin and ignore it
- We must not live up because life is short and God is glorified in our sin, as some have taught

*Instead we turn from our former destitute condition, leave our sin behind, and follow Christ who is compassionate and will help us in our frail condition*

- This is the great truth found in our text this morning
- Let us look at God's Word

### **Body**

"As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed Him.<sup>30</sup> And two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"<sup>31</sup> The crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried out all the more, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"<sup>32</sup> And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?"<sup>33</sup> They said to Him, "Lord, *we want* our eyes to be opened."<sup>34</sup> Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him" (Matt. 20:29-34 NAU)

### **Setting**

"Jericho is on the west bank of the Jordan about 15 miles North East of Jerusalem. Walking from there would involve an ascent of 3,500 feet, as Jericho is 846 feet below sea level and is near the dead sea. While Jerusalem is in the Judean hills 2,625 feet above sea level." ZEC pg 745 FTN 1

Mark and Luke say that Jesus was about to enter into Jericho Matthew reports that Jesus is leaving Jericho when this account occurred

- This discrepancy could be accounted for the Old Jericho and the new Jericho
- New Jericho revolved around Herod's home built in the area
- The old ruins of Old Jericho exist even till this day

By this point Matthew indicates that Jesus is now traveling with a large crowd. There are clearly people who are traveling with Jesus in his traveling party as the text previously indicated that Jesus was traveling with His disciples and He took them aside

- But since Jericho acted as a town where travelers came as they ascended to Jerusalem there were others who caught up to Christ as He was traveling
- Many pilgrims would be making their journey to Jerusalem
- There would be over 1 million people heading to Jerusalem for this most holy celebration.
- Jesus and his party merged with the other travelers

Clearly the people recognized that they were walking with Christ

- The crowds were filled with excitement
- There was a buzz among the crowd

“As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed Him” (Matt. 20:29 NAU)

- Again not that all of these people came from Galilee but that they have joined him here as He is passing through Jericho passing on through to Jerusalem

They were talking with each other and they had spotted the great teacher of Israel

- By this point the rumors of Christ’s healing and power have gone through the land
- The stories of demons responding to Christ and storms calming at the power of His voice
- The crowds considered Christ great

As Jesus was walking with the crowds and as the crowds started to gather. It is likely that people were running ahead to stand on the side of the road to catch glimpse of Christ as He travels to Jerusalem

While they were doing this, they were talking and sharing stories, and while this was happening two blind men hear the commotion and begin to call out to Jesus

- Mark tells us the name of one of the blind men

“Then they came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar *named* Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road” (Mk. 10:46 NAU)

- He was either well known before his healing or well-known after his healing to be able to identify him
- Mark goes a step further and identifies his father

The men were not only blind but as Mark indicates they were beggars. Which indicates they have been in this condition from some time. And they like many blind people were forced to the streets to try to live off the sympathy of others

- They were along a major road for travelers who would be most inclined to carry money
- They were also out around the holiday which means most would be in a reverent mood and ready to contribute to the destitute
- They were together as Matthew indicates that there were two here. While Mark only refers to Bartimaeus

There is a stark contrast in this account. The Pharisees who thought they could see rejected Christ and sought to kill him. These blind men who knew they could not see sought Christ knowing that He is the Lord the Son of David

- *The self-righteous turn away from God as they are not in need while the broken and destitute turn to God for deliverance*

## Outline

### 1. The Destitute Condition

“And two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” (Matt. 20:30 NAU)

The blind men respond to the news that they hear by calling out to Jesus to help them

- Because they are blind, they have no idea how near or far away Jesus is
- Since the crowds rebuke them it is obvious that Jesus was not near at this point
- This is another indication to the size of the crowd or how narrow the pass was that Jesus was traveling on
- Again imagine this like the scene of a victory parade where people are lining up along the road waiting to catch a glimpse of Christ
- It is very likely that Jesus could have healed others along the way but only this account is recorded
- It is also possible that only this miracle took place as to indicate His messianic credentials

When Jesus does stop, He sends people over to get the men and bring them to him. So the crowd was numerous

“And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him *here*.” So they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you.”<sup>50</sup> Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus” (Mk. 10:49-50 NAU)

- Apparently the man was convinced that he was going to be healed because he left his stuff behind with no fear of losing it

While the crowds are forming these two men in their destitute condition call out to Jesus. Lord have mercy upon us

- Because they were blind, they would have a life that was seriously limited in both the pleasures they could see to enjoy and opportunity to work and care for their needs

They knew their condition and they called out for Christ to deliver them

- They did not have to be convinced of their problem
- They relied upon their other senses to help and they called out for help

One more indication of their destitute condition is their calling out to Christ

- The word translated as “cried out” is used
- The word *Krazo* – used by the Canaanite woman in Matt 15:22 who was seeking help from Christ for her demon possessed child
- It has the idea of being hysterical
- It is the idea of being desperate. They are pleading for mercy
- They are making a big display
- It would not be too far to imagine that they are here wailing for Christ’s attention

## **2. The Persistent Plea**

“The crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried out all the more, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!” (Matt. 20:31 NAU)

Now look at this, the crowd was irritated by these men and sternly rebuked them

- The crowd did not care about the condition of these men

- They were too busy getting into position to see Jesus themselves
- Here were two men who not only wanted to see Jesus BUT needed to see Jesus

The crowd should have moved these men to position where they could interact with Christ. Sadly they instead responded with their own self-interest and sought to silence these men

- These blind men were seen as nuisances rather than as men in need

Yet with all of the rebuke the men kept pressing on in calling out to Christ

- They were persistent in their pursuits even in the face of open hostility
- Why? Because their awareness of the difficulties of their condition help them to recognize that their blindness is far worse than the discomfort of the crowd's displeasure

Even if the crowd hated them and rebuked them, they were going to calling out because they were desperate and tired of their condition

### 3. The Object of Faith

"And two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"<sup>31</sup> The crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried out all the more, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" (Matt. 20:30-31 NAU)

"They said to Him, "Lord, *we want* our eyes to be opened." (Matt. 20:33 NAU)

They recognized that Jesus possessed authority and that He was the Messiah

- They called Him Lord recognizing His authority
- They called Him the Son of David recognizing that He was the long-awaited Messiah

It is quite possible that these men have been dreaming of this encounter for quite some time

- Their friends and family could have been telling them news of Jesus' work
- They could have been hearing rumors for months about how this great Prophet was doing mighty deeds among the people of God

They obviously heard of his teaching and his works and believed that this was the Son of David

- This was the one who God promised to come
- This is the messiah and He is the object of their faith

They know He has the authority as they called Him Lord

- Kyros – Lord speaking of His right to rule
- He is the master
- He is the one in authority and they were willing coming under His authority

Again the contrast with the pharisees who have rejected Christ as the messiah and have rejected his works is stark

- The Pharisees are seeking to kill Jesus and remove him as a threat to their power

- These two blind men seek Christ and they immediately recognize that He has all authority

But more than all authority he comes through the line of David

- He has the right to sit on David's throne
- He is the one God promised would come
- Anyone who was going to have God's approval must be through the line of David

Just as the Angel announcing the Birth of Christ told Mary:

"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;" (Lk. 1:32 NAU)

Now notice how our Lord Responded to these two men:

#### **4. The Compassion of Christ**

"And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" (Matt. 20:32 NAU)

"Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him" (Matt. 20:34 NAU)

As Jesus was walking by He heard these two desperate men calling out to Him and He stopped and called out to them

- Again imagine the scene as the crowds are walking around Christ and people are lined up to see Him and you have these two men calling out to Jesus, "Lord, Son of David, Have Mercy upon us."
- Christ hearing the voices stops and calls out to them asking what they want

The obvious request, we want to be able to see

Now again look at verse 34 and see our Lord's response

- He is moved with compassion
  - This is in contrast with the crowd which had no compassion for the blind men and sternly rebuked them
  - The crowd should have moved these men to a prominent spot for a better opportunity to be helped
  - But they did not
- Jesus responded with Genuine sympathy and concern for these two men

He was moved by their broken and destitute condition.

- He was moved by their persistence
- He was grieved at their suffering

By this point these men have approached Christ and have explained to them that they desire to see and Christ reaches out and touches them and they regain their sight

The two men who were a nuisance to the large crowd were now objects of praise to God

- These two men who faced the selfishness and godlessness of others received the mercy and grace of God
- They were immediately delivered from their blindness
- The healing was not gradual but instantaneous
- They move from being in total darkness to being in the light and able to see instantly
  - No ceremonial washing
  - No need to demonstrate a greater faith
  - No need to give a certain amount
  - No need to prove they were worthy

The great compassion of our Lord lead to immediate healing and deliverance for these two men

Now finally notice the response of the men:

- They regained their site and followed Him
- They now joined the crowd in the journey to Jerusalem

This is the most appropriate response. This man delivered us from our greatest calamity. I am going to go wherever He goes

It is quite possible that Mark 10 records the name of Bartimaeus because he continued as a follower of Jesus Christ and was known to the early Church. He was the very man in their midst. He was the blind beggar who could give an account for the work of God in his life

This text is a demonstration that the Messiah is here

Jesus is healing the blind

“Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped” (Isa. 35:5 NAU)

- Many times Jesus has healed the blind in Matthew’s account

“As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"<sup>28</sup> When He entered the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."<sup>29</sup> Then He touched their eyes, saying, "It shall be done to you according to your faith."<sup>30</sup> And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them: "See that no one knows *about this!*"<sup>31</sup> But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout all that land” (Matt. 9:27-31 NAU)

*“the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM”* (Matt. 11:5 NAU)

“Then a demon-possessed man *who was* blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw” (Matt. 12:22 NAU)

“And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them *those who were* lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them.<sup>31</sup> So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel” (Matt. 15:30-31 NAU)

“And *the* blind and *the* lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them” (Matt. 21:14 NAU)

## Conclusion

This text is amazing for many reasons: As JM points out:

“The twelve would one day look back on the healing in Jericho and on all His other acts of mercy and realize that their Lord was never too preoccupied to be compassionate, never in too much of a hurry to heal the afflicted, never in too much agony Himself to be insensitive to the agony of others.” JFM pg 248

Now I suppose there are a few things we can take away from this glorious passage

- Matthew has once again demonstrated that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah
  - Jesus is bringing sight to the blind
  - He is showing compassion and mercy
  - He is Lord
  - He is the Son of David
  - He is everything that God had promised from long ago

It may even appear at this point that Jesus is also at the height of His popularity

- The crowds were surrounding Him and flocking to see Him
- Whenever He traveled around, He would gather a great multitude of people

It is also likely that all of this positive attention helped dull the instruction that Christ gave to His disciples when He told them that He was going to be arrested by the religious leaders, tried, and given over to the Gentiles to be mocked, and crucified

- The positive attention and large following probably made this instruction all the more difficult to hear

So while seeing the greatness of Jesus Christ, as both Lord and the Son of David, we also want to see the mercy of Christ upon sinners

Blindness has always been a description of spiritual death

“They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They have eyes, but they cannot see;” (Ps. 115:5 NAU)

“He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.’”<sup>10</sup> “Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.” (Isa. 6:9-10 NAU)

Jesus describing the Pharisees described them as blind guides:

“Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.” (Matt. 15:14 NAU)

“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, *that* is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.’” (Matt. 23:16 NAU)

“You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!” (Matt. 23:24 NAU)

- The religious leaders were in darkness and leading the people astray

But not only the leaders were blind but also the people

“in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 Cor. 4:4 NAU)

“rescuing you from the *Jewish* people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you,<sup>18</sup> to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.” (Acts 26:17-18 NAU)

Man is described as spiritually blind. Not knowing God and not able to see the light. He is fallen and destitute. He is without hope in this world

- This is our condition without Christ
- We are enslaved to sin and lusts
- We are dead in our transgressions and sins
- We are under the power of darkness and are without hope

And as Gentiles it is far worse. We are without the promises, we are without the fathers, we are without the covenants. We are entirely without hope. We are in a desperate condition

Until we call out upon God. Until like these two blind men we call out to Christ to have mercy upon us. Until we call out for deliverance to be saved

I know some are afraid to come to Christ because they do not want the ridicule and the difficulty that comes from others. But listen, if you know your deeply desperate condition and the terrible price to be paid as an enemy of God, you will gladly give up all to be with Christ

- No amount of mockery will sway the heart of a person who understands their desperate condition
- There is no fear in coming to Christ for the person aware of their total corruption

And notice as well the honor these men gave the Lord

- They recognized him as Lord and as the Son of David
- They do not fight against His authority but instead honor it.
- They recognize and affirm what God has promised about Jesus through the prophets and they yield to this knowledge
- There is a total surrender to Christ

Finally, notice how these two men immediately followed Christ

- Sinner this is how you come to Christ
  - You acknowledge your hopeless condition
  - You call upon the only name through which you could be saved, the name of Jesus Christ
  - You seek earnestly and He will not turn you away
  - And you follow Him

The rest of our spiritual journey is encouraging each other to continue on in following Christ

- This is the story of every believer in this room
- We recognized that we were sinners and unable to stand before God. We were enemies and without hope in this world
- We called out upon Christ to be rescued
  - We asked God to save us
  - Through which He gave us a new nature
  - He opened our eyes to see the truth
  - He teaches us from His word about Himself and His ways
  - He makes us a part of the Church so that we can grow and mature into the image of Christ
  - We turn and follow Him

All of this because He had compassion upon us. No one is here because they are great in themselves. Each of us are here because our Lord is filled with compassion and showers that compassion upon us to care for our great needs

- So if you do not believe, then see your true condition and turn to a merciful God
- If you do believe and you find sin within turn once again to a merciful savior and follow Him

*There are plenty of people following Christ because of His greatness. Let us be like these two blind men. We follow Christ not for the popularity, not for the inevitable show that will follow, but for the realization that we are desperate sinners and cannot live without Him*

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