

Matthew 20:29-34

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 4/29/2012

How can we be delivered from our spiritual blindness?

Prayer

Father, what a privilege it is to come before you, to sing Your praises, to declare Your excellencies, to sing of Your great love and Your mercy in sending Jesus to die for us. What a privilege it is to share this together, to exalt You and praise Your name together as a body. Father, we are thankful for what Your Son has done for us. We are so thankful. We are thankful that You revealed that through Your Word, that You brought forth the truth through Your Word and You revealed Your Son, Jesus the Savior. And Father, we are so thankful that You take Your Word and You produce in us the life of Christ, that You use it to make us like Christ. Father, I pray today that You would open the eyes of those who do not know you. That You would help those who do know You, those of us who do, to see clearly, Lord God, what You intend from Your Word. I pray we would have no sin in our lives, we would confess it and be right before You and receive Your Word and allow it to do its work in our lives. We thank You for this time. We commit it completely to You now. In Jesus' name, amen.

Sermon

Have you ever met a blind person? Someone who is totally blind? Someone who cannot see? There are those who have impairments, but I am talking about someone who is totally blind. We had a blind person that came to this church for a while. And it was evident that they could not see. If you looked at her, it was obvious her eyes were not able to see. Now if she or any other blind person were to tell you that they are not blind, you would say "That's not true." And I don't believe there is a blind person out there who would say they can see with their eyes when they can't. Yet, what's interesting is we see in Scripture that God uses the illustration of physical blindness to help us understand our spiritual blindness. He uses this illustration to help us see our state before Him. Indeed, we see this in Acts chapter 26 where the apostle Paul is recounting his salvation and the Lord's instructions to him when he was saved. Acts 26:15, Paul is, or Saul as he was known at that time, is responding to the Lord who met him on the road to Damascus. And it said, and he said,

¹⁵ 'Who art Thou, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶ 'But arise, and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; ¹⁷ delivering you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, (and look at this) ¹⁸ to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me. [Acts 26:15-18]

Matthew 20:29-34

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 4/29/2012

The apostle Paul's calling was to share the Word of God that people's eyes would be opened and they would turn to God from sin and trust in Christ. You see, because of sin, we are blind to the realities of our own sin and the Savior Jesus Christ, by nature, by our first nature. There are multitudes of spiritually blind, that actually believe they can see. There are some of you here today that do not know Christ and you are blind to the truth concerning yourself and Him, but you think you understand and you think you see. But we are going to see today that we are blind apart from God opening our eyes to see. We are in a desperate state, spiritually blind to our sin and the Savior, with no hope. And with this in mind, I believe we are going to see today a theme that has run through the book very clearly and culminates at this time as Jesus is on the way to the cross. I find it amazing that we have this specific situation at this point. And I believe we are going to see how we can be delivered from our spiritual blindness. And some of you say, "Well, I have already been delivered from my spiritual blindness!" Well praise the Lord for that! But I would say, "Examine yourself to make sure that is the case. And if it is, praise the Lord."

But we will also see for believers, we can become dulled. Our eyes can become clouded with sin. So today, we are going to see that only Jesus opens blind eyes. Would you turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 20? Lord willing, we will finish this chapter today. And it has been a wonderful study in the book of Matthew. It has been a wonderful study where we have seen Jesus, the King of the Jews. God the Son has taken on human flesh. He has come to His own. The angel told Joseph that "You shall name Him Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

We have seen very clearly that He came to His own but they were sitting in darkness and they saw a great light. We have seen Him manifest the truth concerning our sinfulness and Himself being the only Savior. It has been over two and a half years as we have looked over this portion. Jesus comes to the point where He is about to be crucified. And we see that the people have basically hardened their hearts. They have seen the mighty deeds of the Lord Jesus Christ and they have hardened their hearts. He is something that is exciting, but they have not repented of their sins as we saw back earlier in chapter 11 and chapter 10. We saw very clearly the wicked, evil, and adulterous generation. We saw the wicked leaders who wanted to destroy the Lord Jesus. We saw the Lord Jesus withdrawing from the people and teaching them basically, teaching them in His going but withdrawing from His public teaching. Because they had closed their eyes and clogged their ears and so Jesus would veil His truth to them and move towards sharing with His disciples. And we saw very clearly, Him share multiple things with the disciples, wonderful truths. And we saw in chapter 16, He would direct His focus to the cross. And we see at this point now He is on the way to Jerusalem, we saw earlier in chapter 20. Chapter 20 :18,

¹⁸ "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, ¹⁹ and will deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up." [Matthew 20:18-19]

And last week we saw God's view of greatness. We saw God's view of greatness, which it is totally opposite of the world's view of greatness. That to be truly great in the kingdom of God, one must

Matthew 20:29-34

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 4/29/2012

humbly, in the context of total dependence, serve the Lord Jesus by serving His body. We saw the way up is down, the first will be last, the truly humble will be exalted at the proper time. We saw Jesus give Himself as the perfect example, "Just as the Son of man did not come to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many."

And it is in this context, as Jesus is traveling to Jerusalem to give His life a ransom for many, we have this instruction and we have these final things in the final days of His life on earth. And I believe this is crucially placed by the Spirit of God in the context of Matthew writing. And I believe today we are going to see how we can be delivered from our spiritual blindness. Again, let's turn to Matthew chapter 20. We are going to be looking at verses 29-34. Verse 29,

²⁹ And as they were going out from Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. ³⁰ And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" ³¹ And the multitude sternly told them to be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" ³² And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" ³³ They said to Him, "Lord, we want our eyes to be opened." ³⁴ And moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him. [Matthew 20:29-34]

A wonderful passage. It's actually recorded in the three synoptic gospels. We have it also in Mark chapter 10 (you might want to put your finger there). And we have it in Luke chapter 18 as we have heard already. Mark chapter 10 and Luke 18. So how can we be healed from our spiritual blindness? First of all, we need to acknowledge our hopeless condition and call upon Jesus Christ to save us. I find so often the gospel that goes out these days in churches does not call upon man to recognize their absolute need of salvation from the Lord God. We need to recognize and see very clearly that we are in a hopeless spiritual situation. So our text says, verse 29, "They were going out from Jericho and a great multitude followed Him." Now we need to remember that Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem. He has left Galilee. He has gone east to the Parian area on the other side of the Jordan. He has crossed it and He is now in the Jericho area as our text says. And Jericho was west of the Jordan River, north of the Dead Sea. It was about 14 miles from Jerusalem. Now getting to Jerusalem was not a straight 14 miles, it was an ascent of about 3,000 feet and it was a very windy road. So it was still a journey, but it was within a day's journey. Jesus is getting very close to Jerusalem where He would be crucified. And our text says there is a large crowd following Him as they are going out of Jericho. Look at verse 29: "And as they were going out from Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, 'Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!'"

Now at this point, there are some who would say there are some biblical difficulties between the three different stories, true stories, related in the synoptic gospels. And what I mean by that are the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And you say "What are you talking about?" And indeed, unbelieving scholars will use this passage and those passages to say, "Well the Bible is not true." But we know, those who have trusted in Christ and have the Spirit of God, know that this is truth. We know that it is true. And

Matthew 20:29-34

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 4/29/2012

that there is no error. So what is the problem and what is the actual resolution in the context of the Word of God? Well, first of all, we have this point that they are going out from Jericho and He meets two blind men. But then in Luke 18:35, the text says,

^{35a} And it came about, while He was approaching Jericho, a certain blind man... [Luke 18:35a]

That's one blind man right? And in the book of Mark, chapter 10:46, it says,

⁴⁶ And they came to Jericho and He was going out from Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude. A blind beggar named Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road. [Mark 10:46]

So what is going on here? We have two blind men in Matthew, one blind man in Luke, one blind man in Mark. And if you noticed, Matthew says they were leaving Jericho, Mark and Luke say they were coming and approaching Jericho. Are these different situations or is it the same situation? How is this resolved? Well first of all, God's Word is true. And the issue of the multiple men versus one is not a big deal at all to start with as the false teachers would say, and the false brethren in these ivory tower seminaries would say. It is not a big deal at all. If I were to tell you I have a son named Daniel, that does not mean I do not have another son named Stuart. I am just pointing to one out of the two. And we see in those other two books very clearly, the focus is on that single beggar versus the two in Matthew. But what about this approaching Jericho and leaving Jericho thing? Well if you do a little historical digging, you will see that Jericho fell under God's mighty hand back in Joshua. And at that time, there were the ruins of the old city about 2 miles away from the modern city of Jericho that Herod had built. And it is very apparent that Matthew was coming from a Jewish perspective. And he is saying, they are leaving Jericho, they had evidently left that original city that was destroyed but yet partially inhabited. And they are coming on the way. And Luke and Mark say they are approaching Jericho, which would be the modern Jericho. And I believe that is the situation that is going on here. There is no error in Scripture. God's Word is absolutely true.

So with that in mind, what do we see here? Back to our text, verse 29 of Matthew chapter 20: "And as they were going out from Jericho (I believe that is the old Jericho, the one that was ruined but still partially inhabited), they were going out from Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And behold, two blind men were sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying 'Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!'" There are two blind men, they are on the path. Obviously, they are begging as we see. Bartimaeus was the blind beggar, as we see in the other portion of Scripture. They are begging, they are blind. I don't see many blind beggars these days. I see people who look like they are healthy, begging these days. But these men are blind. These men are blind and they are begging. And they hear Jesus coming and they are calling out (the word means demanding, they are demanding with a loud voice), saying (continually habitually), "Lord have mercy on us!" They are just saying it over and over and over again, "Son of David."

Matthew 20:29-34

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 4/29/2012

Now, I think it is extremely important, before we get into our text in depth, that we understand that Scripture, as we have seen in the book of Matthew, reveals, as I have shared already, that physical blindness is a picture of spiritual blindness. If you remember, we saw in chapters 8 and 9 in the book of Matthew that God used physical symptoms and sickness as a picture of our spiritual condition. Like the leper we saw, or the woman with the hemorrhage that only Jesus could heal and thus cleanse. That we are all unclean because of sin. We saw clearly our sin leaves us in a helpless and hopeless situation. And as I have shared before, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Yet the reality is, apart from Christ, we believe, although we are blind to the truth of our sin and Christ, we believe we are actually ok. The book of Proverbs says, we see in Proverbs 21:2,

² Every man's way is right in his own eyes. [Proverbs 21:2]

You see, that is why, when you talk to someone who does not know Christ, they think they are fine. They think their way is right. But God has to intervene and break forth with His Word and open their eyes so that they would turn from darkness to light. Proverbs 30:12,

¹² There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes, yet is not washed from his filthiness. [Proverbs 30:12]

You see, in God's sight, our sin is filthy. Our thoughts are detestable. Our actions are wicked. In God's sight, we are sinful. And we, apart from Christ, think that we are ok. We think we are probably pretty good. Some of you that don't know Christ here today probably think, "You know what, I'm a pretty good person." God's Word says "There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes, yet is not washed from his filthiness." God's Word says that there are none righteous, as Paul summarizes the case against mankind with Old Testament truth. Romans 3:10,

¹⁰ "There is none righteous, not even one; ¹¹ There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; ¹² All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one." [Romans 3:10-12]

God would tell His people who did not trust in Him, the Israelites, that sin had caused a separation between Him and them so that He does not hear. And because of our sin, we do not realize where we are going. We do not realize, we are like a blind man. Some of you who do not know Christ, you do not see where you are going. 1 John 2:11,

¹¹ But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes. [1 John 2:11]

You see, sin causes us to be blind to where we are going, what we are doing in light of the truth of God and the judgment of God. What did Jesus say concerning, excuse me, what did Matthew say concerning Jesus coming into Galilee. Matthew 4:16,

Matthew 20:29-34

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 4/29/2012

¹⁶ "The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light, And to those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, Upon them a light dawned." ¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." [Matthew 4:16-17]

Folks, spiritual blindness and dullness can not only affect, and does totally affect non-believers, it can affect believers too. We can become dull to spiritual truth, we can forget our former purification from sins. Mark chapter 8 clearly shows the disciples had a hardened heart. They didn't understand. Jesus says to them, when they were discussing about bread after He had miraculously fed 4,000 and 5,000, He says to them,

¹⁷ "Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart? ¹⁸ "Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? [Mark 8:17-18]

And He goes on to share how He had provided miraculously. Those who do not know Christ are blind and do not know their destiny until God breaks through with His truth and opens eyes that they would turn to Him from sin. The consequences of our sin are serious. The consequences of our sin are very serious. Paul says in Romans 2:5,

⁵ But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart (he is speaking of the religious Jew who does not know Christ) you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, ⁶ who will render to every man according to his deeds. [Romans 2:5-6]

We see very clearly the reality of punishment for sin. Revelation 20:11,

¹¹ And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. ¹⁴ And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." [Revelation 20:11-15]

Apart from God's revelation, we are blind. "There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes, yet is not washed from his filthiness." And our blindness manifests in our self-sufficiency, rather than a dependence on the Lord God. Revelation 3:15, as Jesus addresses those in Laodicea who claimed to be the church. Revelation 3:15, He says,

Matthew 20:29-34

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 4/29/2012

¹⁵ 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth (it literally says "vomit you out of my mouth"). ¹⁷ 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, ¹⁸ I advise you to buy from Me (Jesus says) gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. [Revelation 3:15-18]

It is Jesus Christ who provides the light for us to see the truth, as He shares His Word. Scripture portrays every man and woman in captivity to sin, blindly going along to their judgment. What is the solution to spiritual blindness? It is salvation through Jesus Christ. Turn to Psalm 146 for a minute, Psalm 146. The work of Jesus Christ was predicted, that He would die for sins and thus open eyes, was predicted in Psalm 146 and many other places in the Old Testament. Psalm 146:1,

¹ Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul! ² I will praise the LORD while I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. ³ Do not trust in princes, In mortal man, in whom there is no salvation. ⁴ His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; In that very day his thoughts perish. ⁵ How blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, Whose hope is in the LORD his God; ⁶ Who made heaven and earth, The sea and all that is in them; Who keeps faith forever; ⁷ Who executes justice for the oppressed; Who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free. ⁸ The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; The LORD raises up those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous; [Psalm 146:1-8]

And Jesus Christ fulfilled the prophecy, we see. Turn to Luke 4. We see very clearly the reality that blindness is a picture of our spiritual state. Luke 4:16, this is where Jesus began the ministry.

¹⁶ And He came to Nazareth, (that was His hometown) where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.¹⁷ And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written (I think that's amazing, He had to go through and He found it. And He says here...), ¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are downtrodden, ¹⁹ To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." ²⁰ And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. ²¹ And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." [Luke 4:16-21]

Matthew 20:29-34

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 4/29/2012

He was sent to open the eyes of the blind and that's speaking in the context of forgiveness of sins. Let me share it one last time, Acts 26, what I read earlier. We see that Jesus told Paul He was sending Him, Acts 26:18,

¹⁸ to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.' [Acts 26:18]

The gospel comes concerning our sin and Christ. And Paul was sent to open eyes that they would turn to Christ. Physical blindness is a picture of our spiritual blindness. We are blind to our state and to our fate. Have your eyes been opened to your condition? Have you seen the truth and responded? Wonderful passage, I'm not going to read the whole thing but you can read it later. It is in John 9 and this is on your bulletins. And we see in that context that a blind man, who was blind from birth, was healed by the Lord Jesus Christ. And that the Pharisees were trying to get him to blaspheme. And all he could say was "All I know is I was blind and now I see." And as they continued to try to make him blaspheme, we see Jesus responding to them at the end of this portion. John 9:39

⁹ And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind." (He is speaking of those who see unclearly; those who are prideful, they think they know it. But the Pharisees...)⁴⁰ Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things, and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

We are going to see in a moment, we need to acknowledge our blindness to the truth. We need to acknowledge it, that we are sinners in need of a Savior. Ok, with that in mind, back to our passage. We see on this road that as Jesus is about to go to the cross, verse 29 in Matthew 20. "And as they were going out from Jericho (I believe that is the older city), a great multitude was following them. And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, 'Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!'" There was a multitude of people. We know in the context that the disciples were with Him also and they are on this road and they are approaching and they are hearing, because they are blind right? And they are hearing that Jesus is coming. And notice what the multitudes do. They do not like this. They do not like them crying out and yelling this. They "sternly told them to be quiet," verse 31. That word speaks of a very serious reproof. A verbal warning, even a threat! It is the same word that was used concerning what Peter said to Jesus when he rebuked Him when Jesus said He was going to the cross. When Jesus said to Peter, "Get behind me Satan." It is the same word used when people were reproofing those bringing infants for Jesus to pray in Matthew 19. Those disciples were.

And so here, the crowd is reproofing these blind guys. They are reproofing them, but I love it. What do they say? Verse 31, in the middle, "But they cried out all the more." The crowd did not stop them, they cried out all the more saying "Lord have mercy on us, Son of David!" On a physical sphere, we see these

Matthew 20:29-34

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 4/29/2012

men acknowledge their absolute need. They knew they needed to be saved. The term mercy is a very important word in Scripture. *Eleos* in Greek, it speaks of this idea of a motion of compassion that is aroused by the affliction of another. One pastor (Wayne Barber) writes concerning this,

The idea is to show kindness or concern for someone in serious need or to give help to the wretched, to relieve the miserable. Here the essential thought is that mercy gives attention to those in misery.

They are saying "Have mercy! We are in misery! We are in serious need! Have mercy on us!" And mercy is compassion or sympathy, this type of mercy, which is aroused by action. This word for mercy, which is a different word than some other ones in Scripture, it is mercy, it is compassion that is aroused to actually act upon it. And it is interesting, you see only those who recognize their absolute helplessness in Scripture crying out for mercy. Have you ever cried out for mercy? If you have not, you probably have never seen your absolute need for salvation. In Scripture, we see this. We see those who are totally helpless. We saw those parents seeking deliverance for their demonically-oppressed children back in Matthew 15:22 and 17:15. Or for the blind, back in 9:27 and in our passage. They were absolutely helpless. They knew they could not get their sight back on their own. It was an absolute fact. "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" Helpless and hopeless. And if you are helpless and hopeless, and Jesus is manifesting Himself to you, it does not matter what everyone else is saying. They are saying "be quiet" and they cried out all the more, all the more.

These days in churches, the gospel is so perverted. You hear of a gospel that says "Jesus will do this and that for you," rather than "You are in a helpless state. You are hopelessly condemned to death, the second death for your sin. But Jesus Christ died for your sins. And He came to help the hopeless, to open blind eyes." And if you don't see it, pray "Lord God, open my eyes. Open my eyes." So how can we be delivered from our spiritual blindness? First of all, we have to come totally acknowledging our need for salvation. We need to come, "Lord have mercy!" I'm not saying you have to say a certain set of words, but you need to have a total acknowledgement that you cannot do it! And Christ can. "Have mercy. Have mercy on us." But that is not enough. It is not enough to acknowledge your need to be saved. That is not enough. We must also believe that Jesus is the Lord and Christ and trust in Him alone for salvation. Look at our passage again, verse 30 in chapter 20. "And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, 'Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!'" And they were crying out over and over again, the Scripture would reveal. "And the multitude sternly told them to be quiet. But they cried out all the more, saying 'Lord have mercy on us, Son of David!'"

And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' And they said, "Lord... we need a new pair of shoes." That is not what they said. "Lord, we want our eyes to be opened." We want our eyes to be opened. "Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him." Not only do we need to recognize our total need, we are blind, we are totally inadequate of saving ourselves. We will fall into that eternal pit because of our sins. Because of the darkness we walk in, we do not see where we are going. Until we acknowledge the truth to the living God, we are helpless and hopeless. We cannot save ourselves. We

Matthew 20:29-34

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 4/29/2012

must turn to the right person of Christ, the right Jesus, the true Jesus, THE one revealed in Scripture, the only true living God. Until we do that, we will stay in our blindness and in our sins.

So then, what did Jesus, what did these blind men understand, about Jesus? What did they know about Him? Look at the end of verses 30 and 31. "Lord have mercy on us, Son of David!" And then, down in verse 32, "And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' They said to Him, 'Lord, we want our eyes to be opened.'" Notice this, they called Jesus Lord. These blind men called Him, *Kurios*, that is the Greek word for "Lord." And it speaks of someone in authority, it speaks of the master. But it is extensively used in Scripture to speak of the "I AM," the self-existent one, the King of kings and Lord of lords. We see very clearly in Scripture that the term "Lord" speaks of the self-existent one, the I AM. It speaks of God. And more specifically, it speaks of Christ. The term "Lord" in the Old Testament comes from the phrase "Yahweh," which means "I AM." And then we see the term "Jesus," "Yeshua," "the Lord (the I AM) is salvation." The I AM is the One who saves. That is what Jesus means.

"...and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins." [Matthew 1:21b]

And I believe, in context, these blind beggars believed that Jesus was the I AM and I will show you that. No one, other than the person of Jesus Christ, can open blind eyes. No one other than God can do this. Acts 4:12,

"And there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." [Acts 4:12]

Scripture reveals very clearly that if you do not recognize the Lordship of Christ, you cannot be saved. We must recognize that He is the Lord. Colossians 2, Paul says to the Colossians: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord..." And the context was faith, "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord," the I AM. Romans 10, turn there for a minute. These blind beggars did not say, "Hey buddy!" They said "Lord." They said "Lord." Romans 10:8, and this is the word, the truth.

⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"-- that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth (that is, say the same thing with your mouth) Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (The point is, whatever is in your heart is going to come out in your mouth. We need to believe that He is the Lord and that He died for our sins.) ¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; ¹³ for "Whoever will call upon the name of the LORD will be saved." [Romans 10:8-13]

Matthew 20:29-34

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 4/29/2012

"Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" They were calling out to the Lord. But they also called on the Son of David. What does that mean? What does "the Son of David" mean? In the context of the Jews, it was very clear what it meant. You see, God had made a promise to David, a covenant with David, that his kingdom and throne would be established forever. Near the end of his life, the prophet Nathan reveals this truth. 2 Samuel 7, let's turn there. 2 Samuel 7:12, we need to know what this term "Son of David" really means and what these beggars understood about the Lord Jesus. 2 Samuel 7:12,

¹² "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever..... (and then down to verse 16 of 2 Samuel 7) ¹⁶ "And your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever." [2 Samuel 7:12-16]

And then flip up to Psalm 89, we will briefly look at Psalm 89. So God promised to David his kingdom would be established forever, that it would be through one of his descendants as we will see, the promised Messiah. Psalm 89:1,

A Maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite. I Will sing of the lovingkindness of the LORD forever; (hopefully you were thinking that earlier) To all generations I will make known Thy faithfulness with my mouth (I hope you do that too). ² For I have said, "Lovingkindness will be built up forever; in the heavens Thou wilt establish Thy faithfulness." ³ "I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant, ⁴ I will establish your seed forever, And build up your throne to all generations." [Psalm 89:1-4]

The Old Testament prophesied One who would reign as the King, the Messiah King upon His throne forever. And we see that Jesus is this Son of David and they believed it. 2 Timothy 2, I will read this for you, verses 8-9,

⁸ Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel (Paul says), ⁹ for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. [2 Timothy 2:8-9]

Luke 1:30,

³⁰ And the angel said to her (this is to Mary), "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. ³¹ "And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. ³² "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; ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end." [Luke 1:30-33]

Matthew 20:29-34

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 4/29/2012

When they said “Son of David,” they were sharing the reality that they believed He was the Messiah King, prophesied in Scripture. They believed He was the Christ. He is the Lord and Christ. “Son of David” points to the incarnation. The term “Lord” points to His deity. We have His humanity and His royalty, we have the Messiah King from Scripture who would die for our sins. They understood He was the anointed One, the Christ. These blind men knew these prophesies and they were saying over and over again “Son of David! Son of David! Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” And folks, we need to recognize this. The reality is that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. One last passage I want to share here, Acts 2. As Peter shares on the day of Pentacost the truth, the reality of what Christ has done. He is sharing it to Jews who should know the truth of the Old Testament, like these beggars and like you do now. Acts 2:36,

³⁶ "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both (what?) Lord and Christ-- this Jesus whom you crucified." ³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, (when they recognized that Jesus is the Lord and the Son of David, the Messiah, the Christ, they were pierced in their hearts) and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (or literally, "be baptized because of the forgiveness of sins); and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [Acts 2:36-38]

What is the response when you know that Jesus is the Lord and the Christ? It is to repent from sin. He is the Lord. He is the Savior. We are sinful, deserving of judgment. Repent. Repent. These blind beggars, I believe, recognized who He was and they humbly cried out to Him for mercy. I believe this story is perfectly placed by the Spirit of God through the writer Matthew at the right time as Jesus is coming to the cross. You cannot be saved apart from believing Jesus Christ is God and that He is the promised Messiah, the one Who would die for our sins. Brother and sister and friends, what is the object of your faith? Is it a Jesus of your own imagination or of some preacher's imagination? Is it an idol built up who will fix your life or is it the Jesus from the Word of God who is the Lord and the Christ, the Messiah?

So notice what happens here. They make a request of Him. Back to our passage. Verse 32: “And Jesus stopped and called them, and said...” And back in Mark's chapter, we have a little more vivid description which I really love here. In Mark 10:48, a more vivid description of the situation. “And many were sternly telling him to be quiet (this is the beggar, 10:48), but he kept crying out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ And Jesus stopped and said, ‘Call him here.’ And they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘Take courage, arise! He is calling for you.’ (And for those of you in darkness, take courage! Arise, He is calling for you!) “And casting aside his cloak (look at what it says), he jumped up (he leaped up), and came to Jesus.”

The blind beggar, Bartimaeus, leaps up. And evidently, it reflects both of them because both of them came to Him. And our text says “‘What do you want Me to do?’ And they said to Him ‘Lord, we want

Matthew 20:29-34

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 4/29/2012

our eyes opened.” And what happens? Verse 34, “And moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes and immediately they regain their sight and followed Him.” He was moved with compassion.

God is compassionate towards our pitiful state. We are helpless and when a helpless person recognizes their helplessness and cries out to Christ, He is compassionate. The term compassion you know, speaks of “one internal organ.” It spoke of sympathy that deeply moves you internally. You have felt that when you have been moved internally. The Lord Jesus Christ was moved internally with compassion. It is something you feel. It is something that moves you to action. It is closely related to mercy. We saw it earlier in chapter 9. We saw it in the story of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10. We saw the Lord’s great compassion for the lost sheep in their sin, Matthew 9:36. We saw throughout, the Lord’s compassion illustrated in healing those who were sick but pointing to the ultimate healing of their sins. We saw in Matthew 18:27, in the illustration of the parable, that the lord had compassion for his slave in that parable. And he forgave him the debt. When you come to Jesus broken, acknowledging your helplessness, He has compassion. He is compassionate. He was moved with compassion towards them.

When you recognize you are spiritually blind and you come to Him, “Lord God, help me see. Help me see.” He has compassion. He has compassion. And I believe these beggars were not only physically given sight, but spiritually given sight. Take a look again at our passage. “Immediately they regained their sight (and look at what happened) and followed Him.” And in the book of Mark 10:52,

⁵² And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he regained his sight and began following Him... [Mark 10:52]

Jesus says “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” He did not go on his way, he followed Jesus Christ. Luke 18:42

⁴² And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." ⁴³ And immediately he regained his sight, and began following Him, glorifying God. [Luke 18:42-43]

I believe these blind men not only received their physical sight, but they received their spiritual sight. Their faith made them well. They were glorifying God and following Jesus. So how can we be delivered from our spiritual blindness? We need to recognize our sinful condition, that we are blind. We cannot see; we cannot perceive. We need to acknowledge the truth of what God says. “The wages of sin is death.” We are in our sins; we are helpless and hopeless, apart from the Lord who is the Christ who died for our sins. Recognizing your need is not enough. You must trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. “Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” They were saved immediately. Their sight was given to them and it is emphasized: *immediately*. There was no heavenly delay. When I began this message, I asked you if you had ever met a blind person. And hopefully, if you do not know Christ, you have said “Yes. It is me. I need Christ.” And hopefully those of us who have been saved recognize we were blind. As the hymn writer says, “I once was blind and now I see.” There are some of you here today who have never recognized your absolute need of salvation. You have maybe raised

Matthew 20:29-34

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 4/29/2012

your hand for Jesus, a Jesus who would do this for you or that for you. But you have never truly, in your heart of hearts, bowed your heart before Him, asking for mercy. Not in those exact words, but just humbling yourself for salvation. Jesus Christ died for our sins and if you trust Him He will set you free. He will forgive you. You will be set free. I pray you leap up and you come to Him and ask Him to save you. "Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved." And inherently that is what Jesus began to preach, back in Matthew. "Repent for the kingdom is at hand." Turn to Him from your sin. You realize you are sinful. Cry out to Him. What about us believers? Very clearly, we can be dulled. We can have our eyes and our vision blurred. We ought to be praising and giving Jesus glory and following Him for what He has done for us. 1 Peter 2:9,

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood (it is speaking of believers), a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. [1 Peter 2:9]

We should be praising God for His mercy. He saved us. He saved us. And do not forget your former purification from sins. Do not let your eyes be obscured from what Christ has done for you and I.

Prayer

Father, thank you for Your Word. I am so thankful for Your grace in opening my eyes. I am so thankful you showed me my sin. I am thankful for those here who have had their sin revealed to them and that they have repented and trusted in You for salvation. And I pray for anyone here who does not understand, who does not see, that they would pray to You "Lord God, open my eyes." And they would come and they would believe in Your Son Jesus Who died for our sins. They would cry out for mercy. And Father, I pray that we who are saved, we would not be any different than the day we were saved. We would recognize we are not adequate for anything in this life. That You are adequate. That we would cry out for Your grace and Your mercy and trust You to provide it in every circumstance that You ordain. Father, may we be those who praise you and give you thanks for what You have done in Christ. May we not forget so great a salvation. May we not set it aside in our hearts and minds. May you receive all the glory. In Your precious name, Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.vancouverbible.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2013 Vancouver Bible Fellowship

You may reproduce this sermon transcript in its entirety for non-commercial purposes in accordance with

Vancouver Bible Fellowship's Copyright Policy (<http://www.vancouverbible.org/copyright.pdf>).