

Sight to the Blind

An Example of Authority in Prayer

Scripture Readings: Luke 18.35-43, Matthew 20.29-34, Mark 10.46-52

The question arises, how many blind men were there? When we read the three parallel records in the synoptic gospels we notice that they contain both similarities and difference in the detail that they present. Who was this blind beggar? Luke 18.35 calls him simply 'a certain man' being an unspecified but particular person they met as they approached Jericho Mark 10.46 says there was one whom he identifies as Bartimaeus and they met him as they left Jericho, but Matthew 20.29&30 clearly says that there were two blind men that they met going out of the city (lit. 'and leaving out of Jericho'). Some students account in part for these differences by the fact that there was Old Jericho, an ancient fortified city built on a hill, and some kilometres away New Jericho on a Roman road at the springs of an oasis on Wadi Qelt and Jesus was in between. But this does not account for the numbers of blind men. And all three writers say that they were sitting by the way side. The word 'way' here is the word used for a path, a road or a highway which ran through new Jericho. If there was one blind man healed as Jesus entered the city and three who were healed as He left Jericho, here is another example of another copy-cat episode of healings, like those noted before. See Mark 5.27 and 6.56. If this assumption is correct our story in Luke is the first occasion.

The blind man was out for what he could get v36. He had to live on his wits. Jesus does not criticise those who seek His blessing, like Zacchaeus Luke 19.1, or the men who let the paralytic down through the roof Mark 2.1. He encouraged enterprise, see Luke 11.9. & Matthew 25.25. Some of us are too timid when it comes to seeking the blessing of the Lord. Let us come boldly to the throne of grace. Hebrews 4.16.

An opportunity came his way.

Jesus of Nazareth was passing by v37. Nazareth is very fertile and is in Galilee It was Jesus' home town Luke 4.16, where Mary and Joseph lived, Luke 1.26. We are told that this was prophetic, Matthew 2.23,

but there are no direct prophetic references. In Isaiah 11.1 the word for 'Branch, a clear prophetic reference to the Lord who was then to still come, is the word for Nazareth. Nazarenes were not respected, John 1.45 & 46, as the area had a mix of Jewish settlers and Gentiles. Galilee was annexed under Herod. See Isaiah 9.1 & Matthew 4.15. This title was used repeatedly at the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus. See John 18.3-8, Mark 14.67, John 19.19 & Mark 16.6.

'Jesus of Nazareth' is a title feared by the demons, despised by his enemies and respected by his disciples. Our day of opportunity is when Jesus the crucified passes by our way.

He appealed to the Son. 'Thou Son of David' v38&39. Notice the change of title and association. It is a recognition of His royal lineage and recognition by the beggar. See 2 Samuel 7.8-17, Isaiah 11.1, Acts 2.29-36. Here is evidence of both opportunism and spiritual understanding. He called for mercy. This basic Greek word for mercy, a verb, means 'to feel sympathy for the misery of another'. It is given as a command, not a request. It is bold. He believed that He had a right to be heard, and would not be put off v39. Like a plaintiff who, wronged and suffering, has access before a judge he 'cried the more'. 'Cried' is the word for the loud cry of a raven.

Our 'Son' is the Son of the Most High. Child of God, you have a right to the goodness of God not on the basis of earthly kinship, but a heavenly one. Not only do we have the one Father with Him, but Jesus is one of us and our great High Priest Hebrews 4.15. He feels our infirmity (weakness, sickness and disease). He understands.

He was heard. Jesus stood still v40, 'as one called to stand before a

Christians today need to learn these lessons of prevailing in prayer. The Christian life is not a religious system. It is a vibrant living relationship with a loving Heavenly Father. This blind beggar is an example of boldness to enter God's presence by His mercy and a meekness to accept what His grace provides.

court' and gave all His attention to him. He can be arrested by your call. What was so commanding in the cry of this beggar? So will your cry be if it is as earnest. Jesus Himself knows what it means. He cried earnestly to His Father in Heaven and was heard. Look up Hebrews 5.7. Read and learn.

The beggar knew exactly what he wanted v41. His request is significant. 'Lord, that *I might receive my sight.*' This sentence is from one word *anablepo* and means to see, to look up, or recover lost sight. Lord that I might see again!

Notice that the same word is used on three occasions. 'That I might receive my sight.' This is in the subjunctive mood, the mood of possibility. It was a humble request. Then, 'Receive thy sight.' This is in the imperative mood, a command. Jesus is in authority. Then, 'Immediately he received his sight.' This is in the indicative mood it is a statement of fact. Jesus gave him exactly that for which he asked.

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Sundays 10.30 am

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