

# A Certain Blind Man Sat by the Wayside Begging

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[ 0 : 00 ] So in Luke chapter number 18, we get to Jericho on our way to Jerusalem. If I was to ask you, I say, David, meet me up in Dawsonville, downtown Dawsonville. If I was to ask some of you that, I know some of you are from Dawsonville, where are you meeting me?

Are you meeting me at a crazy intersection near a barbecue place? Are you meeting me by the courthouse and the pool hall? Which Dawsonville are you going to?

Because you have a Dawsonville proper, but then you have the commercial part of Dawsonville. I'm sure all of you have been up there. As I said, many of you are from Dawsonville. That's why we provide extra shoes in the foyer.

I'm just kidding. No, it's not like that. That's just for Jeff Bush if he forgets to wear shoes to church. But there's two different Dawsonvilles, right? And then, so here we have an old Jericho.

We have a new Jericho when you're reading the gospel records. They're coming upon Jericho and they're leaving it. And we know about the old Jericho. The walls came tumbling down. Good music probably taught you that if you were as a kid, that the walls came tumbling down.

[ 0 : 58 ] And then they had the other Jericho. And I've never seen it. And this is, I really want to. David, a boy, and I have been talking about how much we want to see Israel and these stories. And maybe some of us will get to go someday.

Hopefully we will all go eventually, right, to a new Jerusalem. Maybe while our time on earth we'll get to see it. So Jesus' miracle started at a wedding on the northern part of Galilee. Now his miracles are going to end at the southern part here of Judah.

And so from the top to the bottom he goes throughout the land healing, preaching the gospel. Several years ago my niece, she was about seven at the time, it was around Easter. And she said this great quote.

She said to me, she didn't know she was quoting at the time. She was just being a little girl speaking, right? She said, Jesus did not come to earth to just heal people. That is just what God does on the way to the cross.

And I just love that so much. He is on the way to the cross, but he takes time for this blind man. Why? Because that's what our Savior does on the way to the cross.

[ 1 : 58 ] So Jericho is a place that is filled with all kinds of sights, all kinds of wonders and memories and people kicking up dirt. Maybe think about Black Friday shopping, all right?

That's what's happening on the streets here. A lot of people coming. Tens of thousands of people are passing through at this time as they're headed to Jerusalem for the time of the Passover.

And then outside there is a man sitting upon the road. And this is his testimony. This is his story. This is how Jesus entered into his life and his response. So the three things we'll see in our time together.

We're going to see a crowd and we're going to see their behavior towards this man. We're going to see the cry of this man. But then we're also, and most importantly, and always most importantly, we're going to see the Christ.

We're going to see the crowd, the cry, and the Christ. So first of all, looking at the confusion, verse number five, the crowd's confusion said, as it came to pass that he was come nigh in the Jericho, a certain blind man set by the wayside begging.

[ 2 : 55 ] And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And then, so this man is there and he is wondering what is happening.

Remember, he can't see what's going on. But even though there have been a lot of people coming through, he knew something was exceptional was happening. The crowd was larger. There was more talking. And he asked somebody, what is going on?

Explain to me, what are you seeing? What is going on? And they said to him, Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus from the town that he is from, this man, now they were referring to him, which isn't saying a whole lot, just his name.

And where he's from, he is passing through. But this blind beggar, he cries out and he says, Jesus, son of David, have mercy upon me. Then they rebuke him and they say, leave him alone.

He is busy. He's traveling through. They rebuke him and tell him to hold his peace. But thankfully, he doesn't. And neither should any of us in the same scenario. We should not be quieted when it comes to crying out to Jesus.

[ 3 : 59 ] So the first thing I want you to see about this crowd is that they were people who were conviction, but they were people that had no compassion. We know what it was like when Jesus walked upon a blind person before in John chapter number nine.

And that person which Jesus saw, it says Jesus saw a man, but the disciples and those around them saw a theological debate. They were people with conviction, but they were not people with compassion.

And so they rebuke him for what he is doing. Jesus saw a person that he could minister to, and they saw somebody that they wanted to rebuke. A religious multitude can be very brutal.

The people that are going inside of the temple to worship, that would be an obvious place that you'd want to set up if you were a blind beggar, because you would believe the worship of God would be a thing that would soften the hearts of people, that would change the way that he would be treated.

But instead of moving towards compassion, they were moved towards rebuke. So today we don't live in a time where there's people outside of our church, but there are people outside of our church.

[ 5 : 00 ] And that is not a crowd that we want to be part of. We're not a crowd of people that create memes or sign petitions or create brochures or the shocking stats that talk about all the problems. We're people that when we come in here, the word of God has softened their hearts so that we don't walk by people in need like this without giving an answer, without giving some type of hope.

Simply people were not helping this man get to Jesus. That's what you want to know about the crowd. They were part of a crowd that weren't helping him get to Jesus. Remember the people of Bethsaida? They would bring a blind man to him so that he might be able to touch him.

Some people had brought blind people to Jesus before. Another group of guys, David Rackley loves them. They cut a hole in the roof. David Rackley loves it because he would charge you to fix that roof, all right? And so they cut a hole in the roof.

Some in the crowd would cause Zacchaeus to have to climb a tree to get a sight of Jesus. So the crowds act differently, but this crowd here is one that wants to create conformity. A crowd always wants to create conformity.

They desire the blind man to be silent, to not speak. The pious probably thought they were doing the Lord a service. But Jesus would want to hear the cry of mercy over the shallow hallelujahs that were being offered.

[ 6 : 14 ] That's what Jesus heard today in the crowd. He heard a man crying out for mercy. Because we're told that Jesus came not for those that were whole that didn't need a physician, but those that were sick.

He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He came that day for a blind man that was crying for mercy. That is not a crowd that I want to be part of. Young people, when we talk about crowds that you don't want to be part of, that is a crowd we don't want to be part of.

A religious crowd that would have conviction, but would have no compassion. We are the ones who pull roofs off. We're the ones who will carry blind men. We were the ones who will make a way so that people can come to Jesus.

Regardless if it inconvenients us, regardless if suffering is involved in it, we want to make the path to our Savior clear and obvious and welcoming. But they wanted him to fall in line, which is what crowds always want to do.

There's a short story by H.C. Wells were about a man was climbing a mountain and he falls into a valley. And in that valley, it's a fictional story, but all the other people were blind, but he isn't blind.

[ 7 : 21 ] And they say that his sight is inconvenient. It's a problem for him because he's seeing things they can't see. So what they try to do is they convince him to have surgery to remove his eyes. And he decides in the middle of the night, that's not a good idea.

And he decides to leave. This was really, this was a blind man, but this was a man who had sight surrounded by blind people who wanted him to stay quiet, who wanted him not to see what he was seeing.

Bartimaeus saw by faith what others didn't. We walk by faith and not by sight. This is what he saw. They saw Jesus of Nazareth. What did he see? Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

He saw something different. Helen Keller says, the only thing worse than being blind is having sight, but no vision. This is textbook right here with this crowd. They were able to see Jesus, but they didn't see the son of David.

They didn't have eyes of faith to see what was right in front of them. In a crowd, but he was all alone. And have you ever felt this way? You were in a crowd, but he was all alone.

[ 8 : 22 ] The world is filled with all these lonely people. Father McKenzie, writing a word of a sermon that no one will hear. Eleanor Rigby, picking up the rice in the church where our wedding has been, but it's not your wedding.

Some of you that are a little bit older in here know what I'm talking about. It's a song. People write songs because it relates the people. This song became famous because it related the people, all the lonely people, meaning that there's a type of loneliness that's extra lonely when it's inside of a crowd, when you're not supposed to be lonely.

So here we have this man who has been ignored, but Jesus will not ignore him. We could hear him today if we would listen. We could hear people that are in the same situation, that have been silenced, that we can listen to.

And these are people that they say should see our good works and as a result glorify the Father which is in heaven. The Bible tells us in Romans 12, 15 that we're supposed to rejoice with them that rejoice, but we're also supposed to weep with them that weep.

There's many people in this world that are weeping alone. There's many people like this blind man that sat outside of a religious institution and everybody had conviction, but few people had compassion.

[ 9 : 28 ] But thankfully that's not where his story ends. Jesus came by and Jesus heard him and Jesus came to him in his loneliness and Jesus gave him mercy and Jesus made him whole.

And you and I can be there when that miracle happens. How wonderful is it? Without one blind man in John chapter number 9 when he heard for the first time he was born like this to bring glory to God.

When the creator begins to make sense of his chaos in his life. And could you imagine being there for the first time that happens? Could you imagine being there when a person who's never seen possibly or hadn't seen in many years, we don't know in this story.

His eyes open up and who does he see but his loving Savior. So the crowd shows no interest or compassion for this common beggar. But Jesus will hear the voice of someone he loves.

Someone who is headed while he hears as he's headed to the cross to die. The cry of this blind beggar causes the son to stand still.

[ 10 : 28 ] Verse 38. And so we see here this compelling cry.

Bartimaeus didn't want to lose his opportunity. He had no promise that this was happening again. Jesus is not coming by here, this area again, on his way to the cross. And as a blind man, he was very much limited to what was going to come into his life.

So he cries out so much the more. I don't believe that I could let my inhibitions go enough to cry out to you today the way that you would expect this blind man to be.

It's all so neat when it's written in the scripture, but I'm sure it's filled with emotion. The voice is crying out. Now imagine, you know that the son of David, Jesus the Messiah, is walking by.

He can make you whole. And if you don't get his attention, then it's over, right? And so he cries out. So imagine all those factors that are there. It says in Mark chapter number 10 that he cast, and he casting away his garment, rose and came to Jesus.

[ 11 : 47 ] He was willing to walk away from whatever that he had. You see it sometimes. It's quite sad when we see homeless people that everything they own that's with them is carried from place to place.

Everything they own is right there. So when it says he cast away his garments, he's saying he walked away from any small thing in his life that created any comfort or security. And we've seen this type of radical urgency out of others.

There's a woman who would not give up hope that Jesus would heal her daughter, even though she was not a Jew, and Jesus initially rebuffs her. There's a woman who must ignore the mockery of the mourners that Jesus can do nothing for his dead child.

Friends must force their way through a crowd and bring a roof to their paralyzed companion to Jesus. There's a leper and a woman with the flow of blood who must disregard laws that forbid her from even having contact with Jesus.

But by faith and radical urgency, she reaches out. There's a desperate father that has to overcome his doubt that Jesus can do anything to help his tormented son when the disciples had already failed him.

[ 12 : 54 ] There's a radical urgency that they're acting in here. And all these people had something in common that was different than the crowd. It's this, that they knew that they were in a helpless state and they knew that Jesus could meet their every need.

And so with radical urgency, they reached out to him. With eight powerful words, he says this repeatedly. Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

Nothing fancy, just recognizing he was sick and Jesus was the great physician. How did he know this? What did he know? What was he overhearing in that temple?

What was given to him? Was anything told him directly? Or was he just picking up stuff all along the way and realizing this? So this information was available to others.

Very likely, no one took the time to tell this man directly by the way that he is being treated. I don't see that there's many people sitting down and reading him prophecy about the Messiah in the Old Testament.

[ 13 : 56 ] Maybe he's just getting the headline news of what's being spoken about around him. It was enough for him, though, to know that this man that they called Jesus was the Messiah as stories were coming to him about what he was doing.

Sometimes you watch commercials for medicine. There's always, I tell Stephanie, I said, I'm thinking our television programming must be for old people. Because, look, the commercials are for old people.

And so apparently this is what old people watch, right? And so there's all these commercials for things and they list everything. And I'm like, I'm not going to pay any attention. I don't need this. But that man sat there on the sidewalk and he listened to everything because he knew he was sick.

And so if he was to hear something, I don't know what the man knew. We don't have additional story. But what I do know is that when he heard about Jesus, what the rest of the crowd didn't know, when the rest of the crowd said, this is a man from Nazareth, he says, no, this is the Messiah.

This is the son of David. This is a man fulfilling prophecy that is here. And so his request for restoration of sight demonstrates his good understanding of what the Messiah was supposed to do.

[ 15 : 00 ] This beggar knew Jesus more than the powerful, was more than powerful enough to give him sight. Did he know what Jesus had prophesied? Did he know that in Isaiah 65, 19, he says, I will rejoice in Jerusalem and join my people.

And the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her nor the voice of crying. And I will come and I will remember. Did he know that? Did he know the prophecies of Isaiah that said, I will come and bring healing to the brokenhearted and to the blind and to the beggars?

Did he know these things? It seems like he knew something. And he knew that Jesus had come by. And he had to know, is this the Messiah? Is he who we have been waiting for? So there's that cry of mercy.

Jesus had asked several people along the way, what do you want me to do for you? He had asked the sons of Zebedee, James and John. He had asked them before, what would you have for me when the mother came to him?

And they said, we would like some power around here, all right? We would like to sit on your right hand and on your left hand. Now, when Jesus looks at this blind beggar, what does he ask for? He says, have mercy on me.

[ 16 : 00 ] And don't think that he was just asking for a handout like any other beggar. Asking for mercy acknowledges something about the person that you're asking mercy from. You know, he was asking mercy from Jesus because he knew that Jesus could bestow mercy upon him.

He's asking mercy because he knew that he needed mercy from him. Mercy is God not punishing us on the sins that we deserve. And so this man, Bartimaeus, recognized that.

He needed this man, Jesus, the Son of God, to give him mercy. Mercy, and he needed to meet this man that everyone had been talking around him about. And that just really breaks my heart to think about a person that hears about it.

I pray that our kids aren't people like this man that we talk about Jesus around. That they hear things and they're just kind of piecing together a story about Jesus. But we sit down with them.

We take them by the hand and we tell them about Jesus. You see, Bartimaeus knew he was sick and he knew that Jesus was the Messiah. And so Bartimaeus responds to mercy as a disciple should.

[ 17 : 02 ] He knew he needed more than just new eyes. He needed mercy. And the way for him was the way of following Jesus. In Mark 10, 52, it says, Go thy way, thy faith has made thee whole. And immediately when he received his sight, he followed Jesus.

Because when he said, go your way, he says, my way is whatever way you are headed, right? You probably know the story of Abraham Lincoln. It's told that he buys a woman who's being sold into slavery.

And he purchases her and gives her all the papers and let her know that she was free. And he says, you can go anywhere you want. I purchased your freedom. She says, well, if you have purchased my freedom and I can go anywhere I want, I want to follow you.

I want to go with you. And that's what Bartimaeus is saying. I have sight. I can see anything I want. All the options are available to me. I'm going to follow Jesus with my gratitude that is here.

So following Jesus seems reasonable to us old blind beggars who have been given sight. It's only reasonable that we would follow Jesus. And as soon as Bartimaeus received the sight, he saw Jesus and he wanted nothing more than to follow him to Jerusalem.

[ 18 : 04 ] That is the desire of all who have been given eyes to see and ears to hear the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And then lastly here, not just the crowd and the cry, but we look at our compassionate Christ.

Verse 40, and Jesus stood and commanded him to be brought unto him. And when he was come near, he asked him, saying, what wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, receive thy sight.

Thy faith hath saved thee. There's a command to call this blind man to him. At the start of Jesus' teaching ministry, he walks into the temple.

He grabs a scroll and he begins to read from the book of Isaiah. He says, Unlike the crowd, Jesus did not find it a distraction from life, but his reason for being here.

Jesus had time for that outcast because he came for us. That's what we celebrate at Christmas. We come that Jesus came for us. That Jesus had a willingness to come so that we can cry out to mercy to him.

[ 19 : 20 ] He came not to be ministered to, but to minister, give his life a ransom for many. He had time to stop and to listen to the cry for mercy because he was a loving and attentive Savior.

He is willing to listen. And today I tell you that Christ delights in knowing our heart's desires. He encourages us to speak though he knows because it is pleasant to him to hear and good for us to tell it.

He needed to cry out for mercy to him. And Jesus heard it and it reveals our heart. And it shows that he is all sufficient Savior. Receive thy sight. Thy faith hath saved thee.

In other places it says it has made thee whole. What should be needed to make us whole? What should be needed to wash away our sins? All things, these are all things that we could never do.

But it was only possible by Jesus because he was headed to the cross in our place. And it's now faith in Christ that makes this blind man whole. It's also faith in Christ that would make you whole.

[ 20 : 21 ] That recognized that he called on him and he said, Lord, thou may receive my sight. What Bartimaeus is asking for is massive. But he's asking the Lord.

He's asking something that is otherworldly. That is supernatural. That is beyond. Do you not think that he had asked other people to help him with his blindness? Do you not think that he had taken every earthly measure to see that done?

I can only imagine that he had. But he's asking for this man that came by to make him, give him sight, but to make him whole, to have mercy on him. And he's the only one that is all sufficient that could do that.

So what we see here, he knew that Jesus had been hearing, that Jesus that he had been hearing about, he cries out to him to be changed. And he began with a need. It went on the gratitude and it finished with loyalty.

And isn't that a perfect summary of discipleship for us? It begins with the need, which overflows in the gratitude, which shows itself in loyalty to him.

[ 21 : 21 ] And so after a whole series of episodes of the 12 here that just don't seem to get it, Jesus, before he enters into Jerusalem, is someone, we have someone here that gets it right.

And who is this exemplary disciple? It is a blind beggar who is sitting by the roadside yelling his head off about Jesus. He got it.

He understood it. Need and a gratitude and loyalty and crying out to Jesus, son of David, to have mercy on me.