

## Luke 18:35-42 — Jesus Heals a Blind Beggar

(Matthew 20:29–34; Mark 10:46–52)

35 As Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting beside the road, begging.

36 When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening.

37 “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by,” they told him.

38 So he called out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

39 Those who led the way admonished him to be silent, but he cried out all the louder, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

40 Jesus stopped and directed that the man be brought to Him. When he had been brought near, Jesus asked him, 41 “What do you want me to do for you?”

“Lord,” he said, “let me see again.”

42 “Receive your sight!” Jesus replied. “Your faith has healed you.”

43 Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, glorifying God. And all the people who saw this gave praise to God.

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### v.35

“Jericho” — Before getting into the heart of this story, let’s address one issue: The three Synoptic Gospel accounts differ markedly. Were there one or two beggars? Was Jesus approaching Jericho or leaving? Some commenters suggest two separate events are recorded: one blind beggar on the way into Jericho, two on the way out. The stories are, however, so similar in their basic elements that it bends the brain to think they are anything but one. Bob Utley points out there were two Jerichos: the old city and a new one built by Herod.<sup>1</sup> I’m going with the idea that this was one encounter that occurred between the two cities. As for the other differences, an article on Zondervan Academic suggests: “If we expect a level of historical precision that the Gospels didn’t intend to provide, we’re going to run into problems. The truth is that it’s completely normal for ancient (and

modern) historical accounts to summarize, paraphrase, omit details, and explain events in a way that highlights their specific points and perspectives.”<sup>2</sup>

### **vv.36-37**

Blind though he was, this beggar on the roadside (Mark calls him Bartimaeus) knew full well something very unusual was afoot. The multitude accompanying Jesus must have raised quite a ruckus and, after all, he was blind, not deaf. When he asked a passerby what was going on, the answer shot straight to his heart. He had heard about this Jesus of Nazareth – stories of his power to heal, whispers that he was the long-awaited Messiah.

Here was an opportunity he must not miss! The Son of David was passing by and would soon be gone. An opportunity for deliverance was presenting itself. If he missed it, he would remain in his darkness, likely for the rest of his life. He must seize the moment and not allow discouragement and opposition to silence him. (W. Jay)

### **v.38**

So the blind man calls out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Notice that he doesn’t just call out to “Jesus,” as many others do. He calls him “Son of David” – a clear confession that he sees Jesus as the Messiah that God promised would come from the lineage of King David. (2 Samuel 7:12-13)

### **v.39**

“Those who led the way” sternly told the blind beggar to be quiet. Luke uses the same word here (S2008) that he employed to describe the disciples rebuking the parents who brought their children to be blessed by Jesus. Ellicott thinks members of the multitude were scolding the beggar; MacLaren suggests the disciples were (again) to blame. In either case, these people wanted the ratty beggar to shut up. Alistair Begg offers several possible reasons: They were excited about Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem. Yelling at an esteemed rabbi was undignified. The man’s shouting made it difficult to hear Jesus’ teaching. Some of the crowd may not have been ready to hear the messianic “Son of David” title applied to the teacher.<sup>3</sup>

Whoever and whatever, the reprimand had the opposite effect. Rather than just shouting (S994), the blind man to cry out that much louder. Luke uses the word *ekrazen* (S2896), which could be translated 'shriek.'

Here we find a cautionary word for "those who lead the way" in today's Jesus multitude. We focus on "evangelizing" and searching for people open to a word of witness, yet along the way we pass hurting souls desperate for mercy and healing. Jesus taught about the Kingdom to all who would listen, but vast amounts of his time and energy were invested in healing. Cries of suffering surround us – physical, emotional, relational, etc. – even if many are silent and need to be drawn out. If we follow Christ's example, we must take the time to bring them his mercy. We must not see the blind beggar as an impediment to our agenda.

#### **v.40**

Jesus felt the shadow of the cross falling over him and was bracing himself for his last struggle. (MacLaren) Yet he knew the need of the moment was to lay aside his own burden, stop the parade, and pour out God's mercy on this poor man. The Lord embarrassed those who had been trying to shush the beggar and instructed them to bring him over. Mark's account shows their complete change of attitude: "Take courage! Get up! He is calling for you." And Mark also records that the man threw off his cloak, jumped up, and ran to Jesus – which means he was approaching the Messiah clad only in his underwear.

#### **v.41**

Note that when Jesus asked what the beggar wanted done for him (an interesting question, considering his obvious blindness), he replied, "Lord, let me see again." The last part of that reply indicates there had been a time when he could see. The first part, however, carries far greater significance: This blind beggar had gone from crying out to Jesus of Nazareth, and acknowledging him as Messiah, to calling him "Lord." Here he completely submitted himself to the one who alone could rescue him from darkness.

#### **v.42**

“Your faith has healed you” — The power to heal, of course, resides with God. Jesus was able to heal only because he did what he saw the Father doing. (John 5:19) But the release of God’s saving/healing power is contingent on faith — actively trusting the Lord to meet the desperate need as he see fit.

Matthew Poole notes the “very remarkable” weight Jesus attributes here to faith: Jesus’ words “can be no otherwise understood, than of faith as the condition that was required in the person to be healed.” J. Leckie likewise preached that receiving Christ’s healing is not a matter of labor, but “the feeling of emptiness, and desire to receive. It is trust in God, the belief in his great love.”

### **v.43**

Thrilled that he had “immediately” received his sight, the man fell in with the crowd and followed Jesus — apparently still without his cloak. His rejoicing and glorifying God overflowed into the entire crowd that had seen the miraculous healing. As the apostle Paul observes, grace that extends to more and more people overflows in thanksgiving, to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 4:15)

1 [http://www.freebiblecommentary.org/new\\_testament\\_studies/VOL03A/VOL03A\\_18.html](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org/new_testament_studies/VOL03A/VOL03A_18.html)

2 <https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/bible-contradictions-explained>

3 <https://www.truthforlife.org/resources/sermon/an-encounter-with-christ/>