Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Blind Who Saw
Scripture: Matthew 20:29-34
Code: 2349

Let's look at Matthew chapter 20, the last wonderful, wonderful section in this twentieth chapter...Matthew chapter 20.

And I would like to read for you verses 29 through 34.

And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And behold, two blind men sitting by the wayside when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David. And the multitude rebuked them that they should hold their peace. But the cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David. And Jesus stood still and called them and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto Him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes and immediately their eyes received sight. And they followed Him.

A very simple story, very simple. Easy to understand and not even unusual in the life of Christ for stories like this could be repeated a thousand times a thousand. So much so perhaps that as John said, all the books of all the world couldn't even contain them. Why this story? Why is it here? As Jesus goes to Jerusalem to die, why stop in the progress of such a great event as the Passover where He is to be the lamb, slain from the foundation of the world, why stop to include a story of two blind men?

Well, I think, among many reasons, one sort of overpowering reason is indicated by the word "compassion" in verse 34. And if all other lessons were set aside, one great and profound truth would grab our minds and that is this, that Jesus had great compassion. People who were nothing but an irritation and a distraction to the crowd were a cause for deep pain to Him, the pain of sympathy, empathy and compassion. While the world wanted to silence these kind of people, Jesus wanted to hear what they had to say. While the world wanted to make sure they didn't get in the way, Jesus wanted to be sure He stood with them. While the world wanted to be sure they didn't interrupt anything by articulating their need, Jesus wanted not only to know their need but to meet it. And so, at best this wonderful little story is a demonstration of the heart of God which is a heart of compassion.

And that is to say, beloved, that God not only knows what pain we endure, He feels it. That's right. He not only knows it, it is not just cognition, it is not God in heaven saying, "O, I understand, So-and-so is suffering," it isn't just that. It's the feeling of that suffering. It is the pain of that which touches His own

great heart. And therefore, when God allows you to suffer, He allows Himself to suffer as well and be sure then that if indeed your suffering is not alleviated, He continues to suffer with you and must therefore have some great purpose in mind for He Himself could eliminate His own suffering as well.

And so does Jesus demonstrate compassion.

We would imagine that He would have been preoccupied with the disciples, perhaps, which were to carry on the legacy after His death which will occur in a few days. We would imagine that He could have been distracted by the thought of dying itself and becoming the sacrificial lamb as He looked up the plateau to Jerusalem from the vantage point of Jericho far below. It would have been easy for us to understand that He really didn't have time in this particular moment in history to stop and take care of a couple of blind men of which there were many, many such and maybe many many such in Jericho for it was said of Jericho that there grew balsam bushes and balsam bushes could be made into a special kind of medicine which was good for the curing of the eyes. And yet He has time. And that is to say that God is compassionate. And Jesus Christ is not too busy redeeming the entire world to give sight to two insignificant blind men who have nothing to offer Him but their problem. And that may be a more profound lesson than we have thought.

Blindness, in fact, is a matter of record in the Bible.

It's quite common, physical blindness and spiritual blindness.

Physical blindness occurred quite frequently in the ancient world. Poverty, lack of medical care, unsanitary conditions, brilliant sunlight, blowing sand, certain kinds of accidents, war, fighting, all of these things could cause blindness. But most commonly, blindness was caused basically because of gonorrheal diplococcus that would find their way from a woman's body into the conjunctiva of the eye of a child at birth and there they would form their disease and permanent blindness could occur. Sometimes blindness came by the infecting virus trichoma(?). And I suppose today, much of these things are curable because of the drugs that we have available, but then they were not. So it was not uncommon to be blind, especially maybe not uncommon, as I said, in Jericho where they believed there was a certain bush that healed blindness.

But even more common than physical blindness was spiritual blindness. And metaphorically the gospels and the epistles speak often of the blindness of the heart. In fact, it's summed up in the words of John 1 which simply says, "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not.

He came unto His own and His own received Him not." Or in the third chapter where it says that men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. Or Romans 11:25 which says blindness in part has happened to Israel. Or 2 Corinthians 3:14, "Their minds were blinded." Or Jesus'

words in Matthew 23, "Woe unto you blind guides, you blind Pharisee," He said. Blind to God. May be able to see physically, but blind to God.

Now the case of these men is most interesting because while they are physically blind, they appear to have unusually clear spiritual sight. Physically they see nothing, spiritually they see very well. And they will see even better when the Lord Jesus is finished with them. And they will also see physically.

Well, why are people spiritually blind? Well, sin, they're blinded by sin, I believe. In Matthew 6 it talks about the fact that when you're evil, your whole eye is darkened. I believe Satan sort of adds a double blindness by blinding the minds of them that believe not, 2 Corinthians 4:4. And then I believe God may add a triple blindness when He sovereignly makes the eye blind, as Isaiah 6 indicates, in a judicial punishment of unbelievers. And so we see then that men are blind by sin and doubly blinded by Satan and doubly or triply blinded by God. And it is into the darkness of man's spiritual blindness that Jesus comes. And you remember when He announced His arrival in Luke 4:18, He said He had come to give sight to the blind. And I don't think He was primarily speaking of physical blindness, He was primarily speaking of spiritual. He said in John 8, "I am the light that lights the world, whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness." He came to give spiritual light to blind eyes.

And sometimes He gave physical sight to blind eyes. And I think He did that for three reasons. First of all, it was part of Messianic proof. He was demonstrating that He was the Messiah. Secondly, it was part of millennial preview. He was showing them what it was going to be like in His Kingdom when all of that kind of thing was turned over and there was glorious wholeness and healing in the Kingdom. And thirdly, I think it was a matter of symbol or picture. It was a marvelous picture.

Every time He healed someone of physical blindness, He was in effect saying that's only a symbol of what I want to do to the soul. Every time He unstopped the ears so that someone could hear sound, He was in effect saying and that is exactly what I want to do to the heart so you can hear the Word of God. And every time He raised someone from the dead physically, He was saying I want to give life to the soul as I am able to give life to the body. And that is why Jesus found it no more difficult to forgive sins than to heal someone. And when posed with that question, that's what He said, "What's the difference? I am showing you by My absolute control over the physical world and the natural laws that I have control over the spiritual world and the supernatural laws."

And so, in the case of these two blind men, you have Messianic proof. You have millennial preview. And you have a marvelous picture of what He's able to do to the heart. And then you have the reality. I believe before the story's over, these two blind men are saved, redeemed souls. And so they see physically, they see spiritually. And they demonstrate to us that no matter how involved our Lord is, His heart of compassion reaches out to those who cry for His help.

Now let's look at the scene in verse 29. It's a very simple story and a simple scene. "As they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed Him." Jesus had finished His ministry in Galilee. He finished His ministry in Peraea. Peraea is the area east of the Jordan. Jesus had crossed the Jordan at some northern point near the Sea of Galilee and descended down the eastern side of the Jordan River in that area known as Peraea.

He's finished His ministry of a few weeks there and now He's on His way to Jerusalem. So He has to recross the Jordan River to the west.

He probably crossed at a fairy spot, about five miles north of Jericho. Jericho's the first city you see when you cross the Jordan from the east. I've seen it sitting there, a couple of times. And as you fairy across the river, you walk across nowadays what is known as the Allenby(?) Bridge, the first sight you see is Jericho. It isn't the Jericho of old, it's really the third Jericho. They keep moving south. But in Jesus' time, there was the Old Testament Jericho which was ruins. And then a little south of that, right against it really, was the New Testament Jericho that flourished at this time. And it was a beautiful place, still is. It has its own unique beauty.

In those days, it was so exquisite a place that Herod built himself a wonderful fort and palace there. And that was his winter home. And they...Josephus used to say that when there was snow in Jerusalem, they were wearing linen because it was so warm in Jericho and it's only about 15 miles as the crow flies. But it's so far down into that desert that it stays warm. It's the Palm Springs, you see, of Palestine. It was known as the city of palms. And if you want to understand the geography of the land of Palestine, you'll be interested to note that it is almost an absolute identical copy of southern California, both in terms of geography and climate. For it has a seacoast, a beautiful gorgeous beach on the Mediterranean. And then there is a lovely valley known as the Sharon Valley. And then the mountains rise up, we know them as the Carmel Mountain Range. And at the southern end is this massive plateau of Jerusalem. And from there descends straight down to the desert. It's almost a parallel. The only difference would be that where as Los Angeles is in a basin, Jerusalem is on a plateau. But it's much like our area. From the seacoast it rises to the mountains and then descends to the desert.

And Jericho was a lovely place in the winter, even in the spring. Because the crops all came in early in Jericho. Mark tells us it was not yet fig picking time in Jerusalem, but it would have been in Jericho because of the warmth. There were citrus trees everywhere because, you see, Jericho is endlessly fed by some beautiful springs, one of which I have myself had a drink out of, lovely water, pure and clear and that water was channeled by irrigation all through that area around Jericho so that it flourished. And there were palm trees everywhere and citrus trees and then this balsam bush which had some multiple uses that was growing there. And so it would have been a very lovely place.

It was also a place that must have literally exploded on the minds of Jesus...on the mind of Jesus with memory because He would no doubt remember a very special woman from that city by the name of Rahab who was a prostitute but who hid the spies, you remember, who came to spy out the land. And as a result in the grace of God she was given a place in Messianic genealogy and you find her listed as an ancestor of the Messiah Himself in Matthew chapter 1. And as He stood on the edge of the Jordan River, ready to go south about five miles maybe to the New Testament city of Jericho, He would have looked straight ahead to a cliff of mountains that rises straight up into the sky, chalky white, limestone-like parapet that cast its shadow in the late afternoon over the city of Jericho. And He would have remembered that that was very likely the place where He was tempted for 40 days and 40 nights by the devil. It's called by historians the devastation of bleak and desolate place.

And so, His mind is literally filled with things. Around Him is pressing a huge crowd, moving now from crossing the river down to Jericho, passing through the ruins of Old Testament Jericho which ruins, by the way, are still there for a visitor to see...including the ancient wall which so accommodated the plan of God by falling over on cue. And as they came to the city, He could see the sights and smell the smells and hear the sounds and it would be such a fulfilling experience. And in the midst of all of this, the tremendous anticipation of His own death only days away. He's only, by the way, six hours walk maybe from Jerusalem, six miles north of the Dead Sea. And it's a fulfilling thing.

Now as He comes into the city, naturally the mob presses Him on all sides. He can heal. I mean, anybody today who even claims to heal can pack in a crowd. You can get 15,000 people into Madison Square Garden if you just tell them you're going to heal them. Even if you can't, they'll come just to find out if you can. And if you really can heal, they're there, believe me.

In Jesus' time, they mobbed Him. That's why the Lord had to tell the disciples not to take any money because they could have made literally a fortune in a day selling healings. And so the people pile all around Jesus, His teaching, His preaching, the magnetism of His personality, His ability to raise the dead and heal people from any disease.

And as He came into the city with the press of the crowd, there was one little guy that really wanted to see Him. You remember his name? Zacchaeus. And he was number-one public enemy, hated. He was a Jew who sold out to Rome for money. He became chief tax collector. He exacerbated tax out of Israel to the point of a fault. He defrauded them. He stole them blind.

And he pocketed it all for himself and they hated him. Not only was he a traitor, but he was a crook. But he was fascinated by Jesus.

Now how did he know about Him? Well, it hadn't been long before this that Jesus made a short trip to Bethany. And when He was there, He raised Lazarus from the dead. And the word went like wildfire. Bethany was the town between Jericho and Jerusalem, just up the hill. It's very likely that everybody

would have known who the Mary, Martha, Joseph little family was...or Mary, Martha and Lazarus, rather. They would have known who they were. And, of course, the whole city was in an uproar when He raised him from the dead. And His enemies pursued Him that He had to go back on the other side of the Jordan for a while for safety's sake. At least He had to retreat away. And so they knew. He had practically banished disease from Palestine and so everybody knew who He was. They were all there. And Zacchaeus wanted a view of Him.

Since he couldn't see like a little kid at a parade, he crawled up in a tree. And Jesus came along and He stopped and said, "Come down out of that tree, I'm coming to your house, I'm going to spend the night." Which wouldn't have done anything for the popularity of Jesus superficially because since this was the most hated man in town. But He had a wonderful evening with Zacchaeus and He transformed him. He redeemed him. The man was totally transformed. The reason we know that was he said to Jesus just before the dawning came and the thing was all completed, he said, "I'm going to give everything I give back to the poor, everything I've ever taken from anybody four-fold."

And Jesus said, "Surely salvation has come to this house."

That's the real thing, folks. That's the real thing. He is the perfect opposite of the rich young ruler. True salvation, he wants to give it all away. You don't even have to tell him to do it, he wants to do it. Everything he's defrauded and more.

And so, as the morning breaks and Zacchaeus is running around town settling his account and he's like some incredible Santa Claus giving everybody back four times what he took and saying it's all because of Jesus, the crowd perhaps even swelled greater. And the whole place is lined with people. Now you have to reach the other accounts to get that. You're not looking at that in verse 29.

And so by now Jesus is ready to leave. He spent the night.

He's going to Jerusalem. He must move to the Passover. And so we pick it up in verse 30. "And behold two blind men sitting by the wayside, when they heard that Jesus passed by cried out saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David."

Now, it says in verse 29 "As they departed from Jericho"

this happened. Mark says, in the comparative passage, "As they were leaving Jericho." But Luke says, "As He came near Jericho."

Now people say, "How do you harmonize this? Isn't this a biblical error? Two have Him leaving, one has Him coming." And some say, "Well, if you remember that there was Old Testament Jericho and New Testament Jericho, it's possible that He was leaving Old Testament Jericho and entering into

New Testament Jericho." But why would He stay overnight in the ruins? I don't know, maybe Zacchaeus lived over there. It's possible. We don't know the explanation, but I'm wonderfully content with the fact that there is an explanation. And I have my own personal explanation. I believe beggars, from my experience in studying the Bible, usually hung around the thoroughfares where the people were. And if you've ever been to Jerusalem, you know where they hang around. In fact, I ran into the same beggars almost every day, just outside the city gate. And that seems to be the rather traditional place for them.

And so, I guess perhaps one explanation of what might have happened is this, that as Jesus is moving with this mob and they come to the gate and the crowd and the noise and all that's going on and they pass out the gate, then all of a sudden the cries of these blind men are brought to His attention at which point He turns to return into the city to confront them and meet them and find their need. Certainly a possible explanation. But I think it's really wonderful to note that each gospel writer is not intimidated by what the other says, therefore they're not copying some extraneous source. They are rather writing from their own heart under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And when you pull it all together, it makes wonderful and beautiful sense.

And so, as Jesus moves along, perhaps going out the gate, moving directly west up that incredible incline to the plateau of Jerusalem, it is brought to His attention that these blind men are crying after Him.

Now, verse 30 says, "Behold," and that is a term of exclamation. And I think the exclamation here is not because of the blind men, it isn't "Behold, two blind men," like that was some big deal. Probably the same two blind men that had been there a while. It wasn't that they were sitting, they always sat. And it wasn't they were along the road, they were always along the road. The reason they put a "behold" in there is because of what they said. They said, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David." And they call Him by His Messianic title. I mean, two beggars, Mark says, who were begging, Luke says, sitting by the wayside, Matthew says, screaming out the Messianic title. Where did these guys come off as such consummate theologians? Where did they get their information and faith?

That's the "behold." That's the exclamation. Not that they were blind or that they were there or that they were begging or that they were yelling, but it was what they were saying.

Now, at this point we find another wonderful thought. Luke only discusses one of the two, the more prominent one. But never says there was only one. And Mark goes a step further, he only discusses one of the two and he gives us his name. His name is Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus. Now I suppose we could wonder why he bothers to name him. Matthew just wants us to see the majesty of Christ. Luke emphasizes the same, but Mark touches the real human cord by naming this man. And I think it perhaps is because he was well-known. Oh, not then but later. So that when Mark pens the gospel and the letters are written to the church to read about the account of the life of our Lord, when they

can sit down and read this, they'll have there the story of the conversion of one who by now they greatly love. It's as if Mark is saying, "And you know who one of those guys was? It was none other than your friend, Bartimaeus." And so he picks up a little of history...of the history of one of the beloved brothers in the church by the time the gospel would be read by some.

It's not unusual, by the way, for one gospel writer to mention two and the others to focus on one. You'll find the same thing in the maniac across the Sea of Galilee at Gerasa where some writers note two and some concentrate on the healing of one.

That's the background.

Now let me give you just a brief outline and we'll run right through the simple story. Their sad plight, their sad plight, verse 30, it says, "When they heard Jesus pass by, they cried out saying, Have mercy on us." And then in verse 31 at the end, "They cried again saying the more, Have mercy on us." The word "cry" here is krazo, it means to scream. It's used in the New Testament of the screechings and screamings of demon possessed people, Mark 5. It's used of the screaming of insane people and epileptics. It's used of the cry, the loud anguish cry of a mother giving birth to a child. And the idea of the form of the text here is there was a constant screaming. I mean, they were yelling at the top of their voice, "Have mercy on us," a cry of anguish and a cry of desperation, cry of pain. I mean, they know that if Jesus gets out of the hearing of their voices, that they're doomed to blindness the rest of their life. They know this is the only one who can do this. And the desperation is powerful, the drama. You can imagine the shrieking and screaming of two men who know they've got one moment in time or the rest of their life they are to be blind stones. And they scream in almost a frenzy. And they say, "Have mercy on us."

I like the fact they didn't say, "Hey, God gave us a dirty deal, why don't You make it right." They recognized that they needed mercy. "Take pity on us. Look at our sad situation."

There's a sense of humility in that that speaks of the mark of someone with true humility. They wail with an intense desire to be healed, but they make not demands and they make no claim to worthiness. And they are so persistent that as F.F. Bruce says, "They refused to be bludgeoned into silence by the indifferent crowd." Verse 31, "The multitude rebuked them that they should hold their peace and they screamed louder." I guess the world always tries to keep people from getting to Jesus, don't they?

It isn't anything really different. People get disgusted with beggars and if you've ever been in a part of the world where there are a lot of them, you really do kind of slough them off and they do get in the way and they're a little bit obtrusive.

But, I think their heart was right. "Have mercy on us, take pity." They felt their deep need. They knew they deserved nothing. They cried for mercy. There's no merit in mercy.

There's no merit to be given to one who seeks mercy. They were quite different than the Pharisees who sought no mercy because they believed on the basis of merit, they possessed a right to everything. So we see their sad plight.

And then their strong persistence. In verse 31, it says, "When the crowd tried to shut them up, they just kept screaming louder." And these people really wanted to get to Jesus. I like that spirit. Their strong persistence.

There's a third thing here that I would just note for you...their sound perception. As blind as they were physically, they were equally able to see spiritually because of something they said. "O Lord, Son of David," verse 30, "O Lord, Son of David," verse 31, that's the Messianic title. They had come to the place where they believed that He was the Messiah. Now to what extent that faith extends, I don't know. I mean, I can't give you an insight into the dimensions of their faith. But it was there to some extent or they wouldn't have been screaming as frantically as they were. There wasn't any doubt in their mind that this was their only chance. Maybe, I'm not sure we can say how sure they were, it was a chance or it was a real opportunity but they knew there wasn't any other and they put all they had into this one. And when they said, "O Lord," there must have been something in that. I don't know whether they assumed Him to be God, deity or whether they were giving Him a title of honor and respect which indicated that He was a sovereign of some kind, a lord of some kind. But when they said "Son of David," they were identifying Him as the Messiah. For it says in Matthew 1:1 in the beginning of the genealogies of Jesus that He is the Son of David, Son of Abraham. That is the most common Jewish term for the coming king because in 2 Samuel 7:12 and 13, when God gave the covenant and promised that there would come a greater king than David, it would be David's greater Son.

And so, Son of David became the title by which Messiah was designated and Jesus was the Son of David, for Joseph, His father, had come in the Davidic line and Mary, His mother, had also come in the Davidic line. And He indeed was the Son of David. And when the birth of Jesus Christ occurred in Luke 1 verse 32, we read, "He shall be great and be called the Son of the Highest and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father, David, and He shall reign and the end of His Kingdom shall never come." And so they give Him a Messianic name.

It's the same thing they called Him in chapter 21 when He came into Jerusalem on that Palm Sunday in verse 9, "Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest." And verse 11 they said, "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." So they are saying, "Jesus of Nazareth from Galilee, a prophet, is none other than Son of David, the one who comes in the name of the highest." And so it is a double act of faith. They have faith in His

power to heal, they have faith in His person as Messiah. Maybe it was due to the resurrection of Lazarus. Maybe it was due to the ministry of John the Baptist a few years before, for they would have been in the proximity of the Jordan River out there and they may well have known John the Baptist, they may well have known that he had called for repentance in preparation for the Messiah. We don't know. They may well even have known Isaiah 29:18 which said that when Messiah comes He will give sight to the blind.

But whatever it was, they had enough faith to know that they were in need of mercy and to believe that this was the one who could do for them what they needed done and that He was Lord to some extent and that He was Messiah to the full extent. And I've always been of a mind to believe that when you have come to the point of all the faith that is possible, the Lord will meet you at that point of faith and take you all the way to redemption.

And I think that's what He does with these two men. Alfred Edersheim says it beautifully, he says, "The faith of the blind rose to the full height of divine possibility."

And so, we see their simple plea...sad plight, strong persistence, sound perception, simple plea...verse 32, "And Jesus stood still and called them and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?" He stood still. Stop the whole procession.

Stopped it. Here was a great moment in which three things could occur generally, Messianic proof again, millennial preview, and a marvelous picture of what He would do for the heart. It was a time to demonstrate His credentials all over again, but it was more than that, it was a moment of tender compassion on behalf of two needy people. And He called them.

How did He call them? Well, if you read Mark's account it seems as though He called them with a messenger. Someone ran back and that's another reason why I get the feeling that they were out of the city and somebody ran back to these guys who were over there by the gate. And he ran back and in Mark 10:49 says, "Be of good comfort, rise, He calls you." He wants you. And in Mark 10:50 it says, "The blind rose up and threw off his garment and went to Jesus." I mean, once he heard that Jesus had gotten the message, he just threw away his garment and took off. Maybe he figured he'd come back and be able to see enough to find it again.

And Jesus says, "What will you that I should do to you?"

This is to evoke out of their hearts a greater expectation, this is to confirm in the crowd exactly what He was doing. And the response is a simple plea of verse 33, "They said unto Him, Lord, that our eyes may be open." You see, they're confessing they're blind. And that needs to be made very clear. They were blind.

And that leads to their supernatural privilege...supernatural privilege, verse 34, "And Jesus had compassion on them, touched their eyes, immediately their eyes received sight."

Now it says that Jesus had compassion. And that's the real message, I think, of this wonderful story. He felt their need.

He felt their pain. He hurt for them. There is such a tenderness in Him. He reached out and He touched their eyes.

And Luke adds, "He said when He touched them, Receive your sight." And instantly all physical laws were set aside and just as God creates something out of nothing, Christ created seeing eyes.

Interesting that the Greek verb here is anablepo, blepo, to see, ana, to see again which is to say that perhaps their blindness had occurred in life, not in birth. And so they were made to see again. And I've always felt that those who have lost their sight have a greater pain to bear than those who were born blind and do not know what they've missed. And so He restores to them their sight again out of compassion, touching and speaking.

Oh, He used many methods. Sometimes He touched, sometimes He didn't. Sometimes they touched Him. Sometimes He spoke, sometimes He merely thought a thought and they were healed.

Sometimes He put fingers in ears, sometimes He used clay, sometimes He used spittle. He healed many, many different ways.

But always His healings were total, complete, instantaneous and defied any natural explanation.

Let me just give you a footnote. There are a lot of people around today who want us to believe that they can heal. And you'll turn on your television from time to time and you'll see those kinds of things, but have you ever noticed the absence of blind people? Have you ever noticed that? Oh, they pretend to be able to help people hear and lengthen legs and help people with aches and pains, but where are the people who have glass eyes and all of a sudden they have seeing eyes? This is a monumental miracle. A person who may be crippled and full of pain can be made in the euphoria of a moment and the hype of their own mind and the energy of a situation and in a strong act of confident faith in some healer to stand up and take a few steps, but none of that stuff is going to make a person without eyeballs see. So let the healers line up who claim they have the gift and heal the blind or raise the dead.

Now this takes us to a final point. This takes us to a final point and I love this in verse 34, I call it "their submissive pursuit." Sad plight, strong persistence, sound perception, simple plea, supernatural privilege, submissive pursuit, they pursue, I love this. The end of verse 34, "They followed Him."

That's just a simple little statement but it's a beautiful statement. And what makes it especially beautiful is when they were healed, one of the other gospel writers, Mark, says, "Jesus said to them, Go your way..go your way." Well, you know what their way was? When He said go your way, what way did they go? Their way was His way from now on. I think this is just the kind of stuff that indicates real regeneration. And Mark 10:52 says, "Jesus said, Go your way, your faith has made you whole." Now listen carefully. The word there, "your faith has made you whole" is not iaomai, healed you, it's sozo, your faith has saved you. That is the classic New Testament word for "to be saved." Your faith has saved you. And I think inherent in what our Lord said there in Mark 10:52 to these blind men was this, "You're redeemed."

Now listen carefully. You do not have to have faith in the New Testament record to be healed. There were plenty of people healed in the New Testament who didn't have faith. Dead people don't have faith. There were a lot of people healed in the New Testament that didn't have faith. You can look through all kinds of illustrations of that. Get Dick's book on Divine Healing Today, you can look them all up, they're all listed for you there. But you can find all kinds of healings where there was no faith, but you'll never find salvation without faith. And so, whereas faith is not necessary for healing, faith is necessary for salvation. And I like to think when Jesus said, "Your faith hath saved you," that's exactly what He meant. Sure there was physical wholeness there and they did have faith in that, but it was more than that.

I think of Luke 17, you know, ten lepers came and Jesus said, "Go show yourself to the priest," and on the way all ten were cleansed, katharizo, a form of healing, they were all katharizoed, cleansed of leprosy. How many came back? One, to whom Jesus said, "Your faith has saved you." I believe there were ten healed, there was one...what?...saved.

And there's another reason that I think these guys really had a transformed life. It says they followed Him. Somebody's going to say, "Oh yeah, but they were just following Him to Jerusalem." Well, that's right. But it says in Luke, "They followed, glorifying God." Glorifying God. And it even tells us, interestingly enough, in Luke 18:43, that all the whole multitude started chanting praise to God. And this thing starts mounting. And by the time they get to Jerusalem, you know what broke loose on Palm Sunday, right? I think He touched that city from top to bottom. He hit the richest guy, Zacchaeus, and a couple of poor beggars, the most despised up and inner, and the most despised down and outers, He got them all. What a demonstration. And it was sort of a final Messianic display that swept the crowd into the hosannas of Palm Sunday.

I hope it's your testimony that you've been touched by the compassion of Jesus because you've cried for Him and He's made you see. Let's pray.

We can all say with the blind man in John 9 that once we were blind and now we see when we've been touched with the saving grace of Christ. We thank You for that, our Lord, for whereas we were blind, we do see. And we thank You that Jesus is compassionate, that He is never too busy in the matter of redeeming the universe to stop to hear the cry of those in need.

And that His heart is touched deeply with compassion for that heart. We thank You that when we who are spiritually blind come and cry out, O that our eyes may be opened, that the same Lord of compassion is there to open our eyes as well and our faith can make us to be saved, to be whole in spirit.

We thank You, also, Father, that Jesus Christ has the power to heal all disease and some day will do that in glory at the redemption of our bodies when all sickness and sorrow and pain and death is banished forever. We thank You and we wait for that display of power. In the meantime, because we know that sickness must endure as long as sin endures, we thank You that our Savior is compassionate and He understands our frailties, He feels the pain of our fallenness, He sympathizes with our sorrow and has even in the midst of them His holy purposes that we through those things might be made more like Jesus Christ who is indeed a sympathetic high priest.

We thank You for this glimpse of our dear Savior. We pray that we might see Him with as clear eyes as those two blind men saw Him. The Lord, the Son of David, the rightful King, the one alone who can save those who come in faith and cry for mercy out of their sad distress.

With your head bowed in a moment as we close. If you have never come to the light of Christ, we would invite you to do that this morning. Believe in your heart, confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, accept His work on the cross for you and you will come to see with the eyes of the soul.

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