

## Message #90

## Luke 18:35-43

The gospel of Luke was written by Luke, who was a medical doctor. You do have to appreciate medical doctors. For the most part, they spend their time looking at sick people and trying to figure out how to make them better. It is amazing what medical doctors are capable of doing. One person goes in with their symptoms and the doctor figures out how to attack it. Another person goes in with their symptoms and the doctor figures out how to attack that. Really, doctors are quite impressive. They are especially impressive if they honor God.

Jesus Christ was the ultimate doctor. He was the Divine Doctor, the Divine Savior, the Divine Messiah and Divine King. Jesus Christ could not only diagnose diseases and heal people physically and miraculously, but He also did that spiritually. Jesus Christ is in the business of assessing mangled lives and making them healthy and brand new. **Here is the amazing thing about this; He did this as He was nearing His own execution.**

It is hard to know why Luke decided to include this little episode with the blind man in this particular context. Perhaps it was because the disciples were blinded from understanding the truth of the Gospel (Luke 18:34). It may be that Jesus Christ wanted to illustrate that in their own blindness, they needed to call to Him so they might see and understand the truth of God. We know that Pharisees totally disregarded sinners. What we see here is this:

**ANY PERSON, REGARDLESS OF PREVIOUS BACKGROUND WHO WILL CALL OUT TO JESUS CHRIST, WILL BE SAVED AND THEN IF THE PERSON WILL FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST, HE WILL HAVE A LIFE THAT GLORIFIES GOD.**

In this powerful text are two key theological ideas:

- 1) People need to cry out to Jesus Christ for salvation.
- 2) People need to follow Jesus Christ to glorify God.

Jesus Christ is in the business of patching up broken lives. He is willing and ready to heal one who cries out to Him and if after crying out to Him one will purpose to follow Him, he will be greatly used by God.

Now Dr. Luke tells this story and it is comprised of four component parts:

**COMPONENT PART #1** – Any person may call out to Jesus Christ in their desperate circumstances of life. **18:35-38**

Christ was approaching Jericho, which is a city located about 15 miles NE of Jerusalem. On this route was a blind man. This guy is in total contrast to the rich ruler in verses 18-23. Mark says the blind man's name was Bartimaeus. He had two major problems:

- 1) He had no sight - he was blind (18:35a).
- 2) He had no job - he was begging (18:35b).

From a social standpoint, he was not a winner. He is not trying to con people like so many do today, this man was blind and could not work. So he would sit on the side of the road and beg people or ask people for some money.

The present tense of the participle “begging” indicates that it was his habitual, customary practice to sit and beg. This blind man regularly sat outside of Jericho and begged people for some money.

It is interesting that the verb “was sitting” is an imperfect middle. What that means is this blind man, in and of himself, somehow went to this roadside continually and sat down and asked people for money. The emphasis of the middle voice verb is that he did this himself. No one was helping him.

This would have been a very lonely and lousy existence.

A blind beggar was not a good life for four reasons:

- 1) He had a physical problem - He was blind.
- 2) He had an employment problem - no job, no disability social security program, no money.
- 3) He had a social problem - very few people would have anything to do with him.
- 4) He had a religious problem - the religious world deemed him as a horrible sinner.

According to the Talmud, the Jewish commentary on the O.T. law, which has been in existence since the time of Ezra (450 B.C.), blindness was considered to be a punishment of God for some parental sin and a blind beggar, whose parents allowed him to beg, would be excommunicated from the synagogue.

This blind beggar was an outcast of society - physically, socially and religiously. All viewed him as a sinful loser. Not too many cared about him and not too many would even talk to him.

According to **verse 36**, the blind man was sitting by the road and he heard a huge crowd going by where he was sitting. He sat there so many times that he knew that this crowd passing by was not normal. He could not see the crowd but he could hear it. This man did not have sight, but he did have hearing and he did have a mind. So he asked what was happening.

According to **verse 37**, someone from the crowd told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. This was not just any person named “Jesus”; this was the Jesus of Nazareth, of Galilee, whose reputation was the talk of the world. Thank God someone took the time to tell him about Jesus. Had not someone done that, he would have still been blind.

Just the fact that He was Jesus of Nazareth would have rubbed the religious leaders the wrong way. They were used to religious leaders coming out of Jerusalem, not Galilee. This fact would have made them angry.

According to **verse 38**, when the blind man heard that it was Jesus, he called out to Him and identifies Him in ways the others didn't:

- 1) He identifies Him as Jesus, which means he identifies Him as the Savior.
- 2) He identifies Him as Son of David, which means he identifies Him as the Messianic King. In fact, when the religious leaders heard people identify Jesus as the "Son of David," it angered them. The Son of David was intimately connected with Israel's Kingdom and Israel's Kingdom was to be a place of national restoration and healing.
- 3) He identifies Him as the One who can grant Divine Mercy, which means he identifies Him as God. In fact, this blind man kept crying out to Jesus "have mercy on me" (**v. 38, 39**).

This man may have been physically blind, but he had spiritual sight greater than those who could physically see Jesus Christ. He knew that this was the One who could help him.

Now the word that this blind man repeats is the word "mercy" (elehson). It is not the word "propitious" used by the tax collector in **verse 13**. We get a real contextual understanding of what God's mercy is here. It is that which reaches out to one that is helpless and hopeless. It is to have compassion and pity on someone in a miserable condition.

The Apostle Paul is very clear to point out in Romans 9 that God is the One who determines to whom He will grant His saving mercy. In fact, Paul says, "So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy." Now we all need the mercy of God. We all need to be saved and in order to be saved we must call out to Jesus Christ and ask Him to save us. That is where the mercy of God is found in any context - spiritual or physical.

**COMPONENT PART #2** – Any person may call out to Jesus Christ regardless of what other people say or think. **18:39**

When those who were leading the way of this procession heard this blind beggar crying out to Jesus Christ for mercy, they rebuked him sternly and told him to "be quiet."

Look at this. Don't miss this because this kind of thing happens all the time. Just as soon as God started to convict and work, someone was raised up who tried to stop it. That same thing happened to Moses, David, Nehemiah and it happened to Jesus Christ Himself. It happens today. Whenever God starts working and convicting, someone will probably be raised up who will try to stop it.

Apparently these religious leaders of the parade to Jerusalem did not remember that it was God who made people blind (Ex. 4:11) and it was God who closely monitors how blind people are treated (Lev. 19:14; Deut. 27:18).

We don't exactly know what prompted them to tell the blind man to "be quiet." Perhaps they were trying to stop the true testimony of Jesus Christ. This man is crying out that He is the Davidic Messiah.

Perhaps they were viewing him as an embarrassment. Perhaps they did not think he was worth it. They were perhaps all revved up that Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem to set up a kingdom and stopping for this one individual would be a waste of time. We don't know why they told him to be quiet, but they did.

It was so easy for those religious leaders who had their physical sight to rebuke one who didn't have his sight. They see fine so they have nothing to lose by getting the blind man to stop calling out to Jesus Christ.

It is easy for those who don't see themselves as sinners to put down those who do see themselves as sinners.

It is interesting to observe the verbs "Call" (**18:38**) and "Cry" (**18:39**). They are two different distinct words. "Call" refers to articulate calling. "Cry" refers to emotional crying.

In other words, the more the blind man was told to be quiet, the more emotional he became in crying out to the Lord. This blind man sensed the urgency of the moment. If Christ would have made it into Jericho, this opportunity would have passed him by.

I don't know how many chances a person gets to cry out to the Lord for mercy. I don't know how many times the Spirit of God convicts a person to cry out for grace. But I do know this; if you are in sin and recognize your need for God's cleansing grace, you need to cry out to Him. Don't let that moment pass you by because you may not get another moment.

**COMPONENT PART #3** – Jesus Christ will respond to one who calls to Him. **18:40-42**

Jesus Christ did just the opposite of what everyone else thought he should do. He stopped the whole parade and "commanded" that this blind beggar be brought to Him (**verse 40**). When the beggar was brought before Jesus, He asked him what he wanted Him to do for him (**Verse 41**).

Now that seems to be somewhat of an odd question. But there is something important to see and learn here. God wants people to be precise, not generic in what they want Him to do. Jesus Christ wants one to be very specific in what the person wants Him to do.

Think of this. Here is the Son of God, the Son of David, the Messiah, the King of Kings, the Savior of the world stopping at the cry of a blind beggar and asking him what he wants Him to do.

Christ is on His way to the cross (18:32-33) and we would think that He would demand that these people do things for Him, but instead, He asks "what can I do for you."

By this time in Christ's life, He was at the pinnacle of earthly notoriety. All knew of His name and power. He drew big crowds but He was still interested in helping individual blind beggars.

No matter how much we have been used by God, we must always take time to help blind beggars. When we tell people who have been mangled by sin to call out to Jesus Christ for His mercy, we are doing the kind of thing Jesus did on His way to the cross.

But we must make certain that we inform the person that he needs to ask Jesus specifically to save from sin.

When Jesus asked the blind man what he wanted Him to do, the blind man said, "Lord, I want to regain my sight" (v. 41). Do not miss this. This blind man identifies Jesus Christ as "Lord." So not only does he identify Christ as the Messiah, but as God.

According to **verse 42**, Jesus healed the man and gave him his sight. Three times in three verses the word "regain" or "receive" shows up. Each word is used in a different mood that really adds color to his narrative:

**Verse 41** the word "regain" is in the subjunctive mood - which means the blind beggar knows that receiving sight is a possibility.

**Verse 42** the word "receive" is in the imperative mood - which means receiving sight is commanded.

**Verse 43** the word "regained" is in the indicative mood - which means receiving sight is a factual reality.

**This is the last miracle Luke records, which clearly shows Jesus Christ is the only One who can bring Divine light to world darkness.**

Carefully notice what it was that saved this man. Jesus says it was his faith. His faith in Him had made him well. The verb "made well" is the verb saved. Your faith has saved you. Not your works, not your religion, but your faith in Me has saved you.

If you are in sin, cry out to the Lord for salvation. Salvation is a real possibility. Jesus Christ will declare you are righteous from all your sin and your sin will be gone and that is a factual reality.

When the blind man cried out to Jesus Christ for sight, he got his sight. You cry out to Jesus Christ and specifically ask Him to save you and you will be saved.

As the song says, "only trust Him and He will save you."

**COMPONENT PART #4** – Any person who has been saved by Jesus Christ who purposes to follow Jesus Christ will cause others to glorify God. **18:43**

It is powerful how Luke ends this story. The blind beggar called out to Jesus Christ and Christ gave him his sight and he immediately followed Christ. He was already saved and had already received his sight but he decided to become a following disciple. Immediately his life changed and he began to glorify God and influence others.

This man's life became a beautiful physical reflection of the grace of God.

There is a major difference between being saved and having a saved life that glorifies God. Calling out to Jesus Christ for salvation will save you. But following Jesus Christ after salvation is what ultimately will bring glory to God.

It would be nice to say that all saved people end up carefully studying and applying the word of God. But the truth is it doesn't always work this way. Some cry out to Jesus Christ to save them but then they do not develop into a life that glorifies God. Does yours?

This story is an amazing story of the Grace of God. Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners and restore them to a right relationship with God. He can and will take a broken down, bruised life that has been mangled by sin and forgive them and make them a shining token of His glory.

Luke 18 is an interesting chapter in which Jesus relates to different types of people:

- 1) He instructs His disciples - about prayer, saving faith, kingdom truth.
- 2) He mercifully ministers to the outcasts - the widow, the little child and the blind man.
- 3) He reprovcs and rebukes self-righteous Pharisees - they will not enter the Kingdom of God.

Have you ever cried out to Jesus Christ and asked Him to save you?