



Lesson 5 December 28th, 2024

The Merciful Son of David

Study Scripture – Luke 18:35-43

Background Scripture – Luke 18:31 - 43

Key Verse:

“Those who led the way were sternly telling him to be quiet; but he kept crying out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Luke 18:39

INTRODUCTION

Jesus was approaching the time for Him to be crucified.

A decision had to be made by the people of Israel and by the leaders as to the source of new life and the requirements for entry into the Kingdom of God.

Jesus had healed the Ten lepers and only the despised Samaritan had returned to thank Him.

Jesus had wistfully lamented at this,

“Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner” And He said to him, ***“Arise, go your way, Your faith has made you well”***.

Jesus had taught about His death and resurrection and the coming disaster for the nation. He taught about the unjust Judge and the woman who persistently sought justice, stressing God’s vindication of the elect and His certain avenging when they cried out to Him.

And in one of the most incredibly troubling statements Jesus added:

“When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

Then after the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, which stripped apart the hypocrisy of the ruling elite, Jesus blessed the children declaring:

“Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, will by no means enter it”.

We then see Luke presenting the Rich Young Ruler who sought salvation but justifying himself because he kept the commandments, but when Jesus told him what he lacked and gave him the corrective measure to go and sell all that he had and then come and follow Him, Jesus was only met with sorrow from the departing young ruler.

Jesus was now left with the only alternative but to again foretell His death and resurrection as He headed toward the Cross.

Remember therefore that men have something missing, not only in their physical life but in their emotional and spiritual life.

Only Jesus as their Lord and Saviour can fill that void and bring wholeness, peace, and joy in the Spirit.

Our Study Lesson will bring these lessons together to guide the bewildered disciples as Jesus continues on to Jerusalem to be crucified.

Note therefore that only when there is faith in Jesus Christ one can be set free from blindness, and notably spiritual blindness that corrupts the heart.

Physical distance is one of many obstacles, barriers that prevent people from achieving ends, receiving cures and just being where they need to be. Maybe less so in our day of land, sea and air-travel but in Jesus' time it was a formidable hurdle and acutely so if one was blind. The secondary character in our study is a blind man named Bartimaeus and he lived in Jericho.

Jesus the only person who could cure his blindness lived in Nazareth 200 km away. Bartimaeus could not find Jesus; Jesus would have to find him and today's Lesson is a real-life picture of the Savior finding lost sinners. ... *the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.* (Luke 19:10). Jesus will not only save him but will also open his eyes, physically and spiritually!

This story (Luke's last recorded miracle) and the next (Zaccheus - Luke 19) are examples of how all who hear the Gospel should respond and how the nation Israel should have responded to her Messiah in that day.

Bartimaeus and Zaccheus line up with the publican in Jesus' parable (18:9-17), who cried out to God for mercy. They stand in contrast to the Pharisee in the parable and the rich young ruler (18:18-27), who both tried to approach God based on their own merit. The Pharisee and the rich young ruler were likely candidates for salvation who missed it because they trusted in themselves and refused to acknowledge their sin.

Bartimaeus and Zaccheus were unlikely candidates for salvation, but they obtained it through faith in God's mercy, apart from anything in themselves.

Thus Luke uses this unlikely blind beggar to teach us among other things that when Jesus *passes by*, we should cry out to Him in faith, and He will be merciful to us.

Today's Text takes place on Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem, a journey that began in Luke 9:51. He had been travelling south from Galilee on the east side of the Jordan River, through Decapolis, Perea ... He forded the Jordan River near Jericho and at this point in Luke's Gospel, He is near the end of the journey. Today's Text, Luke 18:35-43, describes the fourth and final miracle on the journey, (Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6; 17:11-19).

Just before the event of our Text, Jesus warned His disciples (again) that He, the Son of Man, was going to die and rise on the third day (Luke 18:31-34. This was another direct reference to Jesus' death in Luke, (5:35; 9:22, 44-45; 12:49-50; 13:32-33; 17:25). The disciples did not fully



grasp the import of Jesus' statement or even begin to and in that they were a picture of the 'lost sinner' blind to the things of God!

As we read the numerous events and teachings between Luke 9:51 and 18:35, we get the impression that Jesus' pace lacked anxiety or ease; He was on schedule!

Also, in no hurry but by necessity rather than choice, were the physically infirm of the era, especially those who were blind. Blindness was a familiar condition in the ancient world, with the Bible itself using some form of the word *blind* dozens of times.

From our current scientific vantage point, there was no reliable cure for blindness in Jesus' day and little understanding of its varied causes. Still, the ancient mind was not cautious about thinking of one cause of blindness in particular; many believed it to be a curse from God for some sort of sinful behavior. The sins of the parents were thought to affect their children, causing them to be born blind (John 9:1–2). Regardless of the cause, blindness was economically and socially debilitating. Blind men could not serve as priests (Leviticus 21:16–18) and had little opportunity for employment. They were reduced to begging or depending on family support to survive.

Parallels to today's Text of Luke 18:35–43 are Matthew 20:29–34 and Mark 10:46–52. Mark is the writer that tells us that the name of the blind man was Bartimaeus. Matthew tells us that there were two blind beggars actually healed that day. Mark and Luke only mention one. They do not say that there was *only* one. They merely focus on the man who was the more vocal and memorable of the two.

There is another variation in the narratives. Matthew and Mark both report that the incident took place as Jesus was leaving Jericho, but Luke states that it happened as Jesus approached Jericho. A number of solutions have been proposed, but the variance indicates that Luke was not relying on either Matthew or Mark as his source, or the accounts would line up.

Also, we are dealing with eyewitness accounts of what happened. Matthew was there personally; Mark got his story from Peter, who was there; and Luke carefully researched his account from eyewitnesses (Luke 1:1-4). Sometimes, eyewitness accounts of the same event can vary greatly and yet all be true. We may lack sufficient information to piece it all together, but it would be arrogant for us, from our limited perspective, to pronounce that one of the authors was in error.

One explanation is that Jesus was leaving 'old' Jericho and about to enter the rebuilt Jericho when this incident occurred. Jericho was one of the oldest cities in the world and it stood at the entrance to Canaan to block the way of the nation of Israel who had come to enter the Promised Land. But as Joshua followed God's instruction the city's walls had fallen. One writer comments on the history of what was then called Jericho:

“Long before the reign of Herod 1, Jericho was already “a little paradise” with its palm trees, rose gardens, its streets lined with sycamores, its delightful climate etc., and Herod the Great and his son Archelaus had made it even more beautiful. A grand winter palace had been built there, and also a theatre and a hippodrome. In the days of our Lord's ministry the city was the home of many of the Jewish priests and Levites. When it was their turn to serve in the



temple, they would begin the 15 mile, 6-hour journey up to Jerusalem, which was some 2600 feet above sea level.

Jericho was also a city of publicans, of government officials who worked on behalf of the Romans, because of its central location for trade between Jordan and Israel and Egypt. Thus there were many tax collectors there.

Let us read with an eye to avail ourselves of the many lessons from these verses keeping in mind, Jesus 'is passing by'.

THE TEXT

35. ... *Jericho* ... was a commercial center close to north to south and east to west trade routes and located near the Jordan River, about seventeen miles east of Jerusalem.

The city is infamous for having been completely destroyed by God some fourteen centuries prior to the encounter described in Luke 18 (Joshua 6).

Archeology reveals that there were two locations for Jericho in the first century: (1) the ancient location as described in the Old Testament and (2) the complex rebuilt by Herod, approximately one mile from the more ancient location. The modern city of Jericho includes both sites.

... *a man who was blind was sitting by the road, begging.* ... The parallel account in the Gospel of Mark reveals more of the identity of this *certain blind man*: he is "Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus"
(Mark 10:46).

For a person living in the first century A.D, any degree of visual impairment was untreatable. Corrective lenses, as we have them today, would not be available for centuries to come. The most serious visual impairment is, of course, blindness. As noted, People who were so afflicted had few, if any, viable treatment options and were unable to work in many occupations. *Begging* alongside heavily traveled roads or next to city gates was a common sight.

Physical blindness was a metaphor of spiritual blindness (Isa. 42:18-19; 59:9-10; John 9).

The Law of Moses pronounced a curse on those who took advantage of the blind (Leviticus 19:14; Deuteronomy 27:18).

36. *But when he heard a crowd going by, he began inquiring what this was.*

The exact makeup and number of *the crowd* is not given. Luke twelve speaks of a massive crowd so much so people were stepping on each other.

Presently it was Passover time and pilgrims headed to Jerusalem thronged the roadway. The crowd undoubtedly with dropouts and add-ins along the way was tagging along with Jesus' on His final journey to Jerusalem. It was customary for Rabbis to be found in the crowds and they would be teaching as they walked along.



At that time, it was not unusual for people to travel long distances in large groups. Bandits would frequently wait along roads to ambush solitary travelers. While the Roman road system and garrisons made travel safer, banditry was still very common.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan actually begins with this common scenario; its setting is the same road between Jericho and Jerusalem on which Jesus and His companions traveled (Luke 10:30).

... *began inquiring what this was....* note, the blind become good listeners out of necessity and hearing gets sharper. If we assume Bartimaeus was in that condition for some time he would more than likely have overheard snippets about the great healer from Nazareth named Jesus and his miracles of healing including giving sight to the blind.

Jericho was a gateway town with travelers from various places passing through and Bartimaeus must have longed for the day Jesus passed thru! But this hope was blunted by his physical condition; he could not travel to find Jesus so we can imagine the excitement that gripped him when he heard that Jesus was right there!

Speaking of Messiah, the prophet Isaiah said in 42:6-7 *“I am the Lord, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, ⁷ To open blind eyes,* Jesus is the only person in the Bible reported to have given sight to anyone. Among His recorded miracles there are more related to blindness than any other type. Giving sight to the blind was a peculiar mark of Messiah.

Now a crowd of people naturally generates some noise, especially when enthusiastic about something. Bartimaeus had heard feast-day crowds before, and his elevated hearing gave him a sense of who and what was going on but on this day there was a certain buzz in the crowd that caught his attention and interest.

37. They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by

The designation of *Jesus* being *of Nazareth* or as a “Nazarene” occurs about two dozen times in the New Testament—all in the four Gospels and Acts. Although Jesus was not born in Nazareth, He grew up in that town, (Luke 2:39; 4:16, 23–24; Matthew 2:23).

Jesus’ reputation clearly had preceded Him; Bartimaeus was aware of Jesus’ reputation as a miracle worker and healer (Mark 6:54–56; 7:36–37). Hearing that this was *Jesus of Nazareth* made a difference, since the name Jesus (Hebrew: Joshua) was not uncommon. Though Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4–7), His parents lived in Nazareth and returned to that town when Jesus was very young (Matthew 2:22–23; Luke 2:39). Throughout His life, therefore, Jesus was known as “Jesus of Nazareth” (Mark 1:24; 10:47; etc.).



As a variant of the name *Joshua*, the name *Jesus* might have been common at that time. But there was no other person who had worked miraculously among the people—no other person who could be recognized by such a designation, as evidenced by the next verse.

38. ... *And he called out, ...* Bartimaeus was not concerned with social decorum; he knew this opportunity may never come again. Rather than be quietly content with the city's enjoyment of a celebrity rabbi passing through, Bartimaeus *began to cry out*. As he did, he focused on a very different aspect of Jesus' heritage by using the phrase *thou Son of David*.

... *Jesus, Son of David* ... the multitude said, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by," but Bartimaeus did not cry out, "Jesus of Nazareth, have mercy on me." He cried, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! This response confessed that he believed that Jesus had the power to give him sight in light of messianic prophecies.

Note, our faith must be in Jesus Messiah!

Many cults have a 'Jesus' but not the Jesus of Scripture.

At its most generic, the term acknowledged *Jesus* to be a descendant of the greatest king in Israel's history (Matthew 1:1, 6). More importantly, this is a Messianic title (Mark 12:35). The same acclamation was repeated few days later when Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem to the excitement of a great crowd (Matthew 21:9).

Bartimaeus' shout was an enlightened response. It had definite Messianic overtones related to (2 Sam. 7; Luke 1:27,32; 2:4; Matt. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30,31; 21:9,15; 22:42).

The designation of *Jesus* as the *Son of David* reveals something the blind man saw in contrast to the spiritually blind religious leaders. Remember when Jesus asked them this question:

What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he? (Matt. 22:41–46). Since the Messiah was to come from the line of David (2 Samuel 7:12–16; Psalm 89:3–4; Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5–6; 33:17–22).

As we know, Jesus is a descendant of David because He was Joseph's adopted son, as Luke established earlier in his Gospel (Luke 3:23–38). By calling Jesus the "Son of David," the blind man showed that he recognized Jesus as the Messiah of Israel.

Over time Bartimaeus connected the miracles of Jesus with the Messiah e.g. *On that day those who are deaf will hear words of a book, And out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of those who are blind will see.* Isaiah 29:18

But even such recognition did not guarantee a complete understanding of the Messiah's role (Luke 24:19–27 (Emmaus); Acts 1:6). It is no coincidence that Luke relates Jesus' prediction of His own death and resurrection to His twelve disciples just before this encounter with a blind man

(Luke 18:31–34).



The disciples, too, had acknowledged Jesus as they traveled with and learned from Jesus for three years. Still, when Jesus warned them that He would soon die and rise again according to the Scriptures, they did not understand Him.

On the other hand, the blind man did not know Jesus; in fact, he could not even see Jesus. Yet he possessed the spiritual sight to recognize that Jesus truly was the promised Messiah of Israel. (We should note that the Hebrew word translated *Messiah*, and the Greek word translated *Christ* mean the same thing: “the anointed one”; John 1:41)

*The woman *said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.”* John 4:25).

Note it was a man lacking eyesight who recognized Jesus as David’s son! The Text does not say how he was able to do so. But the Bible has much to say about those who have eyes but fail to see

(Matthew 13:14; Mark 4:12; 8:18; Acts 28:26).

How can you ensure you have no “spiritual blind spots” in this regard? And how can you ensure that people recognize Jesus in your life?

Just as Bartimaeus had his opportune moment to cry out to Jesus, and then it would be gone, so it is with you. Today is the day of salvation; you may not have tomorrow! Today you are hearing the Word of God, about a Savior who invites you to come to Him for mercy. Jesus is passing by, and He may never pass so close to you again! He is the only one with the power to open eyes that have been blinded by sin. Call out to Him while He is near!

... have mercy on me ... something we all need and is a comment on our true condition.

Bartimaeus knew that he was a blind beggar with no claim for healing. He had nothing in himself to commend himself to Christ. Like the publican in Jesus’ parable, he just cried out for mercy.

Note being a beggar was a humiliating situation. First, it violated the law stated in Deuteronomy 15

“there shall be no poor among you, since the Lord will surely bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess....If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks; (15:4, 7-8).

The Law therefore had taught the brethren should not have to beg when they were among their own people.

The people in Israel were a living symbol of how blind people were. The disciples were blind about the kingdom of God and so were the “ordinary people”.



Luke wants us to see that we all are blind beggars before God. Satan has “*blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ*” (2 Cor. 4:4). Before God we are “*wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked*” (Revelation 3:17). This is perhaps a major stumbling block that keeps people from coming to Christ: they want to commend themselves and their good deeds. God has to open our eyes to our true condition before Him. We have nothing in ourselves to merit His salvation. We are spiritually blind sinners, and the only way we can come to Him is to ask for mercy, not on merit.

Bartimaeus' words reveal a heart that entertained a firm hope that the one who had *mercy* on other blind people, expressed in their healing, would heal him also (Mark 8:22–25). Jesus' healing ministry had caused a sensation in Galilee (Matthew 11:1–5; etc.). It marked Him as much more than a teacher.

Luke teaches that the capacity for restoring sight was a fulfillment of prophecy concerning the Messiah, marking Jesus as that person (Luke 4:18–21). Furthermore, Luke singles out curing blindness specifically in his listing of the mighty works of Jesus, showing how impressive such a cure was considered to be (7:21).

Note that this blind beggar who grew up in the Jewish community would know from Isaiah 61:1-2 and other Scriptures that the Messiah when He came, would open the eyes of the blind. He would certainly meditate on these texts and likely developed keen spiritual insight. He certainly came to believe that Jesus must be the Messiah.

39. ... *sternly telling him to be quiet* ... not a few in the crowd thought Bartimaeus was rude, too aggressive, or otherwise socially inept. Perhaps they were embarrassed for him because of his bellowing.

Luke does not explain their reasons, but it may have to do with the way that important people were treated in the ancient world. Most people believed that those individuals who were important and famous stood above common people's concerns. The group may have thought they were paying Jesus due honor and respect by keeping someone they considered unimportant from bothering Him. Maybe they found the blind man disruptive and a distraction while Jesus taught.

The blind man, however, showed no concern for such a social norm. He was not shy; he was a beggar. Instead, he pressed *so much the more* as he called again for Jesus' *mercy*. Like the widow who pestered the Judge in search of justice (Luke 18:1–8), the blind man ignored barriers in his way and persisted in asking Jesus for help. Another mark of true; it persist against hinderances.

Mercy means the grace of God to those who are helpless. There are people who cannot change their circumstances. And so the blind man cried to Jesus to have mercy on him. One writer comments:



Have you ever felt helpless, that you have no hope, that you are at your wit's end? This is when God hears the prayers of the people. If we have never cried out for mercy we are not living realistically".

Note, there is much arrayed against any who desire to come to Jesus and call out for His mercy. Satan, the 'flesh' and the 'world' working in concert are formidable obstacles to any who desire to approach Jesus.

... crying out all the more ... Bartimaeus showed genuine faith in his persistent, persevering plea to Jesus. He knew the Scriptures concerning Messiah, he knew God is faithful; he knew Messiah's compassion; all this from the Scriptures which he believed. Unlike the 'rich young ruler' (Luke 18), he would not let this opportunity slip away. Like Jacob who wrestled with an Angel till he was blessed, Bartimaeus sense of urgency and need spurred him on.

And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:30).

God's grace is not cause for a folding of the arms and passivity but a call to action. God's people must cry out to Him for mercy.

40. *And Jesus stopped ...* a cry for mercy will stop the 'passing Jesus' every time!

Based on ancient ideas of honor and the value of persons, the blind man had very little worth. Thus, it is likely that the crowd did not expect this reaction from Jesus. Jesus had priorities; He had to get to Jerusalem and the Cross, but He found time for a beggar to the chagrin of the crowd.

... commanded that he be brought to Him ... consider the honor; a beggar gets an audience; our Lord is gracious!

Similarly, we are to call others to Jesus (Matthew 28:18–20). Though we hope not to stand in the way of those who seek Jesus, sometimes we can be going along our contented way and lose sight of the lost around us. At those times, we must hear Jesus' command to issue the invitation to approach Him.

"Those whom Christ effectually calls by His grace, of which this instance is emblematical, have reason to be of good comfort, that the effectual calling is a ground of comfort, and they can be assured that they are loved by God."

"The call is evidence of God's everlasting love to them and that they are the chosen of God, for, whom He did predestinate, He calls; and that they are Christ's and are redeemed by Him, seeing He has called them by name: and they may expect all good things from Him; seeing they are called according to grace, given them in Him before the world began; and are called to the participation of the blessings of grace; and it is affirmed that all things work together for their good: wherefore they may live in the faith of eternal glory and happiness; since they that are called, are justified, and shall be glorified".

41. *What do you want Me to do for you?"* Jesus' question was not posed from lack of knowledge. Most likely, it would have been evident to everyone in the crowd that Bartimaeus, by appearance, was blind. Even if the crowd was unaware, Jesus would have known since He



had divine insight (Matthew 9:4; 12:25; Luke 6:8; 9:47). Jesus' question was intended to prompt Bartimaeus to verbalize his need and his faith.

Another reason for the question was that Jesus wanted everyone present to hear the specifics of the man's request. The definite cure and manner in which it was accomplished, would show Jesus as the only cause.

Still another reason for Jesus' question was that he wanted the blind man to demonstrate faith. By stating the great problem that he had, the blind man risked embarrassment for even asking for something so bold. His question was designed to get Bartimaeus to be specific in stating his need in front of the crowd.

... Lord, I want to receive my sight... The context implies that this is more than just a polite title. The blind man had called Jesus "Son of David." That response also confessed that he believed that Jesus had the power to give him sight.

... Lord, ... "we may note in passing that Jesus was addressed by various designations of respect in the pages of the New Testament. The most common of those was "Master" (John 11:28). Another common address of respect was Lord, sometimes meaning no more than "sir" (John 5:7). But the translation "Lord" in the verse before us is not in the category of "sir"; rather, the underlying Greek is the word Rabboni, from the Aramaic language. The title Rabboni "is a strengthened form of 'Rabbi,' and means 'my lord,' 'my master.' When Bartimaeus said this, he expressed his humble submission to Jesus."

The specific nature of Bartimaeus' request is a good example for our prayers. "Have mercy on me" is general, but his prayer moved from the general to the specific request, "that I may receive my sight."

Jesus' life demonstrated the necessity to serve the needs of others. That was His mission, and He carried it out to the end.

Note, Jesus does not always grant our requests, even when they are specific. Matthew and Mark both report that just prior to this incident, James and John had come to Jesus and asked Him to do whatever they would request. Jesus responded, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They answered, "*Grant that we may sit in Your glory, one on Your right, and one on Your left*" (Mark 10:37). But Jesus did not grant that request. It was not for the glory of God.

It was for God's glory to grant salvation by His grace to blind beggars who cry out, "Lord, I want to receive my sight!" We should be specific with our requests.

42. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight.

Christians have been reading this story for over 2,000 years, and the radical nature of this healing is less clear to us than it would have been to the original readers.



There were many people in the first century who claimed to have the power to heal. Frequently, they depended on calling for the help of higher spiritual forces. Many in the ancient world believed that healing various ailments required connecting with spiritual beings. These beings held special positions in the cosmic hierarchy. To get help from these beings, one would have to know their names and perform elaborate rituals to lure them. In other words, many saw healing as a kind of magic that only beings higher up the celestial hierarchy could accomplish.

In contrast, Jesus did not summon such beings for help. He did not ask for a heavenly creature to heal the blind man. He did not perform any special rituals or even touch the person. Instead, Jesus simply commanded that the man *receive sight*. Unlike ancient exorcists, Jesus had the power to heal others. He merely spoke and the blind man was healed. In so doing, Jesus demonstrated power over human bodies that only the Creator of those bodies could possess.

"your faith has made you well. ... faith did not create the cure but was the means by which the cure was obtained. Jesus heals; faith does not cause cures; it lays hold of the promise of God's power.

These words would have left no doubt that He was responsible for the miracle. He hastened to clarify that the man's faith was the instrumental cause of the healing. Luke stressed this again for his readers' benefit (7:50; 8:48; 17:19). Divine power was the effectual cause of the healing.

Note the following comment:

"Faith in this context likely refers to two related aspects of the blind man's actions. First, he rightly identified Jesus as the expected Son of David. Second and most important, he persisted in his request when everyone around him pressured him to be silent. The man rejected the pressure of the crowd and focused only on who Jesus is and what Jesus can do. He continued to ask for healing even when everyone around him wanted him to stop. The man's persistence thus showed his faith in Jesus and his trust in the Messiah's love, compassion and power."

'Your faith has made you well'; this phrase contains two key gospel terms:

1. faith (pistis) – this man believed that Jesus could and would help him and he acted.
2. well (sōzō) – this is the term usually translated "save." In the Old Testament it referred to physical deliverance, as it does here. It also denotes spiritual salvation, which is surely the implication of the context (Luke 7:50; 8:48; 17:19).

This encounter reveals the Messianic aspect of Jesus' ministry and the faith of this blind beggar. The blind man who had nothing received by faith everything (physical and spiritual), while the rich, young ruler, who had everything, lost all that was ultimately important.

Jesus' words, "Your faith has saved you," have a double meaning.

On one level, he was "saved" physically, so that he could now see.

On a deeper level, he was saved spiritually; that is the greater miracle. Instantly God forgave his sins and imparted new life to him, making him a child of God. As Jesus said, "He who hears My



word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life” (John 5:24).

43. And immediately he received his sight.

The power of Jesus is further shown by the speed with which the healing occurred. He simply spoke the word, and *immediately*, the blind man received his sight. Unlike supposed healers among the Greeks and Romans, Jesus’ commands have instantaneous results.

And followed him, glorifying God. The responses to the instantaneous (1:64; et al.) healing were what they should have been: The man began following Jesus, and he began glorifying God (vs. 23). Likewise, the observers’ reaction was to give praise to God.

Only Luke recorded the glorifying and praising of God that took place then (2:20; 5:25; et al.). This reflects his interest in the joyful outcome of salvation (5:26; 17:18; Acts. 2:47; 3:9).

And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God. The shock wave of the healing sent ripples across *all the people*. And we cannot help but wonder if those who *gave praise unto God* were the same ones who had tried to silence the blind man just a few minutes earlier.

This ending also sets up a surprise for the reader. One would expect that someone as powerful as Jesus would have continual victories wherever He goes. That impression is supported in the next Chapter, as Jesus brings Zacchaeus the tax collector to repentance (Luke 19:1–10) and as Jesus enters Jerusalem with a crowd of people who call Him “King” (19:38). Yet Jesus had warned His disciples more than once that He would have to die and rise again (18:31–33; see also Lesson Context). The reader is thus primed to experience the shock of Jesus’ death and the joy of His resurrection that follows.

CONCLUSION

Today’s Text illustrates the point on persistence that Jesus made at the beginning of Luke 18. The blind man knew that Jesus was his only hope to receive healing. The man did not heed the crowd’s admonishment to be silent—quite the opposite! He did not give up. Like the persistent widow of Luke 18:1–8, he kept asking the Lord for help. The formula “faith + persistence” was (and is) powerful indeed. Jesus’ encouragement for faithful persistence remains as sure as it was in His day.

The restoration of a blind man’s sight was a great and merciful miracle. But in the larger context of the Gospels, Jesus encountered many who were spiritually blind, having unresponsive hearts that refused to recognize or honor Him.

Our journey with Jesus begins when we realize we are blind and on the side of the road, sidelined and desperate. It is at that point when we allow Jesus to make us whole. Then we join Him, joyfully walking and learning as we go. This is a timeless picture of discipleship (Matthew 16:24; John 14:6).



When we consider the necessity of faith, we learn some things about Jesus—and about ourselves. In the instance of today’s Text, as in those that came before, Jesus honored faith. The faith of Bartimaeus was very simple: he believed that Jesus was willing and able to help. The man was not questioned about what he knew or believed about the coming Messiah. Neither was he queried regarding exactly what he meant when he called Jesus “Son of David” (Mark 10:47–48) or “Lord” (10:51).

Neither his doctrines nor motives were called into account (contrast Mark 10:17–18; John 6:25–26; James 4:3).

Jesus will not ignore the earnest cry for help. He stops. He looks around. He sees a man who cannot see Him. There on the roadside sits blind Bartimaeus, calling out to Him. ***“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”***

We pray that you will see Jesus passing by here today and that this poor, blind beggar will teach you to cry out in faith, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” If you do, He will!

