

The Messiah Has Come
Week 38
Matthew 9:27-34
“The Just Shall Live By Faith”

Introduction

For we walk by faith, not by sight

2 Corinthians 5:7

As we continue on through the ninth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, we come to a story of two very determined blind men, who pressed upon The Savior to restore their sight. I must admit that I have read this story several times, as many of you have, but there was so much that I had overlooked. As I prepared for this week's message, I began to see things (no pun intended) much more clearly. There is far more to this particular episode in the life of Christ than meets the eye at first glance. I found myself in awe of the determination of these men, for The LORD did not heal them upon their first request.

As a pastor, I have had years upon years of counseling experience. Not that this was something that I sought out for myself, it just goes with the job. While I do love to teach the word, I never felt I was a very accomplished counselor. I just always felt inadequate when it came to telling other people how to fix their problems. That is until I learned a valuable lesson from one of my former pastors. He was a great counselor, and what made him so good at it was not at all what you would think. He was not very much of a talker, but rather, he was a good listener. And what I learned from him was that deep down, people know exactly what they should do without anyone telling them. The best counselors don't need to give much advice, they just need to let the person talk until they finally admit what it is that they should do!

So why is it that many know what they need to do, but never actually do it? Because they do not want to do the right thing bad enough! They say they want healing and deliverance, when deep down they are more enamored with their sin, than they desire the righteousness of Christ. There it is. This may not be a popular truth, but it is in fact *the* truth. In order to be delivered from a besetting sin, one needs to be persistent in overcoming it. Don't get me wrong. I am not saying that you can overcome sin in your own strength. But I am saying that in order to find the power of God to overcome, you must be persistent in your pursuit of His healing power.

Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Who among you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?

Matthew 7:7-11

Did you catch that? The reason that Jesus spoke of “asking, seeking, and knocking” was to encourage us to be persistent in our seeking of righteousness. We long to live in a way that pleases God, so in turn, we become intensely motivated to keep reaching out to God for the strength to overcome the sins and temptations that come our way. The reason that many Christians feel so defeated today is because they, quite frankly, do not want to be delivered bad enough to put in the prayer and discipline required.

Ask yourself this question this morning. How long has it been (if ever) since you fasted and prayed, seeking the face of God with intense desire so that you could overcome your sinful desires and habits? Again, most people just do not want to be healed bad enough to put in the time. I cannot tell you how many generic prayers I have heard over the years in church. “And LORD forgive us of our many sins...” I wonder what God thinks of such prayers. Could it be that He is saying, “I will forgive your sins when you get serious enough to lay them aside in exchange for My holiness.” The question is simple, just how bad do you really want to be healed? Just how desperate are you for deliverance? Remember what we studied in our last lesson: *Desperation + Dependence = Deliverance.*

So let us look together at the story of these two blind men who were desperate enough for their healing that they followed Christ, repeatedly asking for Him to restore their sight. They were willing to overcome hardship in order to find healing. They persisted until their prayers were not only heard, but answered. We must learn to do the same, if we are to find the deliverance that we need. As it turns out, these two blind men had far better spiritual eyesight than many who were in the crowd on that fateful day. In this powerful story, we will see; *The Determined, The Demonic, and The Damned*. Please allow me to explain.

The Determined (vs. 27-31)

As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" When He entered the house, the blind men approached Him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I can do this?" They said to Him, "Yes LORD." Then He touched their eyes, saying, "Let it be done for you according to your faith." And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus warned them sternly, "Be sure that no one finds out." But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout that whole area. **Matthew 9:27-31**

There is a whole lot to unpack for us here. So let us just begin from the top. **"As He went on from there,"** is a reference to The Savior leaving the home of Jairus, after raising the synagogue leader's daughter for the dead. He left that house and more than likely headed back to the home of Simon Peter, which seemed to have become His "home base" in Capernaum. Now, we do not know how far of a walk this would have been, but it was a walk nonetheless.

Here is the reality that I had missed as I read this passage over the years. Yes, I was aware that two blind men had received their sight in this story. But for some reason I hadn't noticed that they actually had to follow Jesus and the crowd, repeatedly shouting out for Him to show them mercy. Why does this matter, you might ask? Because they were blind. They could not even see Jesus. They just knew that He was in the crowd of people walking down the street to get to Peter's house. They could not see where they were going, and all they had to go on was the noisy throng of people.

The original Greek text implies that as these two men were blindly following the crowd (literally) they shouted over and over again, "Son of David, have mercy on us." And for whatever reason, The Savior did not answer their prayers for healing until they reached their destination! Let that sink in for a minute. They cried out for healing over and over again, as they walked by faith and not by sight, until Jesus finally turned to them and asked them if they believed. Then and only then were they healed.

What do you think would have happened if these two had shouted out for healing just one time, then upon realizing the crowd was moving away, used their handicap as an excuse not to follow? I can tell you what would have happened, they would not have been healed. Their prayers were answered because they persisted in faith in order to *have* them answered. And The LORD, who had heard their cries from the start, did nothing until they proved to Him just how determined that they truly were. The determined faith of these men's persistent prayers broke through to the very throne room of heaven until they were heard. As The Apostle Paul would have put it, these men *"prayed without ceasing"* until their prayers were answered (**1 Thessalonians 5:17**).

Another important thing to notice in this story is that although these men were physically blind, they had better spiritual insight than most of the crowd that day. Why do I say this? Because they repeatedly called out to Jesus as, *"The Son of David"*. This was known in those days as a symbolic name for the coming Messiah. It is the second time the words appear in Matthew's Gospel. The first time it occurs in the very first chapter and the very first verse.

An account of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, The Son of David, The Son of Abraham:

Matthew 1:1

This title for The Messiah comes from a promise that God had made to King David all the way back in 2 *Samuel*:

The LORD declares to you: The LORD Himself will make a house for you. When your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up after you your descendant, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be His Father, and He will be My Son... 2 Samuel 7:11b-14a

Now, remember that Matthew's Gospel was written to Jews to convince them that Jesus was indeed the Son of David, the promised Messiah King. And here we see these two blind men calling out to Jesus using the very same title. They could see that Jesus was The Promised Messiah long before anyone else did. Their physical eyes may have been completely useless, but their spiritual eyesight was doing just fine! In their determination they cried out repeatedly to the Messiah King to heal them, and He answered their persistent prayers of faith. And then, He admonished them to keep their secret of His true identity to themselves. A command they instantly disobeyed, for they could not keep silent about what He had done for them.

The Demonic (vs. 32-33)

Just as they were going out, a demon-possessed man who was unable to speak was brought to Him. When the demon had been driven out, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowds were amazed, saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel!" **Matthew 9:32-33**

Make no mistake, the two blind men were disobedient to the command of The LORD when they went out and shared their testimony as to what Christ had done for them. But notice they did not lose their newly found healing for doing so. So often, after we have received God's grace and mercy for our salvation, we still go out and disobey. Thankfully, He doesn't take back His salvation for our disobedience, or many of us would be in real danger.

I am convinced that the two healed blind men simply could not contain themselves and had to share what had happened to them. We can only speculate as to why Jesus commanded them to keep their healing miracle a secret, but they were unable to keep quiet. And that is a pretty common thing among those who have had a genuine encounter with Jesus' miraculous healing. It is very hard for us to refrain from telling others what we have received.

I believe that it was the testimony of these two blind men that caused others, or possibly even the two men themselves, to bring the demon-possessed man to Peter's house for healing. I actually believe that the phrase, **"As they were going out..."** means that as they were going around telling their story. It was their testimony that encouraged others to come to Jesus for healing. I think that is why the demon-possessed man was brought in to see Jesus in the first place! Never underestimate the power of the testimony of someone who has been healed by The Savior.

Needless to say, as we have already seen before, Jesus has the power to cast out Satan's evil angelic hosts. And as the demoniac was restored to healing, he was able to communicate and rejoin society. Lest we forget, **there is no power that Christ cannot overcome.**

Many years ago a man named Stuart Hamblin was at the home of a very famous actor. When the subject of his faith in Christ arose, Hamblin, who had recently surrendered his life to Christ after hearing Billy Graham preach, made the statement to his actor friend, *"It is no secret what God can do."* The actor was so struck by the statement that he encouraged Hamblin that he should write a song using those very words. That same evening after returning home, Hamblin heard the chimes ring out from the clock in his house. So he sat down and penned these words.

*The chimes of time ring out the news another day is through,
Someone slipped and fell. Was that someone you?
You may have longed for added strength your courage to renew.
But do not be disheartened, for I have news for you.
It is no secret what God can do.*

*What He's done for others, He'll do for you.
With arms wide open, He'll pardon you.
It is no secret what God can do.*

The song became an anthem for those who had a testimony of God's healing touch. And by the way, that famous actor who encouraged Stuart Hamblin to write this powerful song in the year of 1949, was none other than John Wayne. So just remember these words, my friend, when you are being oppressed by the demonic powers of the evil prince of this world. *"It is no secret what God can do, what He's done for others, He'll do for you!"* This is a message that we have been commanded to share, for there is a world of lost and dying people out there, who desperately need to know this truth.

The Damned (vs. 34)

But the Pharisees said, "He drives out demons by the ruler of the demons."

Matthew 9:34

There will always be those who, no matter what evidence is presented to them as to the identity of Christ, will refuse to believe. The Pharisees, of all people, should have been able to recognize The Messiah as He performed many wondrous signs in their presence, but they did not believe, because they did not *want* to believe. Just as Pharaoh had hardened his heart against God in the story of The Exodus, these wicked, power-hungry, and self-righteous men hardened their hearts against the salvation that could have easily been theirs. And as a result, they were destined for hell's flame.

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Anyone who believes in Him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in The Name of The One and Only Son of God. This is the judgment: The Light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light and avoids it, so that his deeds may not be exposed. But anyone who lives by the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be shown to be accomplished by God.

John 3:17-21

The Pharisees hated The Savior. And the reason they hated Him is because He told them they needed to repent of their sins just like everybody else. They thought so highly of themselves that they refused to believe they weren't God's favorites! So rather than place their faith in Him and find healing, they chose instead to ridicule and discredit Him. But they crossed the line when they attributed His miracles to the power of Satan. And for this reason they damned themselves to eternal judgment. Jesus later addressed this blasphemous act:

Therefore, I tell you, people will be forgiven every sin and blasphemy, but the blasphemy against The Spirit will not be forgiven. Whoever speaks a word against The Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the one to come. **Matthew 12:31-32**

So exactly what is the *"blasphemy against the Holy Spirit"* ? It is when a person can see for themselves that Jesus is LORD, but they chooses to despise and discredit Him, because they are more in love with their own sin. As a pastor, I see this so very often. You share the gospel with someone, and you can see the conviction in their eyes, but rather than repent and trust in Jesus, they criticize and find ways to discredit the message, and thereby, The Savior Who died for them. To reject Jesus in the face of undeniable truth, is to blaspheme against The Holy Spirit, for it is The Spirit Who reveals Christ to us. Listen to what the book of *Hebrew* says about such a person:

For if we deliberately go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire about to consume the adversaries. Anyone who disregarded the law of Moses died without mercy, based on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think one will deserve who has trampled on The Son of God, who has regarded as profane the blood of the covenant by which He was sacrificed, and who has insulted The Spirit of grace? Hebrews 10:26-29

Simply put, the penalty for rejecting the gospel and discrediting the Name of Jesus is eternal damnation. So you see, the blind men in this wonderful passage had far greater vision than that of the self-righteous Pharisees, for **they walked by faith and not by sight**. They acknowledge Christ as The LORD, the Son of David, The Messiah King of the Jews. And for this unwavering and persistent faith, they not only received their physical healing, but the salvation of their souls. And their testimony of faith and healing, brought others to Jesus. And that, my friends, is *Christianity 101*! So where do you stand this morning? Are you standing **with** Christ or against Him? Are you relying upon His mighty power to deliver you from evil, or are you counting on your own merits? I leave you with the powerful testimony of Joshua:

But if it doesn't please you to worship The LORD, choose for yourselves today: Which will you worship — the gods your ancestors worshipped beyond the Euphrates River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living? As for me and my family, we will worship The LORD. Joshua 24:15

TRUTH!!!