

Sermon outline and notes © Dr. Stephen Felker, Pastor
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Prior to Reading the Text: As you can tell, I am skipping over several chapters in Matthew, most of which I preached back in 2011. Let me give an overview of where we are in this Gospel. In chapters 1-4 Matthew introduces us to the person of the King. In chapter 5-7 we see the principles of the King, that is, His teaching. Now in chapters 8-9 we see the power of the King. Today we are going to look at two of the examples of the power of King Jesus. The miracles we will look at today are only recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. Now let us look at our text together.

Matthew 9:27-31 “Never a Man Like Jesus!”

Intro. Have you ever played the children’s game Pin the Tail on the Donkey? Most of us have. For a few moments a blindfolded child gets a taste of what it is to be blind. When you are blind, it can be so hard to do a simple task like pinning a tail on a picture of a donkey.

Our text tells us of two men who were afflicted with blindness, an all too common malady in that day in Middle Eastern countries. They probably were completely blind, perhaps from birth. Can you imagine what it would be like to be blind, especially in the ancient world? Too often we take our eyesight for granted, but here were two men who could not see. They had to feel their way around, or rely on others to lead them, and help them. Most blind people had to beg just to survive. They were in a desperate situation.

Suppose you were living in the days of Jesus. Reports were beginning to circulate of His mighty deeds. As we see in chapter 8, He cleansed the leper (8:1-4). He healed a paralyzed man (8:5-13; cf. 9:1-9). He cast out demons (8:16, 28-32). Now what would you do if you were blind? If Jesus could perform *those* miracles, perhaps He could even give sight to the blind!

I suppose no one here today has a problem with physical blindness, but I’m sure many here today face some other significant problem. What is your need today? Perhaps you or a loved one is facing an incurable disease. Perhaps your heart is broken over the loss of a loved one. Perhaps you have lost your job, and the prospects for another one are not good, especially with over 40 million others who have lost their jobs in the last two months. Perhaps you deal with loneliness most of the time, only made worse by COVID-19 prevention measures. Perhaps you are discouraged or depressed. Perhaps you have a serious marital problem. Someone said, “Love is blind, but marriage is a real eye-opener.”¹

Some of you have a spiritual need. Do you know for sure that your sins are forgiven, and that you are going to heaven? Are you burdened with guilt? Does some sin seem to control you, and you can’t break free? Are you blind to all the good things that God has for you? I do not know all of the needs and problems represented in this room, but I’m sure there are many. The good news is that people tend to be open to the ministry and message of God in times of need.

This morning I want to show you from our text what you should do when you have a need or a problem. First of all:

¹ Quoted by Paula Deen on the Food Network in *Reader’s Digest*, June 05, page 73. Don’t know who said it first!

I. WHEN YOU HAVE A NEED, TURN TO JESUS

We rarely do that *first*. We will hope that with time the problem will just go away. Or we will try to handle it ourselves. Then we may look to other people for help and support, including on social media. Many look to political solutions for the problems we face.

Here in our text we see a common reality. Did you notice that the two blind men were together? Now if you are blind, what good is another blind person? So why were they together? Well, the fact is sorrows tend to drive people together. They have common experiences which isolate them from others. They seem to find the greatest sympathy and understanding from people who have the same problem. That is why we have so many support groups today. But there is only so much that you can do for yourself, and only so much that other people can do for you.

The fact is, there are some needs and problems that you will face that only Jesus can help you with. That was certainly true of the problem of blindness. So I suggest that you do what these blind men did, and turn to Jesus, who was passing by their way. What an opportunity! So the blind men made up their minds that they would go to Jesus, and follow Him, as we see from v.27.

Have you made up your mind that you are coming to Jesus for the supplying of your need? Come to Him just as you are, and He will do the rest. If you need salvation, call out to Jesus, for Romans 10:13 says, “For whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” If you need healing, call out to Jesus.

Now I want to give you 2 reasons given in our text why you should turn to Jesus:

A. Because He Is God’s Messiah – Notice in v.27 that the blind men addressed Jesus as “Son of David.” The title occurs nine times in Matthew, including in the very first verse of this gospel. The second occurrence is in v.27 of our text. It is clear that during Christ’s ministry on earth “Son of David” and “Messiah” had become synonyms (cf. 12:23; 21:9; Mk. 10:47). I believe that explains why Christ is addressed that way, especially when someone was asking for help (Mt. 15:22; Mk. 10:48; Lk. 18:38-39). Furthermore, how can one satisfactorily explain the indignation of the chief priests and scribes when the children were honoring Jesus with the title “Son of David” (21:15, 16)? And in Mt. 22:41-42 Jesus asked the Pharisees, “What do you think about the Messiah? Whose Son is He?” They said to Him, “The Son of David.” Furthermore, in Old Testament prophecy, God promised to King David that one of his descendants would sit on his throne and establish an eternal kingdom (2 Sam. 7:12-16). So in calling Jesus the Son of David, they were confessing that He was the Messiah, the heir to David’s throne.

Now why did these men address Jesus by this Messianic title? Did they know His lineage from Joseph and Mary, who were both of the line of David (Mt. 1:1; Lk. 3:31)? That seems unlikely to me. Well I believe that the context gives the answer. Matthew’s purpose in writing his gospel is to tell us that Jesus is the Messianic King that was promised by God. He will reverse the curse, right the wrongs, establish the Kingdom, and destroy the Enemy. And in order to convince us that Jesus is the Messiah, Matthew selects nine of Jesus’ many miracles and records them in chapters 8 and 9, especially the ones that fulfill Old Testament prophecy. The blind men had not seen Jesus or any of His miracles, but they heard about them. Rom. 10:17 says, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Perhaps these blind men were aware of the fact that the prophet Isaiah gives three prophecies that the Messiah would give sight to the blind (Isaiah 29:18; 35:5; 42:7). And if Jesus is the Messiah, then He would meet their

spiritual needs as well. The Messiah will ultimately end the reign of Satan, sin, sorrow, and death. They believed from what they had heard that Jesus had the power to bring the Kingdom blessings.

Isn't that interesting? Jesus let the physically blind tell those around them who were spiritually blind that He was the Son of David.

Do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior sent by God? I will present more evidence in my sermon today. If so, you should turn to Jesus because He is indeed the promised Messiah.

Now let me give you a second reason to turn to Jesus. You see, the two blind men came not only with a right understanding of who Christ was, but also a right understanding of how unworthy they were. So we can come to Jesus:

B. Because He Is Merciful – Based on what they had heard about Jesus, they must have felt that He was merciful. He showed mercy to so many others. So they said to Him in v.27, “Have mercy on us!” They knew they were needy sinners, and they could not demand anything from God’s Messiah. They knew that if they were to be healed, they would have to rely upon the mercy of God. So they looked to Jesus for mercy, and we will see that they will find mercy in Him. Hebrews 2:17 says that our Lord was “made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest....” They had come to believe in the power of Jesus to heal, but faith in His mercy would encourage their hope that He would be willing to heal *them*.

Never was there a person on the face of the earth with the mercy of Jesus. Once a funeral procession came by and He saw a mother weeping because her *only* son was dead (Luke 7:11-13). She was already a widow, and now she had no child to care for her. Jesus stopped the funeral procession, put His hand on the platform that held the body, and raised the young man from the dead. He cared. Jesus Christ is indeed merciful.

Do you realize that you are a sinner in need of mercy? Friend, if you expect to enter the gates of pearl and walk the streets of gold, then you must cry out for mercy. If you are facing a problem now, turn to Jesus. He is merciful!

So you should turn to Jesus because He is the Savior that God has sent, and He is merciful. Now let’s see the second step of our spiritual journey:

II. WHEN YOU HAVE A NEED, BE PERSISTENT IN YOUR PLEA

We have an example of persistence illustrated in these blind men. Notice in v.27 that they “followed”² Jesus. They did not just speak to Him as He passed by, but they followed Him. Can’t you just see them shoving their way along in their attempt to stay with the group that was following Jesus? They could hear the noise of the crowd surrounding Jesus. They knew which way to go. They were not timid or bashful. Their “cry” to Jesus was probably repeated, for the verb is in the present, continuous tense. The two blind men were crying out in agony and desperation, pleading for help in the midst of their deep need. Apparently, Jesus didn’t initially acknowledge their cries; He let them continue to pour out their hearts. And notice in v.28 that they even followed Jesus right into the house where He was staying!³ Jesus didn’t seem to have much privacy! No doubt they continued their pleas for help as they entered the house.

² Since the verb is in the aorist tense, Matthew makes no point regarding how long they follow Jesus.

³ It was possibly the house of Peter that Jesus lived in during much of His ministry in Galilee.

They did not know why it was better for them to have to wait and continue their plea; but we may be quite sure that God has His reasons when there is a delay. I will share one reason in just a moment. He has a larger blessing for those who wait. So don't give up quickly when you call out to Jesus, and nothing seems to happen. In Luke 18:1 we read that Jesus "spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart." So keep praying, friend.

Marie Parrish knows what it means to be persistent in prayer. She prayed for her husband, Bill, for more than 50 years before he committed his life to Christ. His journey to Christ included brushes with death on three separate occasions. Bill served in the Navy during World War II. During one Battle, Japanese forces sunk his ship, the USS Atlanta. Of the 700 men aboard, Parrish was one of only 350 who survived. Marie had been praying for him then. She married him while he was on leave, just assuming that he would surely become a Christian soon. He did not, but she kept praying. When Parrish was discharged from the Navy in 1945, he and his wife moved to Nashville where Bill went to work for the U.S. Postal Service. He did not share her interest in Christ or the church. Despite Bill's indifference to spiritual matters, Marie continued to pray daily for his salvation. In addition to her own prayers, she solicited the prayers of the deacons at her church and Christians all around the world whom she met on mission trips. In 1953 Bill nearly lost his life for a second time when a car hit him as he delivered the mail. But even the 27 days he spent in the hospital did not encourage Bill to surrender his life to Christ. Then, 45 years later, God finally got his attention. The Parrishes' house caught fire and both of them passed out from smoke inhalation. Had rescuers not dragged Bill and Marie from the house, they would have died. In fact, they were told by the medics, "Four more seconds and it would have been too late." He was in the hospital 74 days. During his recovery, the members of Marie's church cared for Bill by meeting his physical needs and telling him how to begin a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Through their witness, Bill began to consider Christianity. Then on Easter Sunday 1999, Bill finally came to a point of brokenness over his spiritual condition at age 78. He decided to commit his life to Christ and made a public profession of faith at Inglewood Baptist Church. The day he went forward, someone said there was hardly a dry eye in the church. Since then, Bill's life was transformed. He attended church regularly. He visited the hospitals and nursing homes. Bill's salvation demonstrates God's power to transform any life. His salvation also demonstrates the importance of being persistent in making our pleas to Jesus!⁴

So when we have a need, we also should call out to Jesus, and keep doing it until we receive the answer to our plea.

Finally, our text of Scripture shows that:

III. WHEN YOU HAVE A NEED, PLACE YOUR FAITH IN JESUS

Faith in Christ is essential for receiving God's blessings. You can see an example of this in the previous context. In v.22 Jesus said to the woman with an issue of blood, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." So notice from our text:

A. Faith in Jesus Is Required - The only question that Jesus asked these men in v.28, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" One can imagine how the poor blind faces would light up with a flush of eager expectation. Here Jesus was testing their faith.

⁴ Condensed from *Baptist Press*, 12/24/03.

Now the specific issue was their faith in the ability of Jesus to heal them of blindness. That would indeed require great faith. Has anyone else healed blindness? Did you realize that no Old Testament prophet ever healed the blind? We have no record that any of the apostles healed the blind. Only God, or His Messiah, could heal the blind. Psa. 146:8 says, “The LORD opens the eyes of the blind....” We know of at least five occasions when Jesus healed the blind.⁵ But one thing I’ve learned about faith is this: It is only as good as the object of your faith. Faith is not something you muster up within yourself. How much faith you have depends on the object of your faith. A great and powerful Messiah can heal blindness. If He could heal the leper and the paralyzed, if he could cast out powerful demons, then He could cure blindness, so they must have reasoned.

How would *you* answer our Lord’s question in v.28, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” Well, one day a children’s Sunday School teacher asked the class, “Who can tell me what a miracle is?” A little girl raised her hand and said, “Mrs. Jones, a miracle is something we can’t do, but Jesus can.” Oh yes, Jesus can heal the blind, for He is the Messiah, the Son of God.

Why was faith so important? Archbishop Trench said, “The faith which in itself is nothing, is yet the organ for receiving everything. It is the conducting link between man’s emptiness and God’s fullness.... It is the bucket let down into the fountain of God’s grace, without which the man could never draw water of life from the wells of salvation.”⁶ Or to say it in another way, faith is the key that unlocks God’s storehouse of spiritual blessing.

What about you today? You have physical needs, social needs, and spiritual needs. What is your greatest need this hour? Well, all that stands between you and the supplying of that need is the faith to believe that God is able to do what He promised. For example, all that stands between the sinner and salvation is faith to believe that Jesus is able to save—yes, even to the “uttermost” (Heb. 7:25). You have heard that Christ died for the ungodly and that He will save to the uttermost all who will come to God by Him. Do you believe it? The sinner can never be saved until faith is exercised.

Well this leads to another point about faith:

B. True Faith Is Confessed - Notice their answer in v.28, “Yes, Lord.” It seems that their answer was swift and to the point. They had already passed the test of persistence. Their faith was strong enough to be persistent. And now Christ demanded a more definite confession of faith.

God expects us to confess our faith as well. In fact, a faith that is not confessed is not worth much! The Apostle Paul said “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9). Have you publicly confessed your faith in Jesus? If not, why not do so today?

Now when faith in Jesus is exercised and confessed, we see something else from our text and that is:

C. True Faith Is Rewarded – We see this beginning in v.29, “Then He touched their eyes, saying, ‘According to your faith let it be to you.’ And their eyes were opened.” As soon as He removed his hands from their eyes they immediately looked with eyes that saw His blessed face; their blindness was gone. I am impressed by the simplicity of that healing. There was no fanfare. Taking place inside the house the miracle was not seen by the masses. Jesus didn’t need to

⁵ Matthew 9:27-31; 12:22-23; 15:30-31; 20:30-34; 21:14-15.

⁶ Trench, *The Miracles of Our Lord* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner, & Co., 1902), 212.

expend a lot of energy to heal a couple of blind men. The One who can raise the dead could certainly handle a couple of blind fellows. Christ honored their faith by meeting their most obvious need. The records state that Jesus healed at least 4 other blind men.

Another way their faith was rewarded was with greater affirmation of the validity of their faith. After all, to bring about faith in Himself and to preserve this faith is the very purpose of the miracles. They had believed in what Jesus had done for others. Now they personally experienced the power of Christ working in their lives. Now they were convinced beyond a doubt that Jesus is the Messiah. Surely, He must be the Son of God. Surely He is merciful and compassionate regarding the suffering of sinners. St. Augustine said, "Faith is to believe what we do not see; and the reward of faith is to see what we believe." Trust God and at some point faith will be turned into sight.

By the way, we see from v.30 why Jesus wanted to wait until they got in the house to perform the miracle of healing. Opposition to Jesus was already mounting. Such a great miracle would cause even more opposition. So He healed them in the house, away from the gaze of the crowd.

Conclusion: Do you realize that God promises that His Messiah will ultimately cure every disease, right every wrong, and meet every need? If you truly trust in Christ, you will see the fulfillment of this promise. We don't see heaven now, but someday we will see heaven in all its beauty. So place your faith in Christ. Make sure you persistently ask in faith. And if your faith is confessed, you will ultimately see the fulfillment of your needs.

Sources: Stephen Felker, *Devotional & Explanatory Notes on the Entire Bible* (Col. Hghts., VA: Published by Author), 2020; Oliver B. Greene, *I Am the Door and Other Sermons* (Greenville, SC: The Gospel Hour, Inc., 1967), 77-87; William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973); H.A. Ironside, *Expository Notes on the Gospel of Matthew* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1948); John MacArthur, Jr., *The Power of Jesus: Study Notes on Matthew 8:1-9:8, 18-35* (Panorama City, CA: Word of Grace Communications), 1984; Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture, Vol 6* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [Ver. 5:30] (Ontario: onlinebible.net, 2017); John Philips, *Exploring The Gospel of Matthew: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999); Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Loyal: Matthew* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1980); Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004). Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982). McGee and Robertson read, but nothing added.

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