

Jesus Passing By

"And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And behold two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord thou Son of David. And the multitude rebuked them because they should hold their peace; but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord thou 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." Matthew 20:29-34

Outline:

Introduction: setting the scene, the importance of the passage.

First, observe the blind men

- These men were in a position to receive God's mercy
- These men called out in faith
- These men called out earnestly

Second, observe the compassion of Jesus

- Jesus sent messengers
- Jesus touched their eyes

Third, this was the last opportunity

Conclusion: final invitation to come to Jesus.

Introduction

Comparing the accounts of the different evangelists, it appears that one of these unhappy men was Bartimaeus. They sat by the road to ask for donations, and hearing the noise of the passing multitude, they inquired the cause, and found that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. When their eyes were opened, they "followed him, glorifying God," and that "all the people when they saw it, gave praise unto God."

The timing of this event is critical. Jesus was on his final journey to Jerusalem, where, in a few days, he would suffer death. His stay in Jericho had ended, and he set out for Jerusalem, from which he would leave the world. He would never come that way again.

The bodily healing which Christ performed in the days of his flesh was intended to announce to the world that he was the great Physician of the soul and that sinners should come to him for spiritual healing.

First, observe the blind men

- **These men were in a position to receive God's mercy.**

If they had been anywhere else, they could not have received their sight. It was necessary for them to be there at the very moment Jesus passed by. They might have sat there for years at any other time without effect.

So, it is necessary for sinful men to attend with seriousness and sincerity to all the means of grace, as they are essential for being near the Saviour, who passes by in the person of His Spirit. The Gospel and its institutions [the Church, gospel preaching, evangelists, etc.] serve as pathways along which the Holy Spirit moves.

- **These men called out in faith.**

So, men may carelessly attend to the means of grace and, without faith, may die in their sin. These men, knowing themselves to be totally unworthy of the Saviour's notice, called only for mercy.

If sinners are to find the Saviour, they must not think themselves entitled to salvation, but infinitely unworthy. They must abhor themselves and repent in dust and ashes. They must sink into the deepest dust. They must look up, like Jonah, from the bottom of the mountains. They must send up their cry as if from the bottom of hell, depending only on God's mercy – free, rich, and amazing mercy. Sinner must cast themselves – cast all their weight on God's mercy and rest all their hopes and confidence on the mercy of God. Mercy, mercy, mercy – this must be their only plea.

- **These men called out earnestly.**

Hearing that the miracle-working man, who had healed so many, was near, their hearts were filled with joy and great expectations. They cried out earnestly, "Have mercy on us, O Lord thou Son of David." There was no fooling about, but an earnest cry, "Have mercy on us ..."

They could not be silenced by all the multitude, either, who considered them too low for the Saviour's notice. The crowd was disgusted at their earnestness and commanded them to be quiet. But they cried all the more, "Have mercy on us, O Lord thou Son of David."

So, sinners who have recognised their guilt and need of a Saviour, and who see that their eternity depends on Him, will not be silenced by all the frowns and criticisms of the world. Sinners who feel that no other hand in heaven or earth can relieve them will not be kept back by the scoffs of the world.

These blind men cried out so persistently because they felt three things very deeply;—

- First, that they were blind and wretched,
- Second, that Jesus was the Saviour, with full power to open their eyes,
- Third, that he was the only one who could help them.

Sinners will not come to him until they realise that they are utterly lost in themselves, that he is the very one appointed to deliver them and able to save to the uttermost. Sinners will not come unless they realise that there is no other name given under heaven by which they can be saved, that neither the men on earth nor the angels in heaven can relieve them, and that their eternal destiny depends on Jesus, the Son of David.

Second, observe the compassion of Jesus

It is touching to see the contrast between the unfeeling multitude and the compassionate Saviour.

- **Jesus sent messengers**

As soon as Jesus heard the cry of these unfortunate blind men, he sent messengers to bring them to him. These messengers, like preachers of the Gospel, encouraged them to be of good cheer, for He called them.

Is there a poor sinner in all those seats who has been raising his anxious cry to the Son of David? There is good news, my friend. Put your ear to the Gospel and listen. "He calleth thee."

When they approached Him, the condescending Saviour said to them, "What will ye that I shall do unto you?" "They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened." We come not to ask for riches or honours, but to receive our sight. Oh, that sinners would approach Him with such direct desire for spiritual sight. But other things fill their minds. They think more of the opposition they may face than of the glory that will follow.

- **Jesus touched their eyes**

Without reluctance or delay, Jesus touched their eyes and restored their sight.

While the weary and heavy-laden think of how Jesus came by, and how easily the blind men found relief, they are ready to say, "Oh, if I had lived in that day," or "Oh, that it was as easy now to find relief." Sinner, Jesus of Nazareth is as present now as he was then, and as ready to heal. He stands with open arms, ready to receive you.

Listen! sinner, he calls you. Go to him and hear what he says.

Third, observe that this was the last opportunity

It was the last time that Jesus ever passed that way before he left the world. If these unhappy men had been a little out of the way at that moment, or if they had let him pass by without raising their cries of distress, they would have died blind. The next hour would have been too late. This was their last chance.

As the Saviour passes by today, this may be the last chance for many of you. You flatter yourselves that you will be prepared before you die. You are so confident of this that you rest secure, perhaps, as though there was no danger.

The great deceiver has told you that you will be prepared before you die. And so he told the last generation of sinners who went to hell, as he has told every generation since Adam. But while he is comforting you with this lie, it is still an awful truth that a careless youth of twenty, or even of eighteen, is far more likely to spend his eternity in hell than in heaven. Tremendous thought! enough to overwhelm the soul.

And if this is true of a careless youth of eighteen or twenty, what shall we say of a careless man of thirty? What of a sinner of forty, or an unbeliever of fifty?

Young people often put off religion till old age, but alas, few in old age are brought home to God. You are in danger now, and should this heavenly call be rejected, the odds against you would be greater than ever before. This season will not leave you as it found you. You will never again be as you were.

Conclusion: Final invitation to come to Jesus

These wonders of grace which are spread around you, and these many opportunities afforded you to pray and to be instructed, are the voice of the Holy Spirit in your ears. You may harden your heart, but this opportunity is still the voice of God to you, and you must account for the infinite privilege at the judgment of the great day.

You may run from the place and seek to flee from the presence of God as Jonah did, but he will pursue you and hold you answerable for not answering this call. If you reject all this grace of God, your guilt and your danger will be greater than ever before.

God has said, *"My Spirit shall not always strive with man."*

With both these blind men, it is likely to be the last time that Jesus will pass this way to open their eyes. O let the case of the blind men, their impassioned prayer, and their great relief, stand before you. Hear their cry, "Have mercy on us, O Lord thou son of David."

Don't let Jesus pass by before he has opened your eyes. What dreams of madness are keeping you in spiritual slumber? What fumes from hell have clouded your thinking? If you have not deliberately resolved to lie down in eternal burnings, arise and take the kingdom of heaven by violence. Don't delay a moment.

Everything is at stake. It is likely to be your last chance. Either resolve to perish, and set yourselves firmly to resist God and his people, or come with all your heart and soul. But don't hesitate between two opinions. Imitate the blind men and go to him with confidence, for "he calleth thee." By the soft whispers of his Spirit, he is calling you.

It is the same Jesus still, the same heart that pitied the blind men of Jericho. Why will you die when such a glorious Deliverer is so near? Why will ye go down to hell, like the dying thief, from the very side of an atoning Saviour?

This sermon was taken from *The Life and Sermons of Edward D. Griffin*, first published in 1839 and republished by Banner of Truth in 1987. This material is in the Public Domain

and is available as a PDF on the Monergism website.

Our purpose is not to reproduce the sermon in a shorter form, but to provide an outline that is usable for pastors today. We hope that, in doing this, we have maintained the author's original intent and general flow of thought.