

Matthew 20:29-34 | Persistent Prayer/Compassionate Son

Date: January 8, 2023

Text: **Matthew 20:29-34**

Welcome

I love you.

Open your bibles to: **Matthew 20:29**

Text

29 As they were leaving Jericho, ***a large crowd*** followed him. 30 There were two blind men sitting by the road. When they heard that ***Jesus was passing by***, they ***cried out***, “Lord, ***have mercy*** on us, ***Son of David!***” 31 The ***crowd demanded that they keep quiet***, but ***they cried out all the more***, “Lord, ***have mercy on us, Son of David!***”

32 Jesus stopped, called them, and said, “***What do you want me to do for you?***”

33 “Lord,” they said to him, “open our eyes.” 34 ***Moved with compassion***, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they could see, and ***they followed him.***

This is God’s word.

Intro

And I think it’s a good word to start our church year on because in it Mathew gives us

1) a model of persistent, humble, prayer, and

2) a picture of our Lord’s compassionate heart.

Two things that are very ***important for us now*** and will become ***increasingly important for us as His return gets closer.***

- The longer we’re at this, the more endurance and perseverance and persistence we’ll need to exhibit.

- And as the days grow increasingly difficult, we'll need to trust that even more that Jesus' heart is full of compassion and kindness.

So I think this is a great place to start 2023, so let's get to it.

1) Pray with a Humility

First we're given a model of **humble prayer**.

29 As they were leaving Jericho, ***a large crowd*** followed him.

At this point they are leaving or entering Jericho, the different gospels record it a little differently, and Jesus happens upon two blind men; Mark tells us one of them is named Bartimaeus.

And these two men cry out: "Lord, ***have mercy*** on us, ***Son of David!***"

We'll deal with that "Son of David" in a second, but first I think we should look at how they're addressing Jesus, *as those totally dependent on Him* for whatever sort of mercy He is willing to show.

Prayer has often been described this way as "***expressed helplessness.***"

"I have nothing, you have everything, please."

And it's possible that Matthew places this story

of blind men who have nothing in **Matthew 20** right after the story

about the rich young ruler who has everything in **Matthew 19** purposefully

- The rich man is likely dependent on his wealth and self-righteousness
- and the blind people are dependent on everyone else,
- depending on the favor of another party for their life
- rather than their own merit.

They're own merit gains them nothing; they need mercy.

So as we begin praying this year, it should sound like this: "***Lord, have mercy.***"

“We need you for our life. We need you for our next breath. It’s in you that we live and move and have our being; have mercy.”

Our prayer and our lives should be marked with humility, not arrogance or presumption.

2) Pray According To Covenant

First, the posture of prayer matters; let’s do it like the blind guys.

Second, **knowing who you’re praying to matters.**

Who did they think they were praying to?

When they heard that **Jesus** was passing by, they cried out, “Lord, **have mercy** on us, **Son of David!**”

They recognized that Jesus was the son of David—rightful ruler in God’s coming kingdom; the promised Messianic King.

This moniker, “**Son of David**”, comes from **2 Samuel 7**, which I preached on Christmas Day, Terry alluded to on New Years Day, so why not hit it one more again.

(2 Sa 7:12–14)

12 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.* 13 He is the one who will build a house for my name, and ***I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*** 14 I will be his father, and ***he will be my son.***

The Son of David.

The Son of David is God’s appointed agent who will

- rescue Israel from her enemies **(2 Samuel 7)**
- rule from Mt. Zion and have all the nations as His inheritance **(Psalm 2)**
- shatter the kings of the earth on His day of wrath **(Psalm 110)**,
- and bring about peace on the earth.

And this appointed Son of God/Son of Man/Son of David/Seed from Eve carries with it lots of other expectations that we've hit over and over and will continue to hit over and over, but to cover a bunch of those aspects in one passage I just wanna read **Isaiah 35**, **a prophecy in the middle of oracles about the Day of the Lord and the coming Kingdom**, in full cause we get the full flavor of what the Son of David will do.

And as I read, see if you can figure out why two blind guys wouldn't shut up about the Son of David walking by:

(Is 35:1-10)

The wilderness and the **dry land will be glad**; the desert will rejoice and blossom like a wildflower.,
2 It will blossom abundantly and will also **rejoice with joy** and singing. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon.

They [the scattered tribes of Israel] will see **the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.**

3 Strengthen the weak hands, steady the shaking knees! (we'll come back to that in a second) 4 Say to the cowardly: "Be strong; do not fear! Here is your God; **vengeance is coming. God's retribution is coming; he will save you.**"

5 Then **the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. 6 Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will sing for joy,** for water will gush in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; 7 **the parched ground will become a pool,** and the thirsty land, springs.

In the haunt of jackals, in their lairs, there will be grass, reeds, and papyrus.

8 A road will be there and a way; it will be called the Holy Way. The unclean will not travel on it, but it will be **for the one who walks the path.** Fools will not wander on it.

Just a quick funny note, this could mean there will be no fools on the road, but the ESV translates it:

“even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.” So even if you’re a dummy, in the age to come, you stay on the road:)

9 There will be no lion there, and no vicious beast will go up on it; they will not be found there.

But ***the redeemed will walk on it, 10 and the ransomed of the LORD will return and come to Zion with singing, crowned with unending joy. Joy and gladness will overtake them,*** and sorrow and sighing will flee.

The point is the Son of David will do this; the Seed of the Woman; the Arm of the Lord.

He will open blind eyes.

He will make the lame walk.

He will make the dumb sing.

This is who they’re crying out to, *not some generic God they made up*, but to the Son of David.

My exhortation to you, would be to familiarize yourself more and more ***with who the scriptures portray our Lord to be and pray into that.***

When we engage our hearts in prayer,

- it’s not to Generic Man in the Sky,
- it’s to the God of Israel that met with Abraham in the land of Ur
- who has made specific promises
- to do specific things
- and it’s ***those aspects of His word and character that we want to pray into.***

To shorten that, ***“Pray according to the covenants.”***

Pray according to what God has promised to Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets; pray, **“Son of David.”**

3) Pray with Persistence

- Pray with humility

- Pray according to the covenants
- Pray with persistence...the hardest of the 3.

When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they ***cried out***, “Lord, ***have mercy*** on us, ***Son of David!***”

31 The ***crowd demanded that they keep quiet***, so they quit calling out.

No!

but ***they cried out all the more***, “Lord, ***have mercy on us, Son of David!***”

We wanna pray this way.

With all the obstacles and setbacks and opposition, **pray without quitting, without ceasing.**

If it's your own healing, like these, pray for the Lord to complete that work until you are actually healed.

Pray for the strength to endure it and stay on the path in the meantime.

But don't quit.

If it's someone else's healing, same thing. Don't quit.

It doesn't guarantee that they will be healed in this age before the resurrection,

but it is the call of God on our lives, to,

until there is no longer breath in their lungs; *or in special cases of resurrections even after there is no breath*, the call off God on us is to keep praying.

Keep crying out, ***“Son of David, have mercy!”***

God will reward that kind of faith; sometimes in this age people do get healed like these two blind men. But even if God doesn't heal in this age, *He certainly will in the age to come.*

Some of us, by which I mean all of us,

- have prayed
- Believed God

- laid hands
- anointed with oil
- fasted
- and wept

over those in need of healing and God didn't answer that petition in the present.

But that doesn't mean our prayer or faith or fasting or weeping was in vain.

That's not how you should interpret non-healings. Those prayers are not a waste,

God is (Heb 11) a rewarder of those *who diligently seek Him*, who follow after Him in faith even when they don't see the promise fulfilled in their lifetime.

Right?

This is the whole story Hebrews 11;

- people who believed and trusted God with persistence
- even with all the obstacles and trials,
- they kept at it,
- and yet they didn't receive the promise now.

(Heb 11:13)

13 These all died in faith, *although they had not received the things that were promised.*

But they will receive (1 Peter 1) their reward, "the outcome of their faith" at the return of Jesus.

The point here is, in prayer, persist. Don't quit. God sees and will reward.

And this doesn't just concern prayer, it concerns the whole of Christian discipleship.

It takes endurance. It takes perseverance.

Q: *"What does it mean to follow Jesus?"*

A: *"Just not quitting."*

No matter how many times the "crowd" or your flesh or the devil tells you to quit, you don't.

Like these blind guys you cry out all the more because you know the Son of David will answer and will reward.

He will respond to the heart of faith that endures.

Which is Hebrews 12.

(Heb 12:1-13)

Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us (from 11), let us lay aside ***every hindrance*** (every “crowd” telling us to quit) and the sin that so easily ensnares us. ***Let us run with endurance the race*** that lies before us, 2 keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

For ***the joy that lay before him***,

(Oh look, Isaiah 35 again, “***10*** and the ransomed of the LORD will return and come to Zion with singing, crowned with ***unending joy. Joy and gladness will overtake them.***)

For ***the joy that lay before him***, he endured the cross, despising the shame (shut up you blind guys!), and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God...and received His reward.

You see the same kind of picture?

- **Jesus was persistent in enduring difficulty to enter into glory.**
- **These men are persistent in enduring opposition to receive their sight.**
- **And we must be persistent and not quit to inherit eternal life.**

They didn't quit, and we're not quitting, because they know and we know the Son of David rewards.

3 For consider ***him who endured such hostility*** from sinners against himself, (consider him and his example, why?) ***so that you won't grow weary and give up.***

Then he goes into the bit about how trials and difficulty is the Lord's kindness to us as a Father and it's designed to mature and ready us for the kingdom, and then verse 12:

12 Therefore, ***strengthen your tired hands and weakened knees*** (Is. 35:3), 13 and ***make straight paths*** (Is. 35:9) ***for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated but healed instead.***

That you might receive your sight.

It's almost like the author of Matthew read Isaiah and the author of Hebrews read Matthew and they're all telling the same story about how

- **persistence**
- **and not quitting**
- **and endurance being necessary**
- **for God's people to inherit eternal life.**

If you don't hear anything this morning, hear this.

It's the new year, there's gonna be all sorts of new opposition, all sorts of new enemies and trials aiming to get you to quit, so don't.

Ask the Lord for mercy and the power of the Spirit to keep on, and He'll give it.

The Compassionate Son of David & Servant of All

Ok, let's get to the good stuff.

32 Jesus stopped, called them, and said, "***What do you want me to do for you?***"

33 "Lord," they said to him, "open our eyes."

And then the good stuff:

34 ***Moved with compassion***, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they could see

It's been several weeks since we've worked through Matthew, but remember what immediately precede this story is ***Jesus' teaching on His role as the servant of all, as the one who goes low to give His life.***

(Mt 20:26–28)

26... whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave; 28 **just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**

And now here He is,

- on the way to Jerusalem,
- on the way to cross,
- bending low,
- and serving.

And it links his healing ministry in this story with his death in the previous story, like **Isaiah 53** does.

Is 53:4–6

4 Yet he himself **bore our sicknesses** and he carried our pains...5 But **he was pierced** because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and **we are healed by his wounds.**

Jesus, the Messiah, the Suffering Servant, the Son of David, is going up to Jerusalem to give his life a ransom for many and ***in doing so he's showing the heart and compassion and love of God.***

This is what drives the cross.

This is what drives Jesus.

This is why God has a gospel, because God is full of compassion.

God's full of love!

God is love, according to John.

God loves the world, so he sent His Son.

And **Romans 5:8**,

God **proves His love** for us in this,

- in that while we were helpless
- blind,
- Destitute,
- Beggerly
- while we were still sinners
- Christ died for us.

Jesus is Still Passing By (Evangelism)

And this is still his heart.

The compassion that moved Jesus in this story is the same compassion moving Him today; His ascension did not change His character.

So this should bring great comfort to members of CLC, to believers.

If you're in need of mercy, cry out to the Son of David.

He's moved with compassion for you and he will touch and heal.

And to the unbeliever in the room, I want to tell you that Jesus is still "passing by."

And if you've never cried out to Him before, today's the day.

You already have the script: **"Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me."**

"I know I deserve death, hell, and the grave for my sins and I need the mercy and forgiveness found in your cross."

And if you're like a lot of humans, it's likely that as you begin to cry out to him, ***there will be opposition.***

"You don't mean it."

"You can't turn from your sin."

"It'll be too hard to follow Jesus, this life is all you've ever known."

And when that opposition comes up you cry out all the more, **"Son of David, have mercy on me."**

You who are blind and destitute, dead in your sins, put your trust in Jesus.

- Put your faith in the Son of David,
- and He will heal you from your sin
- and raise your body on the last day.

If you have more questions about what that looks like, talk to members...

Responding in Discipleship

Last section here:

33 “Lord,” they said to him, “open our eyes.” 34 ***Moved with compassion***, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they could see, and ***they followed him.***

Their relationship to Jesus didn't end after the healing. It didn't end at the altar.

The proper response to the compassion and mercy of God is to

- follow Him;
- take up His cross,
- walk His narrow way,
- and endure to the end.

The initial receiving of mercy and compassion from Jesus is not the end of the race, it's the beginning.