

Matthew 9:27-31

Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 9:27-31; this passage of scripture comes after the sermon on the mount. It's in a section that says a lot about faith in Jesus Christ. There are nine different miracles in chapters 8 and 9. And in chapter 9:27-31 we have two blind men expressing their faith in the Savior.

So I ask you to turn your attention now to the Word of God as we find it here in Matthew 9:27-31.

Matt. 9:27 ¶^e And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, ^fSon of David."

Matt. 9:28 When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord."

Matt. 9:29 ^gThen he touched their eyes, saying, ^h"According to your faith be it done to you."

Matt. 9:30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, ⁱ"See that no one knows about it."

Matt. 9:31 ^jBut they went away and spread his fame through all that district.

We will see three things from this passage. First, we will see the need to recognize our blindness and the Savior, who gives us sight. Second, we will hear the question that the Savior asks each one of us. And third, we will look at the Savior's response. As we work through this passage, we will see that the main point is, **Faith, placed in the only Savior is faith sufficient to ward off the greatest of blindness.**

Blindness, we all suffer from it. And Here in Matthew 9:27-31, there are two blind men following Jesus looking for light. These men were physically blind, and they know it. Yet, although these men were physically blind, they had been given spiritual eyes that laid hold of their only Savior with remarkable clarity. Matthew 9:27-31 is not so much about the physical eye as it is about the spiritual eye.

The Bible shows us two types of spiritual blindness. First, there is the blindness of those without Christ; this is the worst kind. Our Lord says in John 14:17 that the world cannot receive the Spirit of truth, "**Because it neither sees him nor knows him.**" This blindness plagues every single person who has never placed their faith in Jesus Christ.

But there's even blindness that plagues the children of God. The psalmist in Psalm 119:18 prays, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law." **Spiritual blindness is something we all suffer from in some way, shape, or form,** but this passage also shows us that **faith placed on the only Savior is sufficient to ward off the greatest of blindness. When we put our faith in the only Savior who is able to save, he will shine into the greatest blindness.**

Point 1

Verse 27. Knowing we are blind and knowing our Savior.

Intro. Verse 27 says, "And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him." We are in a section of Matthew that has nine miraculous works of Christ. Here we find Christ leaving the ruler's house, having just healed the woman with the flow of blood and having raised the ruler's daughter from the dead. In Vs. 26 it says, "And the report of this went through all that district." Everyone heard of the wonders that Christ had performed, and no doubt, the two blind men that are now following our Lord heard the reports as well.

We need to know we have blindness

Sub 1, *We must first see that these men, blind as they were, saw their great need; this is the first step to cure all spiritual blindness.* There they are following, pursuing after Jesus crying out after him. The ESV says, "Crying aloud," the KJV says, "Crying and Saying." These men were making no small racket; they knew they were blind, and they were desperate to have the Savior's attention. It cannot be under-emphasized how urgent these men sound; imagine someone trapped in a wrecked car that's on fire calling for help. Would they be crying out with a soft, polite voice, No they would be yelling with all they've got; you would hear the anguish in their voice and know that they are in trouble. We find this desperation in other passages as well: blind Bartimaeus, the Canaanite woman, and the man with the demon-possessed son.

These men knew that they were blind; they knew they needed help. We may often think or say of someone who can't see their own errors, "so and so is blind to the fact that," you fill in the blank. We think they just can't see that they have a problem, "how could they be so blind," we sneer at them. We think that they have a log jammed in their eye, if not both eyes. Yet how often are our eyes veiled to our own weakness or just our inability to see spiritual truths? Anyone who reads the Bible regularly will know that you can read through a particular book of the Bible a thousand times and on the thousand and oneth time you see something that you never saw before; you wonder how you ever missed it! Maybe you let your devotions slip; you didn't really notice, it just happened- life got busy. Then one day, you heard a sermon on personal devotions, and you suddenly realized how you let it slip. Perhaps there was a time you didn't know Christ as your Savior, your spiritual eyes were opened, and you saw Christ for the first time; weren't you amazed that you had never seen him before? You have blindness in your life; I have blindness in my life, do you see it? It's sin that blinds us; John 3:19 says, "The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil." Now don't sit here and think

that someone else has the problem because John again says in 1 John 1:8, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” You have spiritual blindness, will you see it?

Will you search your heart for your blind spots. Don’t be like Balaam who needed a donkey to speak before he would see his sin, or like David who needed a prophet of the Lord to convict him, or even Abraham who needed a gentile king to point out his lack of trust in the Lord for the protection of his life and wife.

If you are here today and you aren’t trusting in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins, hear me. You are blind in your sin, blind to your destruction, blind to the wrath of God that is coming. Look and see that you have rejected the Lord of light. You may be able to open your physical eyes, but you are spiritually blind; you are stumbling around lost in darkness, leaning over the precipice of eternity only inches from falling into the pit of hell. What will you do? Will you go on in blindness? Will you stumble around in the dark, thinking you are fine? Look into your soul and learn from these two blind men who saw. If you are a Christian, are you willing to cry out with the Psalmist in Ps. 139”23,24 “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”!

Have mercy Son of David

Sub 2. Have mercy on us. The text continues, “Have mercy on us,” they cry. Here is **the solution**. These men know their **need**, but they also knew what they **needed**- mercy. What is mercy? It is simply this, “Kind and compassionate treatment extending biblically to forgiveness and the gracious bestowal of that which is not deserved.”¹ The blind men knew they didn’t deserve mercy, but they also knew the one they were crying to was “merciful and gracious.”

There is a sense of confidence here; this can only come from the knowledge of the one in whom they are placing their faith. “Son of David,” they cry. They are making an incredible profession of faith here; this is the first time the title “Son of David” is used by someone calling out to Jesus for help. The gospel of Matthew begins with these words, “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the Son of Abraham.” Matthew, in his gospel account, is laying out before us the identity of Jesus of Nazareth. This Jesus was not just another man, another wannabe savior, rather Matthew shows that he is the long-awaited Messiah, the branch that was to come from the house of David.

There is no mistaking who these men are crying out to, the Son of David the Messiah, the branch of Jessi’s stump. Isaiah 11:1 says, “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jessi, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.” And Matthew quoting Isaiah says, “They shall call his name Immanuel (God with us),” **God with us!** There is no doubt here that these two blind men knew who they were crying out to- it was Immanuel, the one who was to come from David’s house. Jesus, the Son of David, he is the savior, the long-awaited Messiah. Here is the one who came to take away the sins of the world; who came to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows.

There is but one Messiah, one Christ, one Savior; put your faith in your most beloved athlete, he will let you down, trust in the latest self-help podcast, it will fail you. Lay your confidence in new year’s resolutions, see how long it takes before you give up. Look to the next high, the next drink, the next picture on the screen, it is all vanity. Trust in your theology or your good works or your church; can these things save you? No- they are all clouds without rain over dry land. Two blind men, unable to see with their physical eyes, saw clearly who the true Messiah was.

How easy it is for Christians to grope around in the dark looking for help, thinking, if only I follow this Bible reading plan, then I’ll do my devotions; if I listen to happy music, I’ll stop being such an angry person; if I empty my house of liquor then I’ll get my drinking under control. **Nonsense**, do all you like, your heart will still be as black as crude oil; you’ll only be groping around in the dark, stumbling and falling on your face. Christian listen, you must daily be like the blind men crying out, “Have mercy on me Son of David.” Yes, you need to do the other things as well; you can’t just sit around and do nothing; the blind men had to follow after Jesus. But in all the following that the blind men did, they never took their spiritual eyes of the Lord in whom they put their hope. Let me ask you, do you know what it is to cry out *have mercy on me Son of David*; this is fundamental to the Christian life. If you have never in some way, in some form, cried out **have mercy on me, Son of David, have mercy on me, Jesus, have mercy on me a sinner**, then you also don’t know the salvation that comes from Christ Jesus, and you are still lost in the darkness of your sin. If you forget to cry out to him for the straight you need every day, you will have no power to fight against the devil, the world, and your own flesh.

The blind men here in Matthew 9 **knew their need**, they knew they **couldn’t save themselves**, they knew they were unworthy of the least mercy, but they knew in whom they had believed. **They placed their faith in the only savior who is able to save.**

Point 2

Verse 28, 29: Do you believe

Second, we see the ultimate question, “do you believe Jesus Christ is **able**”?

¹ Donald K. Mckim, *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 2014) 196

Sub 1. Vs. 29 says, “When Jesus entered the house, the blind men came to him.” We don’t know why Jesus waited to answer their cries for mercy. One suggestion is that Jesus did not want more fame for himself. Remember, he had just worked two unbelievable miracles, and everyone heard about them, also keep in mind that the Jews had a false view of the Messiah- they thought he was coming to kick out the Romans. Jesus didn’t come to be an earthly king in the way that the Jews expected; instead, he came as the Passover Lamb who was to be slain for the sins of his people. therefore it is suggested that Jesus didn’t want the Jews to see the miracle after they heard the blind men calling him “Son of David.” This suggestion would fit well with the Lord’s command to the blind men not to say anything about the healing. Yet there is no conclusive answer to why Jesus waited until he was in the house, the text doesn’t say, he just simply did.

What do you believe

Sub 2. But once they are in the house, it is Jesus who speaks; Jesus here asks the central question. This is the whole point of the passage; this is the teaching that Matthew wants us to grasp. Jesus doesn’t ask what they want him to do; **instead, he asks them what they believe.** This passage, and for that matter all of Chapters 8 and 9 are not primarily about the miracles. Much of Christianity today gets sidetracked in secondary issues like miracles. Let’s be absolutely clear; the wonders that Jesus performs throughout his ministry on earth serve the purpose of showing his divine authority. Earlier in chapter 9:2 Jesus says to a lame man, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” When the scribe question Jesus’ authority to forgive sin, Jesus responds by healing the man so that they would know the Son of Man has the power to forgive sins; this plainly shows that the miracles that Jesus performs are for the purpose of showing his authority and that Matthew is not focused on the healing of the blind men as much as he is on the one in whom they believe.

Jesus says, “Do you believe that I am able to do this”? *Here is the question, do you believe that I am able?* This is the critical point; this is the crossroad. It’s a matter of life and death. The ESV says, “do you believe.” The word, for believe, is the same Greek word for faith. We could say that, Jesus is asking them if they have faith, “do you have faith that I am able to do this”?

The gospel is, you could say, a *simple one*. Salvation from sin and the wrath of God does not first require us to perform feats of devotion; we don’t need to climb the highest mountain or crawl up the stairs of an ancient church on some far away pilgrimage. Rather, it is simply this, “**Do you believe that Jesus Christ is able to save you from your sin**”? That is it, that’s all. Jesus doesn’t require anything else from these men to be saved, and he requires nothing else from lost sinner to receive salvation. **The Apostel Paul says in Ephesians 2:8, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.” Jesus asked them this vital question. And he asks every person here this same question, “Do you believe that I am able.”**

There is only one lifeline; There is only one medicine that can heal the blinding sickness of the heart. There is but one question to ask, have you come face to face with this question? Have you looked into your heart and ask, “*do I believe that he is able to save me,*” or, “*Do I believe that He is able to deliver me from this trial.*” Don’t doubt Him, “he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” Jesus is the author and Lord of life; he is the redeemer, the one who saves. It is Jesus Christ who redeems his us for sin and death. He is able to say. Do you believe that he is able?

These two blind men received the gift from God to believe in the Son of David. They may have been blind in their eyes, yet the spiritual eyes had faith to see. “They said to him, “Yes Lord.” That was all, “Yes Lord we believe you are able.”

Point 3

The Savior’s Response

Third: the Savior’s response. Verse 29 gives us the response of our Lord to their answer, he touches their eyes and says, “According to your faith be it done to you.” Jesus says in John 6:37, “Whoever comes to me I will never cast out.” Our Savior will never quench smoldering flax or break a bruised reed. Even though he made these men wait for his response, he still rewarded them for their faith.

Quantity of faith or existence of faith

Sub 1. Jesus did not simply touch their eyes, but he also said, “according to your faith be it done to you.” Some might say that the more faith you have, the more likely it will be that Christ will hear you. If only you pray enough and have enough faith, then God will hear you; this, of course, can sound good. But is it right?

I don’t think so. We shouldn’t look at this statement as in quantity of faith but rather that there was faith at all. It’s true that Jesus rebukes some for having little faith. But it is also true that he saves those who have little faith. Just look at Matt 8:23-27 when Jesus calms the storm. He said to the disciples when they came crying to him, “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” And then he saves them! In Luke 17 the disciples ask Jesus to increase their faith and He said to them, “If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.” Jesus is not saying that we will go around uprooting trees; rather, He is showing that the disciples had their eyes set on the wrong thing; they were banking on their faith and not the One in whom they were to place their faith. It should be plain that this is the meaning of the words, “According to your faith be it done to you,” it’s not the quantity of faith but rather the existence of faith that is placed on the only Savior who is able.

When you walked in here today, you believed that the pew/chair you are sitting on would hold you up. You probably didn't walk in here thinking to yourself, do I have enough faith in myself that I'm able to sit down. No, if you were to have any concern about sitting, it would be with what you're sitting on; You may be terrified that what you are going to sit on is not going to hold you, or you could have full confidence in it and throw yourself on it; it really makes no difference whether you tremble when you sit down or whether you throw yourself on it. If it is going to hold someone up, it's going to hold both the one with little faith and the one with great faith. **That's because it's not dependent on our quantity or quality of faith but rather in whom our faith is placed.**

Let me ask you, are you trusting in Jesus Christ, the Son of David, to have mercy on you? He is the only Savior for blind sinners. If you put your faith anywhere else, you will fall straight into the pit of hell- Christ, only Christ can save! Look anywhere else and you will never see the light of life. It's only the Son of David the Son of God who can save you from eternal death. There is only one who is able to make you right with God- Jesus and only Jesus. If you haven't trusted in him yet, then call to him today and he will give you life.

Christian, are you relying on your own strength to overcome sin, or to get through a difficult trial? Do you struggle in your marriage, raising your kids? How about at work. Perhaps it's your devotions. Maybe you have a child that has left the faith or a parent, a husband, a wife. You may feel weak and helpless, you may wonder how the Lord can ever hear you- you think to yourself, "my faith is so little how will he hear me." Yet this is the Savior who said that he would never break a bruised reed. Look to Him and cry out, "have mercy on me, Son of David." He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to him.

Point 4

The Savior's response to the blind men's faith.

Verse 30 and 31 give us the conclusion to the passage. We see Jesus opening their eyes, that is simple enough, but then he sternly warns them not to tell anyone, that's puzzling. Why would the Savior **Sternly** warn them, not just warn them but sternly warn them.

Commentators seem to agree that it is difficult to nail down why Jesus commands them not to say anything. R.T France, I think, gives one of the best explanations when he says, "These are the first people to have addressed Jesus as "Son of David, which means Messiah, so the secrecy may have less to do with the healing itself than with their perception of Jesus' role." That is his role as the long-awaited Messiah. I believe that this explanation fits well since we know that the Jews had a skewed understanding of the Messiah- they were looking for an earthly Messiah; Christ came as the King of the Heavenly Kingdom. In John 6 we are told that they even tried to take Jesus by force to make Him King. Jesus didn't come simply to root out the Romans from the land- He came to free His people from their Spiritual **Blindness**.

There is one thing, however, that nearly all commentators agree on, and that is this; though these **blind** men put their **faith** in Christ, they failed to obey His command, and in this, they sinned. **Faith is the vehicle given to us by which we come to Christ, but once there, faith must always be followed by obedience.** This is exactly what Christ is saying in Mark 1:15, "Repent and believe in the gospel." Repentance, we must obey the one who has saved us. One side of repentance is to live a life of thankful obedience. Yes, we said earlier that the gospel is essentially simple in that we must simply place our **faith** in Christ for salvation, but the one who is saved will have a thankful response of obedience to the Lord.

But hear me carefully, I am not saying that these men were not saved. We are all sinners. I can understand these two men; wouldn't you tell everyone? I would!

The **blind** men may have been forbidden to speak but not us; we are commanded to speak and to speak to all. Jesus commanded us to go into all the world and make disciples, and in Acts 8 when the church was scattered because of persecution, they went about preaching the word. Let me ask you, are you telling people about Jesus? This world needs to **hear** the gospel; they need to **hear** us say, "Repent and believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ." Are you an obedient Christian? We all need to cry out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David, give me boldness to tell others of you." Even in evangelism, we need the mercy of Jesus Christ. Christian, you need the mercy of God every day for you can never stand on your own strength.

Conclusion

In all of life, we need the mercy of the only Savior Jesus Christ. The darkness of our sinful hearts is so great. We need to ask, how can we dispel the darkness of sin. How can you, if you are an unrepentant sinner, be right with God? How can you, O Christian, have strength for each day to overcome the sin that has gnawed at your heels, and the trials that confront you? Here, here in this text, is the answer. Look to calvary. Look to the one who gave his life for yours. To the Savior! See the Lamb who shed his blood for you, for you! **And when you place your faith on the only Savior who is able to save, you will sing with the hymn writer**

My sin, O the bliss of this glorious thought! My sin, not in part but the whole, Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more: Praise the Lord,
Praise the Lord, O my soul!