

## Jesus is passing by

## Luke 8:35-43

Text: "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by" or taking our opportunities

When I was at Spurgeons one of the lecturers there was a great communicator, particularly with breaking complex ideas into easy to understand terms. He lectured in Theology. Look in theological books and you will find some fine definitions of what theology actually is. John's definition of theology was that it was the science of answering two questions.

*What sort of God?*

*So what?*

What sort of God we think we have is going to determine our thoughts and actions. Which brings us to our story. It involved a blind man who sat at the side of the road begging.

Blindness can be a terrible condition because it limits one's ability to do many of the things in life that those of us with sight are able to do. Even in these days of guide dogs and various aids to blind people, there is a limit to what the blind can do. In the time of Jesus, it was even worse to be blind because there was no social security, no disability benefit, guide dogs or similar. People who were blind were dependant on others and they had to beg to make a living. And here was this man sitting at the gate of Jericho - a pathetic sight; just begging day after day. He was trying to get whatever the world gave him.

They say that if you lose one of your senses, then the others improve to compensate. I don't know how true that is but certainly blind people have a greater ability to listen. They don't miss things we sighted people miss. Actually sometimes what disables us is not the physical disability but what we think about it - or worse, what others think.

*An elderly lady was waiting to cross the road but was finding the traffic heavy. A man came up to her and said "Do you mind if I cross with you?" She was ever so pleased and willingly allowed him to hold on to her arm. But as they crossed, the man began to weave backwards and forwards so much so that she had to drag him out of the path of oncoming cars. "What's the matter with you?" she said, "you're acting like a blind man!" "I am blind," he replied, "and I thought YOU were going to help me across the road". Then she noticed his white stick.*

And here was this blind beggar, sitting at the approach to Jericho listening. Someone was coming? A celebrity? Who? So he asks.

*36 When he heard the crowd passing by, he asked, "What is this?"*

*37 "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by," they told him.*

It's Jesus of Nazareth. Notice the words that they gave. Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. OK so it was a throw away phrase. Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. He's passing by. He certainly isn't stopping for the likes of you is maybe what was implied. The city gate was not Jesus' destination as far as they were concerned.

But the man was blind, poor, suffering. What was his reply? 38 He cried out, "Jesus! Son of David! Take pity on me!" 39 *The people in front scolded him and told him to be quiet. But he shouted even more loudly, "Son of David! Take pity on me!"*

Do you notice the difference between his response and their answer to his question? To them He was just Jesus of Nazareth. He did interesting teaching, he was good to hear. He did stunts, he was spectacle. He's that guy from Nazareth. They had eyes that saw spectacle but their ears had not heard.

But he had no eyes to see so only his ears had heard, and he had been listening. He wasn't that rabbi from Nazareth - He was Jesus Son of David - the Messiah, the One who was from God, the One who could meet him in his need and rescue him. How did he know Jesus was the Son of David? Jesus was. But that isn't what people called him. Unlike the others, the man had no eyes to see spectacle, he only had ears to perceive the world and he's picked up on what he's heard around. He had understood Jesus in a different way. So who were the ones who were really blind? The ones who could see!

Go through the gospels and the one thing you'll find about the disciples is that they only understood what

they wanted to. Sometimes we are guilty of the same sin. We see what we want to see and hear what we want to hear but who is Jesus.

He's Jesus, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the exalted One, the one who ever lives to make intercession for us. He's the One whose body was broken, whose blood was shed for us, who. He's the One who has sent His Spirit into our lives. What sort of God? The Bible tells me that.

So what? But who is Jesus in the reality of our lives? How does he make me different?

How did he make things different for this blind man?

### 1. He changed his life.

To the people He was just Jesus of Nazareth - an interesting chap from an unfashionable town in Galilee, but to the blind beggar, He was the life-transforming Son of David, the King - the promised One in Scripture. For us it is simply a question of how seriously we take our Saviour. So what happened when they tried to silence him? He shouted louder. He knew his need and he new Jesus could deal with it - so why stay silent? Why should he listen to those who didn't understand who hadn't listened.

They just said "Conform. You're not important. We're spectators so let us spectate. Jesus isn't for the likes of you."

But Jesus was there to transform people's lives not to do stunts for spectators. *Jesus stopped and ordered the blind man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, 41 "What do you want me to do for you?" "Sir," he answered, "I want to see again." Then see! Your faith has made you well." 43 At once he was able to see, and he followed Jesus, giving thanks to God.*

The change wasn't just a physical one but a spiritual one. And that's where What kind of Saviour? leads us. The salvation the man received that day was not just physical not spiritual. Too often we can put it the other way around. I can do that too.

We talk much about eternal life. But when does eternal life start. It starts now. *John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

What sort of Saviour? A Saviour we only "cash in" on when we die, or one who deals with us in our situations of life now. If He is who we say He is, then like the blind beggar, He can intervene in our lives now, not in eternity. And that's important but we let it so easily slip out of our minds and we start to think like spectators again.

The blind beggar is an interesting case in point. Sure his life was transformed, but being a seeing person didn't exempt him from all the strains of life - he still had to go through all the joys and disappointments but he had new sight and a new faith to enable him to go through it.

It's the same with us - we are not exempt from the stresses and strains of life - but Jesus gives us strength to deal with them - but oh so often we treat him like Jesus of Nazareth and not Jesus, Son of David. Yet He is the One who has come to free us from sin and the consequences of sin. Are you suffering from the stresses and strains of life? Let Jesus transform you

### 2. He's come to make us see

Through faith, the man got to see Jesus. Jesus came to deal not just with physical issues but with spiritual blindness. Very sadly, for many Christians spiritual blindness does not end when they become Christians, but we can still move with God blind or partially sighted because we had faith to accept Jesus of Nazareth but not Jesus, the Son of David, the King, the Lord. Many Christians walk through life but not under His Lordship.

*Jesus said to him, "Then see! Your faith has made you well."  
43 At once he was able to see, and he followed Jesus, giving thanks to God. When the crowd saw it, they all praised God.*

We are called to see and follow Him. If Jesus isn't Lord of all, He's not Lord at all. We may not be exempt from the stresses and strains of life by following Christ and I'm sure that this man wasn't, but Jesus Christ being Lord meant he was following Jesus praising God.

### 3. The opportunity is now

Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. For the blind man, there was no concept of I'm leaving this until next week or next year. "I'll think about it and get back to you". Jesus is passing by and wants to deal with your situation now. Not maybe next year. If the man had waited there wouldn't have been a next week or next year. This was the last opportunity Jesus was giving the people of Jericho to experience His personal presence. And He was quite prepared to stop to deal with people's needs

As we come around the Lord's table this evening, I believe God is challenging us.

- suffering depression - Jesus is passing by - He wants to free you from that which locks you out of serving Him
- locked down by personal problems - Jesus is passing by and he wants to deal with them
- locked down by problems understanding what God's will is for your life - Jesus is passing by, He wants to minister to you
- locked down with worry about your future - health, eternal issues - Jesus is passing by and wants to deal with that worry.

As we come around the table, the time is now.

Prayer

*Preached by Mark Reid  
MRBC Felixstowe 18/3/12  
© Mark Reid 2012*