

LESSON 5

December 29, 2024

Unit I: Jesus, the Heir of David

A Cry for Help

DEVOTIONAL READING: Luke 4:14-21

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Luke 18:31-43

PRINT PASSAGE: Luke 18:35-43

KEY VERSE

They which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. (Luke 18:39, KJV)

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Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” (Luke 18:39, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Analyze the connection the blind man made between Jesus and the “Son of David.”
- Identify your own response to Jesus’ invitation, “What do you want Me to do for you?”
- Help guide the church’s effort to hear and respond to the cries of the needy.

*Key Terms

Asked (verse 36)—Greek: *punthanomai* (poon-than’-om-ahee): inquired; by implication, learned; ascertained by inquiry; understood.

Blind (verse 35)—Greek: *tuphlos* (toof-los’): sightless; unable to see, physically or mentally.

Called (verse 38)—Greek: *boaó* (bo-ah’-o): called out; called aloud; proclaimed; shouted; “cried” (KJV).

Commanded (verse 40)—Greek: *keleuó* (kel-yoo’-o): directed; bid; gave orders; “ordered” (NIV).

Have mercy (verse 38)—Greek: *eleeó* (el-eh-eh’-o): to have pity on; to show mercy.

Jesus (verse 37)—Greek: *Iésous* (ee-ay-sooce’): the Greek form of “Joshua”; the name of the Messiah; the Christ.

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)



The Biblical Context

Recorded in Luke 18 is the setting of an episode from Jesus' final and relentless journey to Jerusalem and ultimately to the Cross—where He would fulfill His divine purpose for coming into the world. During Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, He ministered in Samaria (see Luke 9:51–10:37), where He relayed the parable of the good Samaritan; in Bethany and Judea, where He taught the importance of persistence and castigated the Pharisees (see Luke 11:5-13, 37-54); and in Perea, where He taught the multitudes several parables like the Lost Son (see Luke 15:11-32) and lessons about forgiveness, faithfulness, thankfulness, and readiness (see Luke 17:1-37). Luke 18 also covers a range of topics, including the need for persistent prayer (see Luke 18:1-8), the value of humility and accepting God's mercy (see Luke 18:9-14), childlike faith's importance to entering God's kingdom (see Luke 18:15-17), the challenge of sacrificing wealth for spiritual gain (see Luke 18:18-30), and an illustration of faith's power and persistence when seeking healing and salvation in an encounter with a blind beggar (see Luke 18:35-43). Following Zacchaeus's salvation and a parable about money usage (see Luke 19:1-27), Christ's ministry climaxes with the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.

Introduction

From the outside looking in, it may sometimes seem that the church has lost sight of its biblical purpose and mission. Church people are busier than ever with church work, but have we substituted the work of Christ for activities and business that have little to do with our gifts and callings as God's people? Although the church's role and function vary among Christian groups, our common mission is to give life to Christ's teachings and provide spiritual guidance and ministry to believers and unbelievers, locally and abroad. Along with evangelizing and sharing the Gospel, one of the church's primary purposes is to respond to people's cries for spiritual and physical help.

Each of the gospels provides instances of Jesus' showing compassion to those considered unworthy and untouchable by society. Matthew tells us about Jesus' healing a paralytic lowered through a roof as He taught (see Matthew 9:1-8). Jesus answered a leper's plea for help in Mark 1:40-45 as He did the ceremonially unthinkable—touching and healing the man. John reports Jesus' healing a man whose blindness made him a social outcast (see John 9:1-41). Finally, Luke presents Jesus as a man of great compassion and intense emotions whose purpose for coming into the world included serving the needs of society's most marginalized groups: sinners, women, children, the poor, the sick, and

the dying. In chapter 19 of his gospel account, Luke uses Christ's response to the cries of a persistent blind beggar in a noisy crowd as a vivid illustration of His commitment to reaching out to those in need.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

A Desperate Plea (Luke 18:35-39)

KJV

35 And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:

36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.
37 And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.
38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.
39 And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

NIV

35 As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.
36 When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening.
37 They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.”
38 He called out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”
39 Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem took Him through Jericho, near the Jordan River. As He neared Jericho, a blind man begging by the road was drawn to the crowd surrounding Jesus (**verse 35**). Curious about the commotion, he learned that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by (**verses 36-37**). The narrative does not explain how this blind man knew of Jesus’ identity, nor the motivation for his faith that Jesus would heed his cry for help. Jesus’ reputation for aiding the marginalized and healing sick had spread through the geographical region.

In his account, Mark identifies the beggar as Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus. Recognizing a rare opportunity, the blind man called out to Jesus, addressing Him as the Son of David, a messianic title—indicating his belief in Jesus as the Messiah and his submission to Jesus’ authority (**verse 38**). Despite the crowd’s ignorance of Jesus’ true identity and their attempts to silence Bartimaeus, their dismissal only fueled his determination to be heard (**verse 39**). His cries, described in Greek as an instinctual, almost animalistic expression of frantic emotion, reflect deep desperation. Bartimaeus’s unwavering faith contrasted sharply with Israel’s collective doubt in Jesus as the Messiah. While the nation struggled to believe, despite Jesus’ teachings and miracles, Bartimaeus’s spiritual insight enabled him to recognize and call upon Jesus.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How can believers develop Bartimaeus’s bold, persistent faith and apply it to serving the needs of others?

A Divine Response (Luke 18:40-43)

KJV

40 And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him,
41 Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

42 And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.

43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

NIV

40 Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him,

41 “What do you want me to do for you?” “Lord, I want to see,” he replied.

42 Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.”

43 Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

Fanny Crosby’s hymn “Pass Me Not” captures the essence of the blind beggar’s urgent request and its result. Jesus *did* hear his cry and *did not* pass him by. Jesus heard his desperate cry for His help amid the noise of the shouting crowd, stood still, commanded that someone bring Bartimaeus to Him, and asked the blind man to tell Him what he wanted Him to do (**verse 40**). Of course Jesus knew what the man needed, but He allowed him to speak his request as an expression of personal faith. By addressing Jesus as the Son of David, the beggar had previously expressed confident faith that Jesus could do what he desired—but now was his opportunity to proclaim it publicly. God often wants us to tell Him and request what He already knows and has decided to do for us for similar reasons. Submissively addressing Jesus as “Lord,” the man asked Jesus to restore his physical sight (**verse 41**). Immediately, Jesus granted the man’s request by restoring his sight and declared that his faith produced the healing (**verse 42**).

The beggar responded to his instantaneous and miraculous healing by following Jesus and glorifying God (**verse 43a**). Then those who witnessed this miracle also praised God (**verse 43b**)—the appropriate response to God’s unmerited favor to heal and deliver. This miracle in Jericho provides several applications for the faith community. Jesus did not allow the “noise” of the crowd to prevent Him from hearing this beggar crying out for His help. Likewise, the church must remain vigilant to cries for help from the marginalized victims of pain and injustice, and those considered beyond spiritual help. Additionally, we should respond with open praise to God’s faithfulness and saving grace toward all who approach Him with unwavering faith.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How can the church become more attentive and responsive to cries for help among those often silenced by church busyness and church politics?

A Closing Thought

The miracle at Jericho has relevant applications for the church today. The blind beggar models the appropriate path to seeking God’s help and the appropriate response to receiving it: demonstrating persistent faith despite circumstances, humbly submitting to His authority, and praising, glorifying, and witnessing for Him when He answers our cries for help. Jesus’ actions challenge us to avoid being distracted by the “noise” of “doing church” so that we can hear and

respond appropriately to the needs of those considered undesirable, the marginalized, and the least likely prospects for salvation.

Your Life

Bartimaeus refused to be intimidated by opposition and unwaveringly persisted in making sure that Jesus could hear his cry for help. He knew who Jesus was and had faith in His power to meet his needs. This week, consider how you can follow the man's example of refusing to be silenced and meet the need of someone crying for help in your home, family, church, or community.

Your World!

People in our world constantly cry out for help because of oppression, abuse, discrimination, and mental and physical health issues. This lesson challenges the faith community to be alert to these cries for help and respond to them with Christ's unreserved compassion. Therefore, as an application, consider ways that your congregation can strengthen its efforts to hear and respond to a specific need in your community.

Closing Prayer

Dear God, thank You for hearing and responding to our cry for deliverance from spiritual blindness. Now we pray that You will help us ignore the physical and spiritual distractions that attempt to drown out the cries for help from those yet walking in darkness, so that we can respond to their needs compassionately. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

Trouble is a universal and often uninvited constant source of injustice. Next week's lesson challenges us to go to and cooperate with God in seeking His justice for all. Read Psalm 10:12-18.

Home Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY, December 30	"The Kingdom Belongs to the Messiah"	(Revelation 11:14-19)
TUESDAY, December 31	"A Heart Full of Thanks"	(Psalm 9:1-9)
WEDNESDAY, January 1	"A Plea to God for Grace"	(Psalm 9:10-20)
THURSDAY, January 2	"Immortal, Invisible"	(1 Timothy 1:12-17)
FRIDAY, January 3	"The Life of Faith"	(1 Timothy 6:11-16)
SATURDAY, January 4	"God's Judgments Are True"	(Psalm 10:1-11)
SUNDAY, January 5	"God Will Arise and Hear Us"	(Psalm 10:12-18)