

When Jesus passed by

Of all the miracles of Jesus I have a particular admiration for the healing of blind people. That is why I shared about the healing of a man born blind last week, and today we are going to look at the story of another man who was blind.

These stories have more to do with us than what we think: like these blind men, we are also called to believe a Jesus we can't see – *we walk by faith and not by sight* (2 Cor. 5:7).

1 Peter 1:8 -*whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.*

Opening Text: Luke 18:35-43

³⁵Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. ³⁶And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. ³⁷So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. ³⁸And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ³⁹Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁰So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, ⁴¹saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." ⁴²Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." ⁴³And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

I want us to look at this passage verse by verse:

1. V.36- ... and hearing a crowd passing by

A blind man heard a crowd. I am sure that many other people passed by that place at the entrance of Jericho all the time, every day. There would have been many other crowds walking into that big city. However, the blind man realised that there was something different about this crowd – their sound was different, there was an excitement and an exuberance, there was something in the air that seemed completely out of the ordinary. There was something unusual about that group of people that caused the blind man to want to know what the commotion was all about.

I believe that the church is to carry a sound that is unique and different from anything in the world. Our frequency should be distinct, our voices and our songs should carry a hope and a joy that causes a hurting world to come near and find out Who are we walking with!

V. 37 – *"So they told Him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by"*

2. He asked what it meant.

a) What does it mean to be part of a crowd that follows Jesus?

Sometimes what is obvious to us may be a mystery to someone else who's never been around Church. However, even for us, it is important that from time to time we revisit this question: what does it mean to follow Jesus? What does it mean to part of a body of believers? How do we walk with Him? It is important to never lose sight of the basics.

- b) *He asked what it meant* – The world will look at what we do and wonder: what this crowd all about? What is this music they sing? what about those hands they raise? – what is going on? Why do they look so filled with hope – what is the reason for their hope?

1 Peter 3:15 NIV - ... *always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.*

I believe we owe the world an explanation about who we are and especially about who Jesus of Nazareth is! I love the following passage:

Matthew 21:10 - *And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?"*

The blind man asked what it meant – In acts of the Apostles, we also find people asking about the meaning of a sound that came from the church on the day of Pentecost:

Acts 2:11-12 - ... *we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."* ¹² *So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"*

Here, the sound of the church was not just distinct from the sound of the world, but also distinct from the sound of religion. Religious people had never heard such a sound and that very day 3000 of them became followers of Jesus!

3. V.37 – So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by

- a) *They told him* – we have to tell the world. We can't keep Jesus for our feasts, for our celebrations only. We need to go public with Jesus. Jesus didn't die between two candles in a cathedral. No: He died between two thieves on the cross, openly!
- b) They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by – that was the reason for all the commotion, that was the reason the crowds came. Jesus was central to what was happening there that day. Jesus is really what we are all about!

Our job is not so much to inform the world about the virtues of our denomination, the correctness of our doctrinal statement and so on but simply to tell the world about Jesus!

- c) They must have told the blind man about what 'happens' when Jesus passes by because the blind man's heart was suddenly filled with faith!

There is power in our testimonies, Those testimonies attest to the reality of Jesus and they build our faith:

Acts 2:22 - *Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know*

4. V.38 – ... And he cried out, saying, Jesus Son of David, have mercy on me”

Something powerful happens to the human soul in the presence of Jesus. The realization of His great power caused this man to call upon Jesus! Again, that also happened also on the Day of Pentecost:

Acts 2:37-38 - *Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” ³⁸Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

5. V.39 - ³⁹*Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me”.*

Why should he be quiet anyway? Jesus never placed barriers for people to come to Him. Only men did that. In fact, Jesus said, *“All that comes to Me, I will by no means cast out”* (John 6:37). In the next Chapter (19) we see people complaining because Jesus went into a tax collector’s home (19:7) but Jesus said,

Luke 19:10 – *For the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost*

Matthew 9:12 *“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.*

a) This story shows us that those on the roadside matter to God.

It is important to be part of a crowd that follows Jesus. However, it is equally important to reach those that are yet not following Jesus, that stand on the roadside. It is important to stop for them! The church is here to provide ‘roadside assistance.’ We have to be careful never to be indifferent towards those yet outside the Kingdom.

6. V.40 – So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him

That is still the commandment of Jesus, that is still the mandate of the church!

Conclusion

V. 43 – *Immediately he received his sight and followed Him.*

That is still the story that makes heaven rejoice: the man is now following Jesus – no longer on the side of the road, no longer a beggar, no longer blind, and no longer wondering what it all meant.