

Exegetical Notes, Matthew 20:29-34
“The Power to See”

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Matthew 20:29-34

Verse 29

As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him.

- Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. The events of the triumphal entry and the crucifixion are just before him.
- As in other places, a large crowd followed Jesus. This attests to his popularity among the people.

Verse 30

Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

- The men sitting by the roadside could not see. We are not given the details of their ailment.
- The blind men know something about Jesus. The title they use to address him, “Son of David,” is Messianic implying that they knew, suspected, or believed that Jesus was Israel’s Messiah.
- Their request is that Jesus “have mercy upon them.” The nature of the request is nonspecific. They may have been asking for healing, but more likely they hoped for money as they were probably begging beside the road.

Verse 31

The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

- Given the context of the stories told in Matthew chapter 20, we are again confronted with a group of people, the crowd, who feel that others, the blind men, are not worthy of Jesus’ attention. Blindness

would have been considered proof that these men were sinners being punished by God for their own disobedience or that of their parents. Therefore, they did not deserve Jesus' attention in the mind of the crowds.

- However, the blind men, used to being marginalized by other people, refused to be rebuked. Instead, they became more insistent, calling out to Jesus with greater intensity.

Verse 32

Jesus stopped and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

- More to impress the crowd with the truth that every person is valuable to God than due to their insistence, Jesus called the blind men to him.
- Jesus asked the blind men to be more specific about their request. He asked them to tell him what it was they wanted from him, what it was they meant by the phrase, "have mercy upon us."

Verse 33

"Lord," they answered, "we want our sight."

- If their initial concern was alms, the stakes changed when the blind men knew that they had gotten Jesus' attention. Now they want to be healed, to receive their sight.

Verse 34

Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

- Jesus "touched" them. This implies that he put his hands on their eyes.
- As soon as Jesus touched them they could see. Their sight was immediately and perfectly restored.
- They then followed Jesus. We cannot be sure what this phrase means exactly. It could mean that they followed him out of Jericho, or they followed him all the way to Jerusalem, or that they became his disciples. The complexity of possibilities suggests the complexity of responses to Jesus even today.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *The Power to See*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen*. They are used here by permission.)

