

The Miracles of Jesus
Miracle # 16

"The Healing Of The Two Blind Men"
(Matt 9:27-31)

Most people have never experienced total blindness, even temporarily. You can see the person in the office next to you, the colors of your clothes, your child's smile when you pick them up and love them. You can see to drive, shop, walk down the street, and so much more. What if you were totally blind?

For 51 years Bob Edens was blind. He couldn't see a thing. His world was a black hall of sounds and smells. He felt his way through five decades of darkness. And then, he could see. A skilled surgeon performed a complicated operation and, for the first time, Bob Edens had sight. He found it over-whelming. "I never would have dreamed that yellow is so...yellow," he exclaimed. "I don't have the words. I am amazed by yellow. But red is my favorite color. I just can't believe red. I can see the shape of the moon—and I like nothing better than seeing a jet plane flying across the sky leaving a vapor trail. And of course, sunrises and sunsets. And at night I look at the stars in the sky and the flashing light. You could never know how wonderful everything is."

[Max Lucado. *God Came Near*, (Multnomah Press, 1987) p. 13]

Blindness was and still is a common occurrence in the Middle East. Tony Campolo in his book "Seven Deadly Sins" published in 1987, says more than 100,000 children around the world go blind every year due to lack of vitamin A in their diet. [Tony Campolo. *Seven Deadly Sins*. (Victor Books, 1987) p. 143]

The Davis Dictionary of the Bible accounts for prevalence and severity of eye troubles in those days as, "**aggravated by peculiar conditions, such as the perpetual glare of the sun, the quantity of fine dust in the air, and flies**." [John D. Davis. *Davis Dictionary of the Bible*. Nashville: The Varsity Company, 1973) p. 103]

Although blindness was quite common the Old Testament records no miracles of the restoration of sight to the blind such as Jesus performs.

In fact the healing of the blind was a direct fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy concerning the ministry of the **Messiah** (Isaiah 29:18: 35:5).

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. (6) Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert."

The miracles that Jesus performed fulfilling these prophecies should have been recognized by the Jewish people and their religious leadership as **proof** of who Jesus was. Jesus' stated purpose of his ministry recorded by Luke (4:18) was, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed."

Matthew is the only gospel writer to give an account of this miracle. Matthew tells us that as Jesus left the home of Jairus having restored life to his daughter, two blind men followed him and were determined not to take no for an answer.

'When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" (28) And when He had come into 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." (29) Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." (30) And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it." (31) But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country."

The Background of the Miracle (v. 27)

'When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!"

The account begins with "when Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him..." (v. 27a). The "there" being referred to is the house of Jairus in Capernaum. By this time it is now the evening of a very long and eventful day. Jesus had healed a woman with an issue of blood and had restored the daughter of Jairus who had died, back to life. As Jesus and His disciples left this home and turned into the street to make their way to the place where He was stay a growing crowd accompanied Him.

Matthew says that these two blind men are "crying out" (*krazontes*) – literally "yelling or shrieking." This same Greek word is used of the screams of the **insane** or demon possessed (Mark 5:5, 9:26), used of a woman in **childbirth** (Rev. 12:2) and used to describe the Lord on the **cross** when he "cried out and gave up the spirit" (Mark 15:39). These two men were shrieking and calling out in **desperation**.

But in addition to shrieking they were also calling out to Jesus as the "Son of David" (v. 27). These two blind men are the first persons in

Matthew's gospel account to address Jesus as the "Son of David." This was a common Jewish title of the **Messiah**. They were saying that they believed that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, the King of Israel.

These two men also cried something else that helps us to know the genuineness of their faith, they said, "have mercy on us!" The two men never asked Jesus to heal them. They only asked Jesus to have **mercy** on them. This would indicate that they were asking for their sins to be forgiven, with the expectation that their sight would be restored as a result.

The Elements of the Miracle (vv. 28-29)

"And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" (29) They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you."

Finally, Jesus responds when he arrived at the house where he was probably staying while in Capernaum (possibly the house of **Peter** which seems to have been His base of operations while in Galilee). Once inside the house Jesus questioned them about their faith.

Do you believe that I am able?

"And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" (v. 28)

One question that comes to mind is, "**What is the reason for the emphasis on faith in this story?**"

There are several possibilities. Perhaps it should be noted that both of the previous miracle healing involved **persistence**. The ruler of the synagogue showed persistence. When Jesus agreed to heal his daughter but stopped to heal the woman with the issue of blood, you can imagine how anxious he was. Then he received a message that his daughter was dead, but clinging to the hope extended by Jesus, he still believed. Even the woman who was healed by touching the hem of His garment had to desperately work her way through the press of the crowd to touch Jesus and affirm her faith.

As one commentary suggests; He wanted faith not **Desperation**. Sometimes when people are truly desperate they cry out for help without any real expectation that they will be helped. [Larry Richards. Every Miracle in the Bible. (Nashville:Thomas Nelson, 1998) p. 206]

He asked them rather pointedly "do you believe that I am able." It is not a question of the power of their faith; but a question of the **object** of their faith.

The story of the three Hebrew young men found in Daniel 3 (vv.16-18) immediately comes to mind? When these young men are threatened with death if they do not bow down to the king's image of gold they replied, "... **O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. (17) If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. (18) But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."** Their response was that they were fully confident that God would deliver them from the hands of the king, either from the flame or through the flames. Either the flame would not harm them or the flames would extinguish their lives in which case they would go to Heaven. Either way their God would deliver them.

The two blind men affirmed that they did indeed believe that Jesus was able to do this when they said, "**Yes, Lord.**" (v. 29)

According to Your Faith (v. 29)

It is easy to misinterpret what Jesus says next, "**according to your faith let it be to you**" (v. 29). Some commentators assume falsely that what Jesus is saying is, "**If they have enough faith their sight will be restored.**" The question then becomes, "Is faith necessary for healing?" The answer is that according to the evidence of the Gospels, **No!** How can I say that? Because the Gospels are loaded with people whom Jesus healed, that gave no evidence of faith. And while faith is not necessary for healing it is necessary for **salvation**. Jesus wanted these men to express their faith that they might be saved.

With absolutely no fanfare, Jesus touched their eyes and healed.

The Effect of the Miracle (vv. 30-31)

"And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it." (31) But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country."

He warned them sternly.

"And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it."

Jesus warns them not to tell anyone of their healing. How could the men who were blind, keep everyone who knew them from knowing that they had been healed?

The Greek word translated sternly is (**embrimaomai**) which only occurs five times in the New Testament (Mark 1:43, 14:55, John 11:33, 38). When this word is used it is always in connection with deep **emotion**.

The warning that Jesus issues is a strong one. So why is Jesus so adamant about these men not telling any one.

Why did Jesus want to keep this miracle quiet? Theories abound but there are two that seem likely. First, He knew that the Jewish religious leadership was already angry and looking for a reason for a confrontation, and He was keeping a low profile for the moment. The proclamation of the blind men that he was indeed the "**son of David, The Messiah-King of Israel**" would have brought even more political tension. Secondly, His desire was to direct attention and glory not to Himself but to the **Father**.

But in spite of his strong charge to be silent concerning this miracle, the men departed and spread abroad His fame. But however might rationalize what they did they were still **disobedient**.

John MacArthur comments, "the men did exactly what He told them not to do. However, this is understandable. If you had been blind and were given sight, you would probably tell others about it with great excitement. Usually the problem is that the Lord wants us to say things and we don't. However, there are times when He doesn't want us to say things, but we do. I guess it was sin that only a grateful heart could commit, but it nonetheless was a sin."

MacArthur goes on to note that based on their disobedience we might doubt whether or not they were genuinely saved, if the last thing we heard about them was their disobedience. But verses 32-33 tell us that the two blind men immediately got a hold of a friend and brought him to Jesus.

[John MacArthur. Miracles of Sight and Sound. From series "The Power of Jesus"
www.biblebb.com/files/MAC/sg2267.htm]

Application

In his book, Catching the Light, quantum physicist Arthur Zajoc writes of studies which investigated recovery from congenital blindness. He said, "**The sober truth remains that vision requires far more than a functioning physical organ. Without an inner light, without a formative visual imagination, we are blind,**" he explains. **That "inner light"—the light of the mind—"must flow into and marry with the light of nature to bring forth a world."** [National Right to Life News, March 30, 1993, p.22
- www.bible.org/illus/b/b-67.htm]

Application - Something to think about. - Types of Spiritual Blindness which we may have.

Blindness to our own spiritual **immaturity**.

It is certainly possible to be blind to our own spiritual immaturity Peter lists a series of virtues which every believer should have and then warns, (2 Peter 1:9) "For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins."

Blindness to divine **perspective**.

We need to remind ourselves at times that our earthly perspective keeps us from seeing things as God sees them.

Blindness to our own **faults**.

Because we all have a tendency to be able to spot the faults of others while denying them in ourselves, Jesus taught, "***first remove the beam out of your own eye then you can take the sliver out of your brothers eye***" (Matt 7:4-5).

Blinded by **money** or possessions.

Blinded by **hate**.

To hold a grudge against a fellow believer is evidence of blindness.

Blindness of **half-heartedness**.

John warns the church at Laodicea, (Rev 3:17-18) "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'--and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked--(18) I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see."

[drawn from Leslie B. Flynn. The Miracles of Jesus. (Wheaton, Victor Books, 1990) pp. 132-135]