

### 3. Power over Sickness

Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43

#### Matthew 20:29-34

<sup>29</sup> And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him. <sup>30</sup> And behold, there were two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, “Lord, <sup>[a]</sup> have mercy on us, Son of David!” <sup>31</sup> The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the more, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” <sup>32</sup> And stopping, Jesus called them and said, “What do you want me to do for you?” <sup>33</sup> They said to him, “Lord, let our eyes be opened.” <sup>34</sup> And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him.

#### Mark 10:46-52

<sup>46</sup> And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. <sup>47</sup> And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” <sup>48</sup> And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” <sup>49</sup> And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.” <sup>50</sup> And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. <sup>51</sup> And Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And the blind man said to him, “Rabbi, let me recover my sight.” <sup>52</sup> And Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

#### Luke 18:35-43

<sup>35</sup> As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. <sup>36</sup> And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. <sup>37</sup> They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” <sup>38</sup> And he cried out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” <sup>39</sup> And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” <sup>40</sup> And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, <sup>41</sup> “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, let me recover my sight.” <sup>42</sup> And Jesus said to him, “Recover your sight; your faith has made you well.” <sup>43</sup> And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

**1. Read the three passages, what are some of the differences? Similarities? How does this demonstrate accuracy of the accounts?**

- a. Matthew references two blind beggars, while Mark & Luke only reference one man
- b. Luke tells us all of the people gave praise to God for this work.
- c. In Mark the crowd tells the blind man to go to Jesus, that Jesus was calling him.
- d. Luke says that they were approaching Jericho, Matthew and Mark say as they were leaving Jericho

The fact that there are two blind men in Matthew and only one mentioned in Mark & Luke is not a contradiction, but simply another example of perspective in the eyes of the author. The man named Bartimaeus (In Mark) was the simply the only one mentioned in Mark and Luke. It is possible that this Baritmaeus (son of Timaeus) was somebody that would have been know or that the readers would be familiar with so his name was mentioned. If this is the case, then it would be normal for him to be the one mentioned in this story and the others not mentioned. It is also possible that these passages refer to different accounts of Jesus healing blind men.

The ESV Bible Study notes do a good job with the issue of Jericho. It explains that there were two Jerocho at that time, the ruins of the old city, and the new city built nearby. Jesus could have been leaving one and entering the other when this account took place. The other option is that the events could cover his entering the city and his leaving the city. If He met the men upon his entrance and healed them upon leaving the accounts would make sense.

**2. What is the purpose of the passage? Why did God choose to incorporate this story into three of the Gospel narratives?**

- a. **To show the power of God that people might believe.**
  - i. **John 14:11** Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.
- b. **To show Jesus compassion & love for mankind. Matthew 20:34**
  - i. So Jesus had **compassion** on *them*, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him. (KJV)
  - ii. Moved with **compassion**, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him. (NASB)
  - iii. Jesus had **compassion** on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him. (NIV)
- c. **These passages fulfill prophesy**

**Isaiah 35:4-6** Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.”<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; <sup>6</sup> then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

**Luke 7:18-23** <sup>18</sup> The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, <sup>19</sup> calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” <sup>20</sup> And when the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’” <sup>21</sup> In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. <sup>22</sup> And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers<sup>[e]</sup> are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>23</sup> And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

**3. When the crowds told the blind men to be quiet they called out all the more for Jesus to have mercy on them. How does their cry, “Son of David have mercy on me.” Demonstrate some knowledge of who Jesus is, and their faith?**

- a. By addressing Jesus as, “Son of David” they were recognizing Jesus’ rightful place as king of Israel. By asking Him to heal their sight they were demonstrating their faith that Jesus could only do what God himself can do – thus they showed that they were believing that Jesus is the Messiah. The irony is that the blind men could see Jesus for who He is, but those with sight could not.
- b. We too need to Cry out respecting Jesus authority and Sovereignty for Him to have mercy on us. The blind men recognized their condition was desperate, and that the only hope they had was Jesus. They were unwilling to let anything get in their way. The crowd was not going to stop them, their blindness was not going to stop them, they were going to call out to Jesus no matter the cost. The salvation message is the same way, we must see our condition as desperate, and recognize that Jesus is the only solution. When the crowds left Jesus in John 6 Peter too responded this way.

**John 6:66-69** <sup>66</sup> After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. <sup>67</sup> So Jesus said to the Twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” <sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, <sup>69</sup> and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

**4. All three of the Gospels that mention this account end with these men following Jesus. The correct response to seeing Jesus power in our lives is always to follow Him. Read Luke 17:11-19. How is the response of 9 of the 10 lepers drastically different? How is the response of 1 of them the same?**

- a. When we truly see God for who He is and see ourselves for who we are, the only response that we will have is to bow down and worship. Any other response is failing to see God for who He is. The blind men understood who Jesus is, and they followed Him.

- b. Only one of the 10 lepers saw Jesus for who He is the rest only wanted what they could get from Him. Jesus was convenient for them because He could make their lives better, not because He could forgive their sin. They were too caught up in themselves to see the God that was standing in front of them.

**Luke 17:11-19** <sup>11</sup> On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup> And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, <sup>[a]</sup> who stood at a distance <sup>13</sup> and lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” <sup>14</sup> When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. <sup>15</sup> Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; <sup>16</sup> and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. <sup>17</sup> Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? <sup>18</sup> Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” <sup>19</sup> And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

- c. Job’s response to Hearing from God in Job Chapter 42 is a great example. Job 26-31 is Job’s appeal to God and his friends that He is innocent and that He did not sin and deserve this destruction. God shows up in chapter 38-41 and God does not defend Himself, but tells Job of all of the things in the world that God created and sustains.

**Job 38:1-5** Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: <sup>2</sup> “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? <sup>3</sup> Dress for action <sup>[a]</sup> like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. <sup>4</sup> “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. <sup>5</sup> Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?”

**Job 40:7-8** “Dress for action <sup>[a]</sup> like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. <sup>8</sup> Will you even put me in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you may be in the right?”

Job’s response to hearing from God is in chapter 42. Job repents from His arrogance and submits to God’s plan. The only proper response to God is a cry for mercy.

**Job 42:1-6** Then Job answered the LORD and said: <sup>2</sup> “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. <sup>3</sup> ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore, I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. <sup>4</sup> ‘Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.’ <sup>5</sup> I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; <sup>6</sup> therefore I despise myself, and repent <sup>[a]</sup> in dust and ashes.”

**5. Why do you think that Jesus asked the men, “What do you want me to do?”**

- a. Jesus wanted the blind man to verbalize his faith. Many in the crowd were telling the man to be silent, doubtless they did not believe that Jesus could heal him. Jesus, therefore, by asking the man what he wanted used the man’s faith as a testimony for those around him.
- b. This question is also a contrast to the previous passage where Jesus asks the very same question to James and John (Matthew 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45). This same question, when asked of the two disciples receives a very different response. The disciples ask for glory and honor while the blind man asks for mercy. This is a great representation of how we come to Jesus. We can only come to him in brokenness and humility, not in pride and ambition.

**Matthew 19:23-30** – (vs. 24) <sup>24</sup> Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

**Matthew 18:3-4** and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup> Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

**6. If Jesus has power over sickness to heal, why does He allow so much suffering and sickness in this world today to go uncured?**

- a. Romans 8:20-22 tells us that sickness is a result of sin in the world. God has allowed sin to have its effects on us and allows sickness and death to run its course in this world so that we may see the futility and destruction that sin causes and be drawn to Him, the Great Physician. If we think about it, if God allowed us to continue to live in a utopian garden with our sin, and protected us from the effects of sin (i.e., Death and sickness) we would continue in our sin and death without ever seeing a need for a savior. God often draws people to himself through their hard times and their struggles.

**Romans 8:20-22** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

- b. There may be a lesson for us to learn from the sickness in the world today, and the fact that Jesus healed every disease and sickness He encountered. (**Matt 12:15; Matt 14:14; Matt 15:30; Luke 6:17**) When Jesus comes into contact with sickness he heals it. God promises that He will create a new Heaven and Earth, and when He does this He will live with His people and there will be no more sin, or sickness or death.

**Revelation 21:1-4** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

<sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven

from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place<sup>[a]</sup> of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people,<sup>[b]</sup> and God himself will be with them as their God.<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

**7. If sickness is the result of sin, is sickness the result of an individual’s sin? If I am sick, am I being punished? Read John 9:1-7. Does this passage help us to understand the relationship between sickness and sin?**

- a. Yes, sickness is the result of sin, but not every person that is sick is being punished for a specific sin. All of us have sinned, and we all therefore deserve to die and spend eternity away from God. Sin did cause sickness and death, but that does not mean that everybody that sins is being directly punished for some specific sin they committed. Although there is, however, some evidence that God uses sickness to punish people directly it does not seem to be the normal case with sickness that it is directly linked to sin in one’s life.

**1 Corinthians 11:27-32** Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup> Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup> That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.<sup>[g]</sup> <sup>31</sup> But if we judged<sup>[h]</sup> ourselves truly, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup> But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined<sup>[i]</sup> so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

- b. The disciples asked Jesus this very question in John 9:1-7 and Jesus responded that this man’s blindness was so that the works of God might be shown. Sickness, is present in this world because of sin, and the reason God allows us to suffer the effects of mankind’s sin is that the glory of God might be shown.

**John 9:1-7** As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup> We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” <sup>6</sup> Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud <sup>7</sup> and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

- c. Job is also a good example of God's allowing sickness and death to attack us so that His power and glory might be shown. Job is described as a righteous man, yet loses everything and is afflicted with a horrible sickness. Job's friends try to tell him it is because he sinned. In the end God shows Job that God alone has power over sin and sickness, and our response to adversity, sickness and death ought to be only one of worship and praise at the power and knowledge of God.

**Job 1:20-23** Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. <sup>21</sup> And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." <sup>22</sup> In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.