

Luke 18:35-43

The Blessing of Receiving Our Sight

Lord, that I may receive my sight – v. 41

The news of Jesus Christ had evidently spread far and wide by the time this blind beggar heard that Jesus was passing by. And even though the blind beggar couldn't see, he could apparently still hear. He had heard of the great things that Christ had done already. And he could hear the sound of a commotion taking place nearby. So when he learned that the cause of the commotion was Jesus Christ passing by that way, he immediately knew what he must do.

So we read in v. 38 that *he cried*. Other versions translate it – *He cried out* or *He called out – Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me*. And he would not cease from his calling out, not even when the crowd would try to silence him. Here, then, is an example of a man in need who would ask and seek and knock, one who would keep asking, seeking, and knocking and would not be dissuaded from his asking, seeking, and knocking.

I never will forget a sermon I heard many years ago in which Ian Paisley pointed out how the cries of this blind beggar did something that all the forces of heaven, earth, and hell could not do – these cries brought Jesus Christ to a standstill. Notice what it says in v. 40: *And Jesus stood*. That's an easy statement to pass over isn't it? And yet the statement becomes all the more profound when you consider that Christ was on His way to Jerusalem. Look at v. 31 *Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished*. Earlier in Luke's gospel we see the resolute determination of Christ on His final journey to Jerusalem. Lu 9:51 *And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem*.

Christ was on a mission, and nothing must stop the accomplishment of that mission. And yet when the cries of this blind beggar sounded forth, Jesus would come to a halt and would summon the blind beggar into His presence. *What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?* Christ asks in v. 41 – to which the petition comes *Lord, that I may receive my sight*. The very thing you would expect from a blind man. And the next verse tells us something that is as true spiritually as it was for that blind man physically. When someone gains their spiritual sight it can be said of them the same thing that is said of this healed blind man in v. 43: *And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God*. This is the same thing sinners do when they receive their spiritual sight. They follow Christ and they live to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

So the thing I'd like you to see this afternoon is that there is a spiritual counterpart to this blind beggar's petition. There's a definite spiritual sense in which his petition for physical sight needs to be our constant petition for spiritual sight. Let's look then at a spiritual analysis of this blind beggar's petition:

Lord, That I May Receive My Sight

Think with me first of all on:

I. The Christian's Need for Such a Petition

We know, of course, that spiritual sight is a pressing need for those that are lost and outside of Christ. Like the blind man in John 9 who was born blind, so is every one who is naturally born into this world born spiritually blind. So Paul writes in Eph. 4:17,18 *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.*

It's interesting to note that a clear mark of spiritual blindness is the inability or unwillingness to see the truth of Christ or to see the truth of sin. When Christ healed that blind man in Jn. 9 the Jews desperately sought a way to explain the miracle away. They interrogated the blind man himself, and then they interrogated the blind man's parents and then they interrogated the healed blind man again.

And when the healed blind man asked them if they would become Christ's followers, they got angry and the narrative says *they cast him out*. A couple of verses later in Jn. 9:39 we read these words from Christ: *And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. 40 And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? 41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.*

They were blind toward their own rebellion toward Christ. They were blind to the fact that they were flying in the face of the obvious by denying what the miracle said about Christ. Here is a condition that is worse than blindness – it's a blindness to your blindness. It's a deception of heart that convinces a man he sees when in fact he's blind.

This is the kind of blindness that you were healed from when salvation was wrought on your heart. You saw your sin and you saw the truth of Christ in terms of who He is what He's done for sinners. What a blessing to be able to sing the familiar words – Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.

The thing I want you to realize now, however, is that just as our physical sight can grow dim and need adjusting through glasses or contact lenses, so does our spiritual sight have that same propensity. And this necessitates the plea *Lord, that I may receive my sight*. It may be that one time you saw things with greater clarity and fullness. The Word of God was a living Word to your soul. The very sight of Christ in the written Word had the impact on your soul of moving you to humble praise and thanksgiving as well as reverence in worship toward Christ.

But the time comes when God's Word doesn't have that impact on you the way it once did. You drag your eyes over the words of your assigned daily reading but there is no impact on your soul. We all recognize that even at our best and at our highest level of spirituality we still see through a glass darkly (1Cor. 13:12) and at times that darkness seems impenetrable. When that happens we do well to utilize the petition of the blind beggar – *Lord that I may receive my sight*. Lord, help me to see anew and afresh the glory of Christ and the glory of salvation.

Peter addresses the issue of blindness in his 2nd epistle. In the first chapter of his second epistle he lists a number of things that are to be added to our faith. These things include virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity. Listen to what he says in v. 9 which addresses the issue of failing to add these things to faith: *But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins*.

Another translation puts it this way: *For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind*. This idea of being nearsighted is what is meant in the AV *he cannot see afar off*. The application can certainly be drawn from such a verse that the Christian's sight has been restricted to the point that he only sees what the physical eye sees. He only sees, in other words, the things of this world. He only sees the here and now and has lost his spiritual vision. And as a result Peter goes on to say he's forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

I don't think Peter means that the Christian in this condition has forgotten that part of his creed that tells him that Christ died for him. But he's lost his heart-felt appreciation for the reality of his old sins being purged and at such a high price, the blood of Christ. So it is in this kind of condition that the blind beggar's petition becomes a needed petition for the Christian – *Lord, that I may receive my sight*.

So there is need for such a petition, not only by those that are spiritually blind before salvation but for Christians themselves whose spiritual sight grow dim. But let's think next on:

II. The Blessing of The Answer to Such a Petition

I said in my introduction that the cries of the blind beggar stopped Christ in His tracks. And He then summoned the blind beggar into His presence and asked Him what He could do for Him, to which invitation the blind beggar replied *Lord, that I may receive my sight*. And then we read in v. 42 *And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee*. And he did receive his sight and followed Christ and praised and glorified Him.

So is the Lord pleased to answer prayer for the Christian who sees his need for his sight to be restored. One of my favorite prayers in the New Testament is the prayer of Paul in Eph. 1. You could say that this prayer in Eph. 1 amounts to the same thing as the blind beggar's prayer in Lk. 18.

Listen to the way Paul expresses this prayer for the saints at Ephesus beginning in v. 15 of Eph. 1: *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.*

You'll notice that occasion for this prayer was that Paul heard about their faith in the Lord Jesus which became manifest by the way they loved all the saints. In that sense, then, you could say that they had received their sight. Verse 17 begins the content of Paul's actual prayer for them. His desire for them was that they would be given the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened. The word *understanding* can be translated by the word *heart*. And so here is a prayer that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened. You see you readily that can correspond to the blind beggar's prayer – *Lord, that I may receive my sight?*

This is a prayer for spiritual illumination. This is a prayer that the things we perceive in our minds may be brought home to our hearts. When that happens, when that kind of prayer is answered then we too follow Christ all the more fervently and glorify and praise Him. This idea of spiritual illumination is something that I tend to emphasize often. I must say, however, that in my years of experience as a Christian before the Lord called me to preach it's not something I ever heard mentioned at all.

And I stress it often because it's an all important key to your spiritual vitality. When the truth that's fed to your mind is taken by the Holy Spirit and applied to your soul then your religion becomes real. And isn't that what so many Christians are looking for today? They don't necessarily need something that's fancy or something that utilizes all the high-tech methods that accompany modern day worship. They want that which is real. And it's the Holy Spirit who is the author of spiritual reality. This spiritual illumination is something that only He can give.

And when He does give it, then you know, not simply as a matter of your creed but as a matter of your heart you know the hope of your calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints and exceeding greatness of His power toward those that believe. And if you care to add Paul's prayer from Eph. 3 into the mix you could say that you gain the heart felt perception of the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of Christ toward you.

This matter of spiritual sight is vividly illustrated in another favorite New Testament passage of mine. In Lk. 24 you have the account of the Emmaus Road disciples. They're discouraged. Their hopes had been raised so high that Jesus was indeed the long promised Messiah. But then the authorities took and crucified Him and the hopes of those Emmaus Road disciples were dashed. Jesus accompanies them on their way home and then He

opens the Scriptures to them and explains to them how it was necessary for Christ to suffer before He entered into His glory. And a little later in the narrative those disciples say to each other Lk. 24:32 *Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?*

Here is spiritual illumination. Here is a vivid illustration of what Paul prays for the saints at Ephesus. Here is the blessing of such a prayer being answered. Our hearts are set ablaze in devotion to Christ. So we have the need for this petition – *Lord, that I may receive my sight*. And we have the blessing of such a petition being answered. Let me say a word finally about the petition itself. For in this petition we see:

III. The Means For Having Our Need Met and Gaining the Blessing