

THE HEALING OF A BLIND BEGGAR: STEPS TO GETTING HELP FROM GOD

LUKE 18:35–43

Introduction

The blind beggar demonstrated ever so clearly how men can get help from God.

- I. Jesus approached Jericho (v. 35).
- II. A man had great need (v. 35).
- III. A man had great hope in Jesus (vv. 36-38).
- IV. A man had a persistence in seeking Jesus that would not quit (v. 39).
- V. A man had the boldness to ask great things of God (vv. 40-42).
- VI. A man had the appreciation to praise God (v. 43).

I. *Luke 18:35 Discrepancies in Scripture*

Jesus was near Jericho, about to enter the city. He was on His way to Jerusalem where He was to die. His face was set to accomplish the purpose for which God had sent Him into the world. Jericho was only about seventeen miles from Jerusalem, so the journey was about over. The cross was ever near, hanging immediately before His face.

There are two apparent conflicts among the three gospel accounts of this event that need to be mentioned.

1. The actual location where the healing of Bartimaeus took place. Luke said it took place as Jesus “approached” Jericho; Mathew and Mark said the event took place as He departed from Jericho (Mt. 20:29, Mk. 10:46) What happened was apparently what often happens in a big city. There was an old Jericho (the one so often mentioned in the Old Testament), and a new Jericho built by Herod the Great; or as we might say today, an old section of town and a new section. Mathew and Mark were apparently referring to the old or new city Jesus was leaving and Luke to the other city He was entering. There is also the possibility that the two blind men began to cry as Jesus entered the city. However, since they needed their faith strengthened by persisting, Jesus waited until they were close to leaving the city before hearing their cry.
2. The number of blind men involved. Mathew said there were two; Mark and Luke said one, and Mark gave his name as Bartimaeus. The simplest explanation of what happened is what often happens in an ordinary conversation when an event is being explained: the spokesman or prominent person is the only one mentioned. In this particular case, the prominent person was Bartimaeus. Therefore, Bartimaeus is the only blind man referred to by Mark and Luke.

Note: we do not know what actually happened. However when we get to heaven, God will reveal that what appeared to be discrepancies were only that, apparent discrepancies that gave us another opportunity to trust Him and His Word.

II. *Luke 18:35 The Needy*

A man had great need. The blind man was as needful as he could be, desperately needful. He had been blind for years, perhaps for life, with no hope of ever seeing. All he knew about things and people was what he could imagine from touching and hearing and tasting. The only places he could go were the places where people led him or else where he could safely feel his way along. Even then he would sometimes stumble and fall. He was doomed to live in total darkness, never to see anything but pitch black as long as he lived. The worst fact of all was that he knew it. He had to live with the knowledge that he was doomed to a world of darkness. It preyed and preyed upon his mind. He knew that he could never be normal, never fit in, and never be fully accepted by normal people.

He was also poor. He had to beg to survive, and he suffered the humiliation of being a beggar every day. There was no one to care for him — not family or neighbour or social group. He was left entirely alone in fending for himself and struggling for survival. How many days he must have gone to bed hungry, his stomach suffering sharp pains or nausea from lack of food. He was desperately needful, and he knew it.

III. *Luke 18:36–38 Seeking Jesus with Hope*

A man had great hope in Jesus. As the blind man sat by the wayside, he heard all kinds of commotion throughout the day. The road was a major highway, one of the major commercial routes of the day. During this particular time, pilgrims from all over the known world were flooding the road; therefore the commotion was noisier and more hectic than usual. All of a sudden, the blind man heard a huge throng of people passing by. When he asked about the crowd, someone told him Jesus of Nazareth was coming.

1. The blind man had heard about Jesus of Nazareth, and he had *believed the reports* about Him. Apparently the blind man hoped for “the consolation of Israel” (Lk. 2:25). As soon as he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he knew who Jesus was and he began to cry out immediately. This tells us that he had already been thinking about the possibility of Jesus’ coming his way. Hope had already risen in his heart, and now, despite the fact that he could not see, the opportunity of his life stared him in the face. The point to note is this: he had already *believed the report* that the Messiah had come. Belief had already been stirred in his heart — at least to some degree.

Isa 53:1 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

2 Cor 6:2 For he says, “In the time of my favour I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favour, now is the day of salvation.

2. The blind man acknowledged Jesus as Messiah. He called Jesus “Son of David.” This term is used only two times in Luke (see Lk. 20:41). It was a title of the Messiah. (See *Son of David*, Lk. 18:38.) It was an inadequate concept of Jesus, although it was a true fact. He was the Son of David predicted from the beginning, but He was

more, much more. He was the very Son of God Himself. But note: the blind man approached Jesus with what knowledge he had. He used what he understood and cried out to Jesus in his desperate need.

Thought 1. All a man needs to do is use what knowledge he has and call out to God. God will help a man grow in knowledge as the man continues to seek God's help, no matter the need.

Acts 17:27 God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

Psa 105:4 Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.

Zep 2:3 Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger.

Isa 55:6 Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.

3. The blind man cried for mercy. This is significant. He was blind and poor and he had to beg for daily survival. But note: he did not cry for food, clothing, or shelter. The basic necessities of life were not his primary concern. The mercy of God upon his life was his concern.

Luke 1:50 His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

Luke 18:13-14 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Eph 2:4-5 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.

Psa 6:2-3 Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am faint; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are in agony. My soul is in anguish. How long, O Lord, how long?

Psa 27:7 Hear my voice when I call, O Lord; be merciful to me and answer me.

Psa 51:1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

Psa 85:7 Show us your unfailing love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Psa 119:77 Let your compassion come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight.

Joel 2:13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

Micah 7:8 *Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be my light.*

LUKE 18:38 JESUS CHRIST, SON OF DAVID

He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" **Luke 18:38**

The title the Son of David is a common title throughout the Bible. (See Mt. 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; Acts 2:29-36; Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8; Rev. 22:16.) It was the common title and popular concept of the Messiah. Generation after generation of Jews longed and looked for the promised deliverer of Israel. The people expected Him to be a great general who would deliver and restore the nation to its greatness. In fact, they expected Him to make the nation the centre of universal rule. Under God, He would conquer the world and centre the glory and majesty of God Himself in Jerusalem. From His throne, the throne of David, He (the Son of David, the Messiah) would execute "the Messianic fire of judgment" upon the nations and people of the world. □

IV. Luke 18:39 Persistence in Seeking Jesus

A man had a persistence that would not quit. This is an excellent example of the kind of persistence that gets help from God.

1. Some of the people with Jesus rebuked the blind man. They tried to silence stop him from crying out to the Lord. Why we are not told, but they did oppose him. He had every reason to be discouraged, for he was blind and could not see to make his way through the crowd. All he could do was shout out, and some were even trying to stop him from doing that. He could have easily quit and given up, for it seemed so useless.
2. Note what he did: he "shouted all the more." He would not quit and would not be silenced. Jesus was his hope, the only chance he had for mercy. No other man could have mercy upon him or meet his need. They might feed, clothe, and house him; but they could not meet the crying need of his heart, the blindness of his eyes and spirit. His faith in Jesus was strong; therefore, he was not to be stopped. His faith fought against all odds: the opposition of the crowd and the noise above which he had to be heard. His faith cried out louder and louder, desperately hoping that God would help Jesus hear.

Mat 7:7 *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."*

Deu 4:29 *But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him, if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.*

Amos 5:4 *This is what the Lord says to the house of Israel: "Seek me and live."*

Thought 1. Perseverance — resisting and standing against all odds — is the answer to being helped by God. God cannot turn a deaf ear to the persevering cry of a desperate

need, not if the person cries and cries for help, never quitting. God has promised to hear and answer undying perseverance (see Lk. 11:8-13; 18:1-8).

V. *Luke 18:40–42 Prayer, Seeking Great Things of God*

A man had the boldness to ask great things of God. Note three significant facts.

1. The man's persistence caused Jesus to stop and to stand still. Imagine the scene. Jesus heard the cry and its sound of desperation. He stopped and looked about, standing perfectly still with a hush sweeping over the crowd until there was nothing but stone silence. Then piercing through the silence, the desperate cry came: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me."

Thought 1. There is symbolism in the scene: the great need for quietness and silence for Jesus to hear us. There are times when the crowd must be silenced, hushed so that Christ can hear our cries for mercy. Nothing should ever be allowed to interfere with our daily *quiet time* with the Lord. How many of our needs would be met so much quicker if we persevered daily in a *quiet time*, crying out to the Lord for mercy.

Psa 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

Hab 2:20 *But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.*

Zec 2:13 "Be still before the Lord, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling."

2. The blind man asked for a great thing to be done. Imagine — being truly blind and asking a man standing there to heal your eyes. An unbelievable thing, yet the blind man believed. He believed in the One who stood before Him, *believing what he had heard*: that this Jesus was the Messiah who possessed the very power of God. He was able to do anything, so the blind man asked for the greatest need in his life to be met. There was no need to ask for anything less, for Jesus was the One possessing the power of God. And Jesus had called him to come forward and to ask for whatever he needed. It was a time for courage, the kind of courage that asks great things of God, even if they seem impossible.

Mat 21:22 "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

John 14:13 "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father."

John 15:7 "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."

John 16:24 "Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."

1 John 5:14-15 *This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.*

Isa 65:24 *Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.*

Jer 33:3 *‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.’*

3. Jesus granted his request. He gave him sight and saved him. The blind man had taken three critical steps. He had...
 - believed the reports that Jesus was the promised Messiah (Rom. 10:13-17, esp. 16).
 - cried out for mercy.
 - persevered and persisted and refused to give up despite all kinds of odds.

Therefore, Jesus saved him by giving him sight and saving his soul. This was a complete healing that included both the inner and outer person: the spirit as well as the body (Mt. 14:36).

Heb 7:25 *Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.*

Heb 11:6 *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

Psa 37:5 *Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this.*

Prov 3:5 *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.*

Isa 26:4 *Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.*

VI. Luke 18:43 *Courageous Witnessing*

A man had the appreciation to praise God, the courage to become a witness for Christ.

1. Note that he followed Christ immediately.

Luke 9:23 *Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”*

John 10:27 *“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”*

John 12:26 *Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.*

Eph 5:1 *Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children.*

Col 2:6 *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him.*

1 Pet 2:21 *To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.*

2. Note that he praised and glorified God and caused others to praise God.

Mat 5:16 *“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*

Rom 15:6 *So that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Cor 6:20 *You were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.*

2 Th 1:12 *We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Heb 13:15 *Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that confess his name.*

1 Pet 2:9 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

Psa 9:11 *Sing praises to the Lord, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done.*

Psa 67:3 *May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you. ■*