

Matthew 20:29-34 | Jeffrey Smith

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[0 : 0 0] All right, good morning. As David said, with the amount of sickness going around, and it impacted our family as well. My son Micah has a fever. I'm going to give you the positive side of it, the silver lining. Today may be a record-setting day.

I asked KJ before, what is the most number of online viewers we've had at one time? And it was six. And I just checked. Guys, I saw seven. We're at seven. We broke the record. Yes! So, I'm looking at you, Joe Babcock. I'm looking at you, my son Eli.

And all the Brad and Ann, I'm sure you guys are on. Thank you guys for joining online. Well, we're going to continue in our study of Matthew. I'm excited about this one. Matthew 20 is where we're going to be.

We're wrapping up that chapter, verses 29 through 34. And I thought this was interesting because, just to give you a quick summary, this passage talks about two blind men that were healed of their blindness.

And two messages ago of mine, back in October, I had a message that had to do with healing as well. And I kind of shared a personal aspect of it regarding my mom. She was in the ICU at the time.

[1 : 2 1] And in that Matthew 15 chapter, you know, there's mute that were healed and could speak. They were crippled. They were lame. They were blind. And they were all healed by Jesus.

And I kind of talked about just how the main points that I took away from that account, those miracles, were just a reminder that God can heal. God can heal.

But also, the reminder that He doesn't always heal. The third point I had in that message was that prayer is impactful.

And I believe it's most impactful for us, those that are praying. The Lord doesn't require us to pray or not pray or pray a lot or pray a little to do what He wants. He can do it.

But our bringing things before the Lord in prayer, specifically in the example of healing and in, you know, medical situations, that builds our faith when we see Him answer in different ways.

[2 : 2 2] And then also, the last point I had in that message was just being discerning. You know, there's a lot that goes on around healings and that kind of thing.

And so we just need to be, you know, really just clearly understanding what's happening and how it relates to the gospel. So I kind of just touched on it.

In October, I shared about my mom. My mom, if you guys don't know, she has brain cancer. She had a lot of some complications that came up in September. And she spent 97 days in the hospital. That's a long time. 85 days in ICU, 12 days in rehab. And she got to come home on Christmas Eve. That was awesome. And so I just want to start by saying thank you guys for praying and for asking and supporting meals, everything.

I mean, it's been just awesome to see. And it's still a long road ahead. Just when I say she's home, it doesn't mean that things are all good. It's still quite a bit ahead of us. But I think it's just an example of, like, the Lord brought her out of that situation.

[3 : 3 5] And, again, it's not like we're 100% in the clear. There's still a lot ahead. But it's just a neat reminder of the Lord's power in that.

The Lord can heal. So we're going to look at Matthew 20, verses 29 through 34. And before we jump into it, I just want to, let's pray.

And then I'm going to make it just a couple general observations. So, Heavenly Father, we just thank you for this morning. Thank you for those that are here. We pray for those that are sick at home.

Just pray for healing there. There's a lot going around. And so we just thank you for this morning. Thank you for the Gospel of Matthew and just the lessons to be learned there.

In Jesus' name, amen. How do we know who wrote each of the Gospels? Anybody ever thought about that? You know, you look at the epistles and Paul makes it clear, whoever wrote, you know, that book.

[4 : 40] But when you think about who wrote the Gospels, it's an interesting question. It doesn't necessarily start with, hey, this is Matthew and I wrote this. And this question came up because there was a really kind of popular amongst Christian circles podcast going around a few weeks ago where Joe Rogan, a very popular podcaster, interviewed this guy named Wesley Huff.

And Wesley Huff is a Christian that really specializes in understanding ancient texts and biblical texts and all these things. And he was just, it was just really fascinating to hear him kind of share different things around this kind of topic.

Things that I had never really thought about before. You know, how did they weed out things that were false texts and how did they include things that we see in the canon, in the Bible here?

And when you think about who wrote Matthew, you know, there's some clues along the way.

There's one that is in one of the early transcripts.

There is a mention of kata mathian, which means according to Matthew. So that's a pretty good indication that Matthew wrote this. In other clues, in other Gospels, you know, like John, you know, he refers to himself as the disciple Jesus loved.

[6 : 07] You know, in Matthew, it's also interesting because Matthew was what? What was his profession? He was a tax collector, you know. And so he humbly refers to himself as the tax collector.

But in other Gospels, they refer to him as Matthew or Levi. They don't necessarily use his title. And so it's a way that he's kind of humbly writing. You know, when he talks about the feast, you know, Matthew modestly calls the feast with Jesus just a dining experience.

Whereas others refer to him as a big reception. Matthew is interesting because 58% of the book of Matthew is similar to what we see in the other synoptic Gospels.

Or just in even the other Gospels in general. Okay? So 58% is similar to the other Gospels. 42% is unique. I'm going to kind of explain why that's important here in a second.

But I mentioned the word synoptic. The synoptic Gospels are what? Matthew, Mark, Luke.

Synoptic. And synoptic means they represent the life and the ministry of Jesus Christ in a similar manner.

[7 : 19] So Matthew himself was a capable writer. He was a note-taker. He was a preserver of history. And he brings this very distinctly Jewish angle to his account.

And his vocabulary is very similar to that of the Old Testament writers. He refers back to Isaiah more than any other Gospel writer. He most often, more than any other, he presents Jesus as the Messiah.

As this fulfillment of the promise. And so as we read this story from Matthew, we're going to also look at it in Mark and in Luke.

Because this is a very interesting story where it appears in the other two synoptic Gospels as well. So it's neat to kind of see this coming from three different angles. So this first angle, which is where we're going to kind of primarily camp out at, is in Matthew.

And Matthew is this tax collector. Again, like, think this guy. Very smart. Very good with money. If you've ever seen The Chosen, it's hard not to, like, think about, you know, kind of his personality in that.

[8 : 27] But, and this Jewish background that he also had. So I've actually recruited a couple people to read. So my son Josiah is going to come up. And he's going to read Matthew 20, 29 through 34.

So if you want to turn there, that'll be kind of where we camp out at. Matthew 20, 29 through 34. And as he went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him and pealed there were two blind men sitting by the roadside.

And when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, Lord, have mercy on us, son of David. And the crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent. But they cried out all the more, Lord, have mercy on us, son of David.

And stopping, Jesus called them and said, what do you want me to do? They said to him, Lord, let our eyes be open. And Jesus, in pity, touched their eyes.

Immediately they recovered their sight and followed him. Thank you. So here's an account from Matthew, who is a direct disciple.

[9 : 35] And just a couple things that I underlined. And you're going to see this angle from all three writers kind of come together. And you see it in each of the passages. So it's not like just Matthew emphasized this, but you see kind of where these three pieces touch.

The two blind men say, Lord, have mercy on us, son of David. And again, they say again, Lord, have mercy on us in verse 31, son of David.

That is the example of the fulfillment of the messianic prophecy. They're all waiting for the son of David to come and to be their savior.

And so these two men, just in recognition of him as the son of David, really show the faith that they have in their hearts, which we're going to come back to.

So next I'm going to have Mariah come up and she's going to read the account out of Mark 10. So if you want to kind of keep your thumb in Matthew 20, but flip over to Mark 10, 46 through 52.

[10 : 46] Okay. 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.

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. And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, son of David, have mercy on me.

And Jesus stopped him and said, call him. And they called him. They called the blind man, saying to him, take heart, get up. He is calling you. And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.

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. 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. Thank you. Okay, so here's a couple things I would say about Mark's account. So Mark was not a direct disciple of Jesus.

[11 : 47] So where did he get this information from? Ever think about that? Where did he get this from? So he got this from probably various sources, but a primary one of that was Peter.

Peter's written and oral accounts were passed down to Mark. And Mark wrote this down. So why is that interesting? Everyone's got a different angle to things, okay?

And I just love just trying to understand what is the perspective that the Lord used in this author.

And so for Mark, a lot of folks point to the way he was able to personalize the account.

And out of all three of these accounts, this is the only one that he refers to the blind man by his name, Bartimaeus. And so you see Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, mentioned.

And it's just kind of neat to see here's Mark using some personalized details of the story in his account. So the next one I'm going to have Reese come up is going to be out of Luke 18, 35 through 43.

[12 : 56] And what I would say about Luke is he really draws out his compassion. He draws out the compassion that Jesus had for the sick and the poor and the lame.

And I don't know if that's because of his background as a physician. You know, maybe it's because he saw a lot of sick and therefore he wanted to really emphasize the compassion that Jesus had on these individuals.

So I didn't turn it on. Is it on? Good. Cool. All right. So Reese is going to read Luke 18, 35 through 43. As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.

And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. And he cried out, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. 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. And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, what do you want me to do for you? He said, Lord, let me recover my sight.

[14 : 03] And Jesus said to him, recover your sight. Your faith has made you well. And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Thank you, Reese. So just, you know, from Luke's account, and again, the others all mentioned this. These were, this was a blind man or a blind man sitting by the roadside begging.

And I felt bad as I was driving home last night. And it seems like there's people begging on every street corner in St. Louis right now. And it's like, I don't even look anymore.

And I'm like, well, should that be my response? I don't know. But Jesus saw them and had compassion. In the Matthew account, it said he had pity on them.

Obviously, this account does not show up in John. But I do want to just kind of point out a couple things about the book of John. I know that's not our study. But just a couple interesting tidbits here.

[15:02] So the book of John is 92% unique from the other Gospels. Probably not a surprise. You know, John's book is very different.

The book, or the Gospel of John is very different. Some call it the spiritual gospel. So if you have the synoptic Gospels, maybe spiritual gospel. I don't know what you want to call it.

But it is different. And I thought this was a very interesting way of looking at this. So the synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Some describe it as this is a perspective from the ground level up.

Whereas the audience in real time, the Jewish audience in real time, is gaining a recognition that this guy is different.

This guy is the Messiah. And they're seeing the works that he's doing. And they're following him. So when you're talking like ground level response, when you're looking at it from that angle, that is how often the synoptic Gospels are kind of described.

[16:08] Whereas John's Gospel is kind of a top-down view. Coming from kind of a heavenly perspective on Christ.

You know, John stresses the deity of Christ from the very beginning. In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God. And the Word was God. And then it later says the Word became flesh.

So here's this like descent of like Jesus as part of the Trinity coming down to earth to become flesh. John uses the Greek word for believe 98 times.

And here's the interesting thing. Every time it's a verb. It's not a noun. So there's this emphasis in to believe, in believing in this deity, in the Son of God.

Okay. So that's kind of the high-level perspective of all these different angles. So let's just start with this. I want to just kind of give you guys some common themes that I'm seeing in Matthew.

[17:09] But first, let me mention the difference. Did you guys catch a key difference in that? In the three accounts? There's an interesting difference.

In Matthew it says, as they went out of Jericho. In Luke it says, as they drew near to Jericho. And in Mark it says, and they came to Jericho.

So were they coming to Jericho or were they leaving Jericho? And I just bring that up because there has been some debate about, is this all the same account? I'm not going to go down all the different rabbit trails.

I'll just kind of give my opinion here. Most point to the fact that there was an old Jericho and then later built a new Jericho. So when you understand that, and then they were traveling, leaving one and going to the other, there's a very simple explanation as to why these could all be and likely are the same account.

There's also the difference in, you know, you see two beggars in Matthew and then you see one beggar in the other two accounts. That could be described as just, you know, the perspective of seeing two, the emphasis of one, you know.

[18:32] I'm going to kind of go with the camp that this is all one account mentioned in each of the three Gospels. So let's get to the similarities. So the similarities, the first one is they all describe the beggars call out to Jesus saying, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

And so this is a very interesting question because it it gets to kind of the heart of what must someone believe to be saved? And if you look at these beggars, they're simply saying, they're simply acknowledging Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

That's all that's written in all three accounts. I think sometimes we like to overly complicate the question. Someone must believe this and then have 100% of their doctrine all in line before we can declare them they are a believer.

But in reality, especially with the new believer, it is sometimes just the basic of the Gospel. This guy is the son of David. This is the Messiah that we've been waiting for.

The one that our forefathers had prophesied and God had promised. this is him. This is him.

[19 : 57] This is the son of David. This is the Messiah. And that simple, that faith, that acknowledgement, that trust in him being the son of God is all that it is.

Ezekiel 34, 23 says, and I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall be freed from, and he shall feed them. He shall feed them and be their shepherd.

And I, the Lord, will be their God. And my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the Lord. I have spoken. In Isaiah 11, it says, the shoot from the stump of Jesse is to be what was prophesied, is to be the Messiah.

And so, these two blind men make this request in the face of all this rebuke. Jesus, son of David, have mercy on us. And, I think that, that is just an interesting kind of thing to point out briefly, just the open rebuke.

It says, the crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the more, Lord, have mercy on us, son of David. From a very personal standpoint, you know, I'm helping to give the prayer request on a semi-regular basis up here.

[21 : 19] How often do I say, hey, this is what I need prayer for? Rarely. You know, rarely. And it's, that is a fault of my own. I have many things that I need prayer for.

And I think that there is a sense of pride on my part. there's a sense of just lack of awareness. I went back, one of the first things I said in that message in October was, prayer is impactful. Prayer builds the faith of those that are praying. And so, for me just to not even acknowledge that, that is a very selfish thing on my part. I'm not worried that you guys are going to rebuke me for praying.

So, it's not similar in that sense. But, there can be sometimes this concern of, what will I do? What will other people say? Oh, here he goes. He's got another prayer request regarding this thing. But that is a, that is a real thing. And so, my encouragement is to bring a request, to make them known, to put them on the book, to mention them on that Friday morning prayer, whatever it may be.

[22 : 27] Ask your buddies. I mean, as a guy, we rarely ask our buddies for prayer. I think girls are a little bit better at it. Don't, don't, don't, yeah, don't, just don't let the impact of others, the peer pressure of others keep you from acknowledging, this is what I need prayer in.

And Jesus responds to these men with compassion. Think about what Jesus is about to go through. In the next week or so, he's going to have maybe the most profound week that anyone has ever lived.

He is entering into Jerusalem. He is roughly a week away from being crucified. He's going from walking in, they're laying down the branches, they're laying down their coats, Hosanna to the son of David, to a week later, let him be crucified.

And he knows this. He knows what's about to happen. There's no, there's no, I hope this all works out, and man, I feel like this is going to be kind of a busy week for me. This is the most impactful week that's ever been lived.

And despite him and this crowd with him going on this mission to Jerusalem, two beggars stop and say, Lord, have mercy on us.

[24 : 00] Son of David, have mercy on us. And, you know, for someone, and we're all busy, I mean, for someone that's just busy, it's like, man, that one hits home because we just all have a lot going on.

We all look at our calendars and we're like, okay, there's just this happening, this happening, how are we going to get from here to there? And to stop and recognize the need of something or someone that is around you is just incredible.

And so the Lord responds with, what do you want me to do? The Lord knew what he wanted. And they said, recover my sight. And this is a bold and direct ask.

This isn't a doubt-filled request. You know, back to my own faults that when I'm sometimes praying, sometimes it sounds like this, Lord, if it's your will, and you totally don't, totally don't have to do this if you don't want to, but if you don't mind, just please consider maybe the possibility of considering maybe giving my eyesight back.

That'd be kind of cool. These guys just said, recover my sight. Why do we pray like that sometimes? Deep down, I think it's because, you know, we don't want to see the Lord not answer the way we want, and therefore, it appears he didn't hear us.

[25 : 18] The Lord hears the prayers of the believers. He doesn't always answer the way we want, but he hears them. And we can be direct in our ask. You know, if you're asking for something sinful, obviously, that is not going to be what the Lord is going to, you know, provide in his will, but, Lord, I'm sick.

I need your help. I'm in this situation. Lord, please help. This is what I need. And he may provide that. He may not. The Lord can and will do what he wills, and there's no shame in asking. Psalm 37, verse 4 says, take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Take delight in the Lord. That's step one. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

The blind man's insistence reflected his belief that Jesus the Messiah could help him. It feels like the opposition to that only made his belief that much more unshakable.

When we're like that blind man, when we truly realize that there is no other way of being saved from our sinful state, our spiritually blind state, it doesn't matter what anyone else says.

[26 : 45] It really doesn't. It doesn't matter what other pressure comes in. If you are to the point of these beggars, this may be my last chance. And here comes Jesus.

I gotta get my request out there. There is nothing that can stand in your way. And so Jesus got these men to verbalize the request. He knows their inner thoughts.

He wanted them to say it out loud. Maybe for the benefit of the crowd around him. And he healed their blindness, and it says they followed him. This was really a proper response.

And if you listen to the order of operations here, it says that they believed he was the Messiah. They acknowledged that when he said, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on us.

They acknowledged he is the Messiah. And so the belief was in him. And then once the healing happened, they became his disciples. They followed him.

[27 : 52] And let's not lose sight that Jesus performed an absolute miracle here. To heal two blind men is a miracle. So there was a quote from a guy named James Morrison, late 1800s.

He said, what was happening in the man's body was really, as we presume, the outward picture of what had happened in his soul. He was spiritually given sight as well as physically given sight.

This was Jesus' last miracle, last written miracle before the crucifixion. And, you know, there's an interesting contrast. In Matthew 9, he heals two blind men.

But the difference is, in that passage, he said, see that no one knows about it. And ultimately, the timing wasn't there.

He wasn't to the point then to letting the general population know that he was the Messiah. And of course, what did they do? They went and told everyone they knew.

[29 : 01] So, though these men were physically blind, their spiritual eyes had been opened to the fact that Jesus was the Messiah.

And not just from a factual standpoint, but that he was the Son of God, the Savior that they had been waiting for. In Matthew 16, Jesus asked Peter, who do you say that I am?

Who do you say that I am? I personally hate rhetorical questions. I remember just being in school and the teacher would ask a rhetorical question and you're like, is it the obvious one that we all know? Is it something else that I'm not thinking of?

As soon as I raise my hand and I give the obvious question, it's like the one that was obscure and vice versa. And I feel like that's what Jesus is doing. Peter, who do you say that I am? And Peter says that he is the Christ, the Son of God.

And Jesus says, bless you, Peter. And this is the interesting point I just want to draw out here in Matthew 16. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

[30 : 13] These blind men didn't come to this faith that Jesus was the Messiah on their own. This was given to them by the Heavenly Father.

He was the one that opened their spiritual eyes first and then physically opened their eyes. Just like Peter, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

Now just wrapping up here, here we are. It's another example of Jesus healing, Jesus exemplifying the power, the ability to perform miracles.

And, you know, there's one thing that really stuck out to me. I just want to kind of hone in on this for one second. And, and again, there's a lot of good here.

There's, there's so many things you can kind of focus on. I mean, just the salvation aspect of it, the discipleship, you know, Bartimaeus, you know, pictured discipleship very clearly here.

[31 : 23] He recognized his inability. He trusted Jesus as the one who could give him mercy. And when he could see clearly, he began to follow Jesus.

Here's, if you want to just turn with me to one last passage. Hebrews 4, starting verse 14. We, we like to talk a lot about how God is our Heavenly Father. We can have a relationship with him. But sometimes, like I said, my own fault in not going to the Lord in prayer, sometimes it just like ends there.

Like, relationships are very interactive. You're, you're walking with the Lord in that, in that relationship. Hebrews 4, 14, it says, since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens.

Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness. Okay, listen here. We don't have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who is in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

[32 : 38] Here's, here's the, the verse that I have just in bold, underlined, highlighted. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.

These two blind men were in their moments of greatest need. They're blind, they're begging, they're being hushed by the crowd, but all of that becomes a non-factor when you're at your lowest moment.

Could this be you? Will this be you? Maybe you feel like, hey, life's pretty good right now. I guarantee it won't always be this way. There will be times where people are sick, perhaps there's death, there's family issues, you lose your job, you live on this earth long enough, you will feel hardship if you haven't already.

There will be a time of need. Tim Keller tells this really fascinating story, I'm going to kind of butcher it, but I'm going to give you kind of what I remember, of a four-year-old child and he wakes up in the middle of the night.

Maybe he had a nightmare, maybe he's not feeling good and he's unable to go back to sleep and he goes into, this is where the story gets a little off, he goes into his parents' room and he wakes up his dad.

[34 : 12] Why is that a little off? Usually they wake up their mom. But in this example, he goes in and he wakes up his dad. It's middle of the night.

That son doesn't care if he is the CEO of the company and he has a big board meeting the next day. He doesn't care if he's the quarterback of the Kansas City Chiefs and he's playing the Super Bowl the next day.

He doesn't care if, he doesn't care what his job is. He doesn't care what he has on the agenda the next day. He is in his moment of need and is going to his Heavenly Father.

These two beggars were in their moment of need and here is Jesus on his way to Jerusalem to live or to experience death. To experience the culmination of his mission.

They obviously didn't know that but obviously there was momentum building. There was a crowd there. Something was happening and it's really easy to be like, ah, you know what?

[35 : 19] He's busy. I think he's busy. I'll just let him go. But when you are truly in your moment of need, there's nothing that can hold you back from going to your Heavenly Father. And that is the relationship that we have.

Again, Hebrews 4, 16. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

all that son knows is that I have a need and my dad can help. First and foremost, our greatest need is a Savior.

At some point, I pray that we all, everyone in this room, wake up to the nightmare of life without Christ. Regardless of where you are or what you're doing or how bad your nightmare has been, the nightmare of life sometimes, but that we first and foremost, we come to put our faith in Christ, our trust in Him.

That personal relationship is real. And just like those blind men, we can throw off that cloak and follow Him. Once you've put your trust in Christ, become a follower of Him.

[36 : 37] Walk with Him. That moment of need, our greatest moment of need is salvation. But there are many moments of need that come after that. It doesn't end there.

And so I just urge you to continue to go to the Lord to seek mercy and grace in your time of need. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we just again thank you for this morning. Thank you for your word, for this message here in Matthew and in Mark and Luke as well, just about these two blind men who are healed on your way to Jerusalem, on your way to being put on a cross.

Lord, we just thank you for that and thank you for just the fact that the story doesn't end there, that despite death, Lord, you overcame that in your power. You were buried and you rose again and you offer salvation to those who put their trust in you.

We thank you for that, Lord. We thank you for just the ability to not only put our trust in you and gain salvation, the ultimate gift, Lord, but that relationship starts and we can come to you in that moment of need whenever that is, wherever that is.

[38 : 02] Lord, that is part of this discipleship process that we are all seeking to just walk with you, Lord. So we just thank you for that. Thank you for this morning. Amen.