

Intro:

This afternoon we come to a prayer made to Jesus. This prayer is, I think, very significant in its simplicity and very profound in its answer.

Our passage happens to be Lk 18.35-43. Let's read the account.

From Mark's Gospel we know this as the healing of 'Blind Bartimaeus'. There are two matters we should mention before we begin the message.

In Matthew, two blind beggars are mentioned.

- Should be taken that there were indeed two men who were healed, but one was more prominent in the later history of the church, so the focus is primarily on him.

In Matthew and Mark, Jesus is leaving Jericho, in Luke he is entering Jericho.

- Some make it two separate incidents, or a two-stage incident that happened as Jesus was entering and leaving the town, Bartimaeus yelling louder at his second chance. [Neither possibility seems satisfactory to me.]
- The Jewish historian, Josephus, says there were two Jerichos, old Jericho which existed for many years, and new Jericho, rebuilt by Herod as a palace city about 5 miles from the old. This is probably the preferable view – the Lord was leaving old Jericho, entering new Jericho, and the healing takes place.

One last thing we should mention as we get into the message. Some things are not mentioned by Luke that happened in the sequence.

- Read Lk 18.31-34, note especially v. 31
- Note this: after Jesus said these things comes the occasion when James and John and their mother ask for special privileges in the Kingdom.
- Then comes this healing, and then (Lk 19.1-10), Zacchaeus

So consider these terms: 'all the prophets said'; 'kingdom'; 'son of David' ...

And now our proposition:

Proposition: You cannot be saved unless you see yourself for what you are and see, with faith, the Son for who he is .

I. The anticipation of Israel – a kingdom full of blessings

- A. **Real:** the blessings of the kingdom are basically spiritual, but in the 'context of sense experience' (217-220)

- B. **Ethical:** the crooked will be made straight – what an amazing condition for the human race, an honest government of ethical people! (220-224)
- C. **Social:** the society of the kingdom will be the most blessed the world has ever seen — free from war, want, death, all will rejoice in a prosperity hitherto unknown (224-228)
- D. **Political:** politically, the long standing feuds of men will be ended and settled in the government of the King (especially anti-Semitism will be ended, for the good of all) (228-234)
- E. **Physical:** true (and beneficial) climate change — the physical aspects of the kingdom [ALL of them] will be regulated for the blessing of mankind by the King (234-241)
- F. **Spiritual:** regarding the restoration of pure religion, it begins with a Priest-King, it is centered in Jerusalem, it is practiced in a restored temple, and it is the sole religion of men in the earth. The spiritual need of mankind will be perfectly and completely satisfied in a reformed universal worship of Christ. (241-254)¹

“It must be observed that the spiritual blessings described in the Old Testament are set firmly in a context of sense experience, they are not blessings confined exclusively to an immaterial and far-off heaven somewhere in the skies. On the contrary, they are inseparably united with other blessings which are social, physical, and even political in nature.”²

Such were the ordinary expectations of every day Jews, though they may not have understood all that the Scriptures meant by their descriptions [and perhaps neither do we].

II. The blindness of those who could see

- A. The disciples could not see the meaning of the Lord’s teaching from the prophets (Lk 18.31-34)

The blindness of the disciples is typical – they, like us, tended to hear what they expected to hear, and could not understand that which didn’t fit their grid.

- B. The people who led the way rebuked the blind man (Lk 18.39)

¹ These six points from McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, see pages cited.

² McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, p. 220.

It is ironic that those who were usually looking for a sensation rebuked a prime candidate for providing one for them. 'Go away, the Lord isn't interested in blind beggars.' [Oh, yeah?]

III. The faith of those who could not see

A. The blind man calls on 'the Son of David'

1. A term used only 26 times in the Bible

a. 9 times in the OT

- 1) Once of Absalom and Amnon (2 Sa 13.1)
- 2) Once of Rehoboam's marriage to a cousin, a daughter of a son of David (2 Chr 11.18)
- 3) The rest of Solomon

b. 10 times in Matthew

c. In Luke and Mark

- 1) In Lk, in the genealogy
- 2) Blind Bartimaeus, twice each
- 3) And in Jesus question to the Pharisees

2. The question to the Pharisees (Mt 22.42, Mk 12.35, Lk 20.41)

Matthew 22:42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, *The Son of David.*

Mark 12:35 ¶ And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David?

Luke 20:41 ¶ And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son?

a. The Jews expectation of a Messiah was centered in the idea that he would be a son of David

- 1) There was a Jewish tradition that Solomon, the heir of David, had great powers of healing
- 2) Powers of healing are consistent with the prophecies of the Kingdom

b. The Lord intended to face the Jews with the implications of David's prophecies

- 1) If Messiah is David's son

- 2) How does David call him, Lord
- 3) That is, if David calls his son, 'Lord', then his son is more than his son: he is God

The blind man could see more than those who could not see.

B. The Lord's answer: 'Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.'

1. In our series on Romans, we have been belaboring the description of the human condition
 - a. Do you see yourself in Romans?
 - b. Or are you blind to your need?
2. You cannot be saved unless you see yourself for what you are and see with faith the Son for who he is

Conclusion:

I'd like to close by reading to you from C. H. Spurgeon's autobiography:³

In my conversion, the very point lay in making the discovery that I had nothing to do but to look to Christ, and I should be saved. I believe that I had been a very good, attentive hearer; my own impression about myself was that nobody ever listened much better than I did. For years, as a child, I tried to learn the way of salvation; and either I did not hear it set forth, which I think cannot quite have been the case, or else I was spiritually blind and deaf, and could not see it and could not hear it; but the good news that I was, as a sinner, to look away from myself to Christ, as much startled me, and came as fresh to me, as any news ever heard in my life. Had I never read my Bible? Yes, and read it earnestly. Had I never been taught by Christian people? Yes, I had, by mother, and father, and others. Had I not heard the gospel? Yes, I think I had; and yet, somehow, it was like a new revelation to me that I was to "believe and live." I confess to have been tutored in piety, put into my cradle by prayerful bands, and lulled to sleep by songs concerning Jesus; but after having heard the gospel continually, with line upon line, precept upon precept, here much and there much, yet, when the Word of the Lord came to me with power, it was as new as if I had lived amid the unvisited tribes of Central Africa, and had never heard the tidings of the cleansing fountain filled with blood, drawn from the Saviour's veins.

...

I sometimes think I might have been in darkness and despair until now had it not been for the goodness of God in sending a snowstorm, one Sunday morning, while I was going to a certain place of worship. When I could go no further, I turned down a side street, and came to a little Primitive Methodist Chapel. In that chapel there may have been a dozen or fifteen people. I had heard of the Primitive Methodists, how they sang so loudly that they made people's heads ache; but that did not matter to me. I wanted to know how I might be saved, and if they could tell me that, I did not care how much they made my head ache. The minister did not come that morning; he was snowed up, I suppose. At last, a very thin-looking man, a shoemaker, or tailor, or something of that sort, went up into the pulpit to preach. Now, it is well that preachers should be instructed; but this man was really stupid. He was obliged to stick to his text, for the simple reason that he had little else to say. The text was,—

“LOOK UNTO ME, AND BE YE SAVED, ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.”

He did not even pronounce the words rightly, but that did not matter. There was, I thought, a glimpse of hope for me in that text. The preacher began thus—“My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says, ‘Look.’ Now lookin’ don’t take a deal of pains. It ain’t liftin’ your foot or your finger; it is just, ‘Look.’ Well, a man needn’t go to College to learn to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. A man needn’t be worth a thousand a year to be able to look. Anyone can look; even a child can look. But then the text says, ‘Look unto *Me.*’ Ay!” said he, in broad Essex, “many on ye are lookin’ to yourselves, but it’s no use lookin’ there. You’ll never find any comfort in yourselves. Some look to God the Father. No, look to Him by-and-by. Jesus Christ says, ‘Look unto *Me.*’ Some on ye say, ‘We must wait for the Spirit’s workin’.’ You have no business with that just now. Look to *Christ.* The text says, ‘Look unto *Me.*’ “

Then the good man followed up his text in this way:—“Look unto Me; I am sweatin’ great drops of blood. Look unto Me; I am hangin’ on the cross. Look unto Me; I am dead and buried. Look unto Me; I rise again. Look unto Me; I ascend to Heaven. Look unto Me; I am sittin’ at the Father’s right hand. O poor sinner, look unto Me! look unto Me!

When he had gone to about that length, and managed to spin out ten minutes or so, he was at the end of his tether. Then he looked at me under the gallery, and I daresay, with so few present, he knew me to be a stranger. Just fixing his eyes on me, as if he knew all my heart, he said, "Young man, you look very miserable." Well, I did; but I had not been accustomed to have remarks made from the pulpit on my personal appearance before. However, it was a good blow, struck right home. He continued, "and you always will be miserable—miserable in life, and miserable in death,—if you don't obey my text; but if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved." Then, lifting up his hands, he shouted, as only a Primitive Methodist could do, "Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothin' to do but to look and live." I saw at once the way of salvation. I know not what else he said,—I did not take much notice of it,—I was so possessed with that one thought. Like as when the brazen serpent was lifted up, the people only looked and were healed, so it was with me. I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard that word, "Look!" what a charming word it seemed to me! Oh! I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away. There and then the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; and I could have risen that instant, and sung with the most enthusiastic of them, of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him.

...

On one of the foundation stones of the School-Chapel erected at Bexhill-on-Sea in ever-loving memory of Mr. Spurgeon, the following inscription has been cut, in the hope that passersby may find salvation through reading the passage of Scripture which was blessed to his conversion:—

HOW C.H. SPURGEON FOUND CHRIST.

I looked to Him;

He looked on me;

And we were one for ever."—C. H. S.

Look unto Me, and be ye Saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else."—Isaiah 45:22.

Now, have you truly looked to the Son of David?

- Have you seen there your great need?
- Have you seen there the great blessing of the promised King?
- Have you begged him for mercy?

That is a prayer *always* answered.