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**Message Series: Jesus Set His Face****Message Title: What Do You Want Me to Do for You?****Scripture: Luke 18:31- 43**

As we look forward to celebrating Easter in two weeks, we are journeying with Jesus to Jerusalem, where he will suffer, die, and be raised to new life. Luke 9:51 tells us that when the time came for Jesus to fulfill his mission, “he set his face toward Jerusalem.” From that moment forward, Jesus is on a determined journey. Every step is leading toward the cross.

What is remarkable as we follow Jesus on this journey to Jerusalem in Luke is that along the way, Jesus continued to stop for people. Even though the cross looms before him, Jesus pauses for those in need.

**The Prediction of the Cross (Luke 18:31-34)**

- In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus explicitly foretells his death and suffering three times (9:22, 43-45; 18:31-33). Each prediction becomes more detailed and intense, yet the disciples consistently fail to understand Jesus’ divine destiny to the cross in Jerusalem.
- In Luke 18:31-34, Jesus provides the most detailed account of his suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus explicitly mentions Jerusalem as the geographical location of the culmination of all the prophetic writings about the Son of Man, his most common title for himself.
- Jesus said he would be handed over to the Gentile (the Romans), mocked, treated shamefully, spat upon, flogged, and killed. Jesus also predicted his resurrection three days later.
- In Luke 18:34, we’re told the disciples did not understand the significance of Jesus’ prediction. They were spiritually blind to see who Jesus was and how his destiny was the cross. They walked with Jesus physically, but they still did not clearly see who he was.

**The Blind Beggar in Jericho (Luke 18:35-38)**

- Jericho is about 15 miles northeast of Jerusalem, roughly a full day’s walk. Jesus is in his final stretch on the way to Jerusalem.
- A blind man (named Bartimaeus in Mark 10:47) is sitting, begging on the road. In the ancient world, blindness was more than a medical condition affecting sight. Blindness meant social isolation and economic desperation. With no government programs, no medical insurance, or accessible care, the survival of a blind person depended entirely on the mercy of others.
- Jesus’s entrance to Jericho created a buzz, and the blind man was told that Jesus the Nazarene was passing by. Notice, the crowd identified Jesus by his hometown.
- The blind beggar cried out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.” Son of David is a messianic title associated with 2 Samuel 7, in which the Lord promised that King David’s throne would be secure forever. Notice the irony that a blind man recognized Jesus as the Messiah.

- The blind beggar asks not for money but for mercy. Mercy means not getting what we deserve and receiving compassion instead. The crowd attempts to silence the blind beggar, but he cried out again.
- Jesus heard him and stopped. On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus heard the desperate cry of the blind beggar who recognized his identity. Jesus asked for the man to be brought to him.
- Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" It seems like an obvious question. However, Jesus provides the man voice and choice. Jesus invites the blind beggar to respond with faith, and he responds, "I want to see."
- Jesus healed the man by opening his eyes, and the first face the man sees is Jesus' face. After his healing, the beggar began to follow Jesus. Those who saw the miracle praised the Lord.

Jesus' divine destiny led him to Jerusalem with unshakable resolve so that blind eyes, then and now, would see him as the Messiah. This story speaks to us today in several powerful ways:

**1. We all need mercy.**

- Like the blind beggar, we are all blinded by sin. We can't see ourselves, the world, and God clearly. We are unable to save ourselves. Our only hope is the same cry as the blind beggar, "Son of David, have mercy on me."
- Jesus is full of mercy, and his mercy is displayed on the cross for everyone. Through the cross, sinful humanity does not get what it deserves, but rather receives forgiveness and reconciliation.

**2. Don't let others silence your cry for mercy.**

- The crowd tried to silence the man, and sometimes life does the same thing. Voices around and within us say, "God doesn't care." "You're not good enough." "God can't love you because of what you've done."

**3. Jesus stops and sees you.**

- When we cry for mercy, Jesus stops and sees you. He sees your brokenness and beyond your sin. Jesus, the risen Messiah, sees you as valuable and desires to give you voice and choice.

**4. Jesus asks the same question today.**

- Imagine Jesus asking you this question, "What do you want me to do for you?"
- How would you respond? What would you answer? What brokenness in your life needs healing: spiritual, relational, physical, or emotional? What blindness in your life needs the healing touch of Jesus?

**5. When Jesus opens our eyes, we follow him.**

- The natural response to encountering the mercy of Jesus is to follow him. Discipleship means following Jesus on the road to take up your cross and follow him.

*Bible Reading Challenge*

Throughout this series, we encourage you to read the Gospel of Luke. Perhaps read one chapter a day, or read the Gospel in one sitting, or read it with other people.