

In Luke 9:51 it says that Jesus "set His face toward Jerusalem." The cross moved Him in that direction. Jesus had said that He did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many (Mk. 10:45). From the very beginning He was declared to be the one who would save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21) by offering the perfect sacrifice for sin that would satisfy the wrath of God (Jn. 1:29).

18:31 Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished.

18:32 "For He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon,

18:33 and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again."

18:34 But the disciples understood none of these things, and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

As Jesus and His disciples approached Jerusalem, He reminded them of what was about to take place. He was going to suffer and be killed. This was not the first time He had spoken of His death. In Luke 5:34 He alluded to it in the imagery of a bridegroom that was going to be taken away. Then, in Luke 12:50, He referred to His sufferings and death as "a baptism" He needed to undergo. Jesus made it clear that He was going to give up His life in Jerusalem in Luke 13:33. He said, "I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem." And in Luke 17:25 He said, "the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation." In addition to these subtle references, Jesus made three specific predictions of His own death. In Luke 9:22 He said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised up on the third day." Then later in the same chapter He said, "Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men" (Lk. 9:44). Now in Luke 18:31-33, for the third time, He clearly and unambiguously spoke of His death.

It was critical that everybody knew that what was about to happen in Jerusalem was not an accident or unexpected. Jesus told the disciples that He must go up to Jerusalem to fulfill Scripture (see Isa. 53; Zech. 12:10; 13:7). He would be handed over, mocked, mistreated, spit upon, and killed, but He would rise again on the third day (v. 33).

The disciples weren't stupid. They were very aware that during the many months of ministering in Judea, the leadership of Israel had become more and more hateful and hostile toward Christ. Mark writes in his parallel account that as they were on the road going up to Jerusalem they "were fearful" (Mk. 10:32). They were fearful because they understood that Jesus would be walking right into the arms of His enemies. Jesus knew their fears. He knew they didn't understand that God would allow the Messiah to be crucified. Nevertheless, they needed to be told that these things were planned. They would become His ambassadors, the first to proclaim the gospel after Him. They needed to see that the cross is the center of absolutely everything, that Jesus is the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world, the Lamb who fulfilled the OT prophecies.

Earlier when Jesus told them that He would be delivered over to men it says the disciples “did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement” (Lk. 9:45). Even now, as they were approaching the city it states three times in verse 34 that the disciples did not understand what was being said. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:23, “we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block.” What is true of the Jews in general was true of the disciples in particular; the cross was a stumbling block. Although Jesus’ words were intelligible, they had no category for a crucified messiah. They were looking for a messianic king and a messianic kingdom. They expected a coronation, not a crucifixion; a Messiah who killed His enemies, not a Messiah who was killed by His own people. “The idea of a crucified Messiah was an absurdity. It was ridiculous to the point where they couldn't even comprehend it” (MacArthur).

It was not until after the resurrection they would finally understand (Lk. 23:32, 45-48; Jn. 2:22).

18:35 As Jesus was approaching Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the road begging.

18:36 Now hearing a crowd going by, he began to inquire what this was.

18:37 They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

Jericho is just north of the Dead Sea about six miles west of the Jordan River. It was on a major highway eighteen miles from Jerusalem (Bock, 1505). This miracle and the transformation of Zacchaeus that follows (19:1-10) are strategically placed together by Luke; together, the two stories demonstrate the nature of salvation and the model response to salvation: those who cry for mercy receive it; those who are saved respond in praise, joy, and generous service.

The timeframe is nearing the celebration of Passover, so the roads were crowded with multitudes of Jews making their way toward Jerusalem to celebrate. The story begins with a blind man who hears a commotion different than the normal flow of constant pilgrims, and inquires as to what is happening. He is told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

18:38 And he called out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

18:39 Those who led the way were sternly telling him to be quiet; but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

The blind man knew that a unique opportunity was before him. No medicine could heal blindness, but he had heard of Christ’s power to heal. Although he could not see physically, ironically, he “saw” Jesus more clearly than the crowd did. In the popular perception, Jesus was a man from a town named Nazareth; the blind man perceived he was the Son of David, the Messiah. This is the first time in the book of Luke that anyone calls Jesus the “Son of David.” The title comes from 2 Samuel 7:12 -14, where God promises that David would have a greater Son who would reign over an everlasting kingdom. When Gabriel went to Mary he told her who the child that she would bear would be: “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end” (Lk. 1:32-33). Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, said, “God has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David, His servant” (Lk. 1:69).

As the man called out, the people tried to stop him as the disciples had tried to stop the children from approaching Jesus earlier (18:15 ff.). He was a nobody, an outcast, someone to be avoided and ignored; but the man could not be silenced. He was desperate; Jesus was the only hope he had to regain his sight.

18:40 And Jesus stopped and commanded that he be brought to Him; and when he came near, He questioned him,

18:41 "What do you want Me to do for you?" And he said, "Lord, I want to regain my sight!"

18:42 And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well."

18:43 Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw it, they gave praise to God.

Even as Jesus walked toward His own horrific suffering and death, He was not despondent or self-absorbed. He always had time for people, and He was always compassionate toward those in need.

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus quoted from Isaiah and declared, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and *recovering of sight to the blind*, to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Lk. 4:18). This last miracle was the final demonstration that He was who He declared Himself to be.

In verse 42, Jesus stated that the man's faith had made him well. This does not mean that the man's faith created the cure, but that faith was the means by which he received it (Morris, 296). He had faith that Jesus was the Son of David and was able to cure him if He so desired.

Although the Greek verb, *sozo*; σωζω, translated "made you well," is clearly a reference to physical healing in this context, it is hard not to notice that the same verb in Greek is commonly translated as "saved." "Your faith has saved you." Anyone who read Greek could not miss the word choice. The man was healed, but light had also come where once there was darkness. In the story that follows, light will dawn again, bringing salvation to Zacchaeus and his household (19:9). In that story Jesus says, "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save (*sozo*; σωζω) that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10).

As a result of the healing, the beggar glorified God - a mark of the saved in the Book of Luke.

The miracle functions in a number of different ways relative to the stories that surround it.

1. The healing was so obviously miraculous that "when all the people saw it, they gave praise to God." This was the beginning of the mounting praise that would burst forth at the triumphal entry when Jesus walked through the gate of the city of Jerusalem.
2. The blind man's spiritual sight stands out among the others who could not see.
 - a. The disciples were unable to "see" what Jesus meant in 18: 31-34.
 - b. The crowd was unable to see who Jesus was. They saw Him as a man from Nazareth.
 - c. The rich young ruler (18:18-30) had everything materially, but was blind spiritually. He rejected Christ, remained as he was, and did not receive eternal life; the beggar had nothing, but trusted Christ, received his sight, and gained eternal life.

This deliberate progress toward Jerusalem continues to be evident in Luke 19.

Luke 19:11: "He was near Jerusalem."

Luke 19:29-44 records the events on Sunday - the day of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Luke 19:28: "He was going on ahead, ascending to Jerusalem."

Luke 19:41: "When He approached, He saw the city and wept over it."

Luke 19:45-48 was Jesus' second cleansing of the Temple which occurred on Monday.

Luke 19: 45: "He entered the temple."

Jesus would be crucified on Friday of the same week. The parable in Luke 19:11-27 was probably given within a week of Jesus' crucifixion.

The disciples had been waiting for Jesus to set up His kingdom; however, since Jesus was going to be killed, it was necessary to talk about His departure. He did this by means of a parable.