

Focus Text

"And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, "See that no one knows about it." But they went away and spread his fame through all that district. As they were going away, behold, a demon-oppressed man who was mute was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the mute man spoke. And the crowds marveled, saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the prince of demons." **(Matthew 9:27–34, ESV)**

1. Seeking the Savior's Sight

"And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." **(Matthew 9:27–28, ESV)**

As Jesus is leaving Capernaum, there is a bit of hilarity that two men who can't see are following Jesus. They are following the noise of the crowd that is walking with Jesus. This reminds us that Jesus isn't walking in some quiet back alley but is surrounded by a crowd. Matthew reminds us of Jesus' Davidic lineage, which confirms again that Jesus is being marked as the Messiah to save God's people from their sins. When Jesus enters a house, maybe His own, or another 's, the men follow Jesus inside. Jesus then asks a question: do they believe that Jesus can have mercy on them, meaning to forgive them of their sins and to heal their infirmities. The blind men address Jesus as Lord and confirm that they believe in His ability to forgive them their sins and to heal them of their blindness. As the New American Commentary points out, the irony here is that Gentiles (spiritually blind) and physically blind people seem to see who Jesus is while the religious elites seem to miss it entirely.

"The prospect of God's mercy is one of the blessings announced in the Beatitudes. Against the background of Jesus' connection with the kingdom whose coming he announces, these blind people seek mercy in a concrete form related to their condition."¹

"It is interesting, though, that in Matthew such recognition comes primarily from blind people and Gentiles (viewed by many as spiritually blind).⁷² Matthew's twin themes of Jesus' rejection by official Judaism and acceptance by outcasts (see comments under 2:1-12) reappear here and set the stage for an increasing polarization of response to Christ."²

2. Faith's Fulfilling Focus

"Then he touched their eyes, saying, 'According to your faith be it done to you.' And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, 'See that no one knows about it.' But they went away and spread his fame through all that district." **(Matthew 9:29-31, ESV)**

Jesus touched their eyes and they could see. This is both a physical and a metaphorical restoration of sight. They can see the physical world and the King of Kings! Jesus makes a stern warning to them not to speak of this miracle. The verb here is like a horse snorting! Mark talks about this in the first chapter, and once this world is out, people are going to mob Jesus. The men are so overjoyed at receiving both sight and forgiveness that they ignore Jesus's warning and tell everyone about Him and His power. This is the irony in the text, they both make Jesus known and ignore His direct command! Theologically, we don't know what happened to these men in glory, but one thing is true: their zeal outpaced their restraint.

The challenge for the Christian is to understand that your zeal is tremendous, but if it outpaces the fruit of the Holy Spirit, it can still be messy and damaging. This is why we want you to have a cornerman who walks with you, matching your zeal and maturity. As we leave this home, two things are true: Jesus is about to be mobbed by the throngs of people swarming to Him, and these men have been made whole in the Kingdom of God!

¹ Nolland, John. 2005. *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

² 72 See esp. J. M. Gibbs, "Purpose and Pattern in Matthew's Use of the Title 'Son of David,'" *NTS* 10 (1963-64): 446-64.

Blomberg, Craig. 1992. *Matthew*. Vol. 22. *The New American Commentary*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

“The verb is used of horses snorting (Æsch. Theb. 461), of men fretting or being downcast (Luc. Nec. 20), or being angry (Dn 11:30 LXX.). It occurs twice in Mk., 1:43, 14:5, where Mt. both times omits it. In Mt. it occurs only here. It is found twice in a different sense in Jn 11:33, 38, followed by τῷ πνεύματι or ἐν ἑαυτῷ. Here, as in Mk 1:43, it presumably means “to command with emphasis.”¹”³

“But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.” (Mark 1:45, ESV)

3. Confronting Spiritual Challenges

“As they were going away, behold, a demon-oppressed man who was mute was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the mute man spoke. And the crowds marveled, saying, “Never was anything like this seen in Israel.” But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the prince of demons.” **(Matthew 9:32–34, ESV)**

The next patient to see the Great Physician is a man who cannot speak. We aren’t given much beyond the fact that this is caused by the demonic and that the man is healed, as evidenced by his ability to speak. Jesus’ fame is growing, as the crowd proclaims that nothing in all of Israel has been seen like this before. We can conclude that the crowd is marveling at the compendium of Jesus’ incredible works, not solely at this single miracle. Jesus has been working tirelessly to demonstrate the coming of the Kingdom of God, and now people are starting to be convinced that Jesus is no normal Rabbi and that maybe He really is the Messiah who has come to earth to save people from their sins. Even today, some people are curious and open to hearing about Jesus. As they see the darkness of a world where the light of Christ is fading, they want to know if the Great Physician is still available. Yes! He is!

³ Æsch. Æschylus.

Luc. Lucian.

LXX. The Septuagint Version.

¹ See Abbott, Johannine Vocabulary, 1811, “Gk. usage seems to demand some such rendering as ‘roar.’ ”

Allen, Willoughby C. 1907. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to S. Matthew. International Critical Commentary. New York: C. Scribner’s Sons.

Sadly, as the crowds praise Jesus for His supernatural work and His mercy toward these three people, the Pharisees see something else. An upstart who has come to topple their systems that have made them comfortable and powerful. Ignoring the blessings Jesus has offered, the Pharisees seek to find an answer to His power. Their conclusion is in the demonic. Jesus can cast out demons because He is one in their eyes. This marks the second group of people we can still find today. People who can't stand to think that life is out of their control and that the world around them may be a small part in a much grander and more expansive universe. Those who reject the spiritual realms and the King of Kings as only myth and superstition. They must find any other reason possible to make sense of the Divine and the spiritual world. It wouldn't matter what your persuasive argument is; they will never believe in the King of Kings.

“As far as the Pharisees are concerned, the most obvious feature about Jesus to emerge thus far is his disturbance of the religious status quo in a manner that placed in question the adequacy of Pharisaic religious life.²³² When the present accusation is repeated in 12:24, the specific juxtaposition of ‘ruler of the demons’ and ‘casts out demons’ will make possible a *reductio ad absurdum* rejoinder (see there).”⁴

Application

This week, speak to your cornerman about the ways Jesus has healed you and revealed Himself to you.

Also, challenge yourself this week to pray with someone as a way of sharing Jesus with them!

⁴ 232 See Mt. 5:20; 9:(3), 11, 14.

Nolland, John. 2005. *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.