

**Reading:** Matthew 9:27-34

**Theme:** Clues to who Jesus is.

Who was he? Your first clue is that he could be contacted at 221B Baker St. Sherlock Holmes, the fictional great detective and he was portrayed as having a true detective's mind and could spot clues that would be overlooked by the ordinary policeman or detective. Agatha Christie wrote mystery novels and gave clues throughout each novel as to "*whodunnit*", but the readers had to be alert to the evidence to be able work out who committed the crime, how they did it and why they did it.

In contrast to those writings, the miracles of the Lord Jesus are not secrets hidden away that we are to try to make sense of, but are open clues. John uses a word meaning "sign" for miracles - a street or shop sign or direction sign. These miracles show us the power of Jesus and point us to who He really is. Sadly, people can ignore the evidence, the facts, the signs and follow their own short-sighted biases and may end up ignoring who Jesus really is and reject Him as of little worth and even class Him as evil and undesirable!

This morning in v27-34 we will look at Jesus' healing of 3 men and the adverse reaction it produced in the hierarchy of His day. The 2 miracles and this reaction will form the basis for looking at this passage:

### **1. The Blind Behold.**

Jesus is on His way from Jairus's home after raising Jairus's daughter from the dead. As He goes on His way, 2 blind men follow Him and cry out "*Have mercy on us, Son of David!*" We do not know who these men were or their backgrounds. They may have been a father and son, may have been brothers, or merely 'brothers' in affliction. We know they were blind and were in a pitiable condition. Yet we learn something about them - they were ready and able listeners. They had listened to what people had been talking about

and had heard of Jesus - all He had been doing and teaching. They also heard the excited crowd coming and passing, so probably they followed the crowd, especially when they heard it was with Jesus. It is likely that a crowd was still with Jesus from Jairus's house and accompanied Him as He went on His way.

Yet they were not only listeners, but were those who considered what they heard. As they did so, they began to realise that Jesus was no ordinary man; was not a great teacher or a miracle worker alone, but He was someone more important - He was the Messiah, the Anointed One from God. We are to remember that the Jews had long expected the Messiah and by NT times, they expected a great king to come and free them from Roman occupation and rule. Through the years the term Messiah or Anointed One and Son of David came to mean the same thing and spoke of this special One sent by God.

It is almost amusing to realise these 2 blind men saw more than others - even before their blindness was removed! They 'saw' and recognised Jesus was the Son of David and He would be able to deal with their blindness - they would have known OT promises and they put Psalm 146:8a *"the LORD gives sight to the blind,"* with Isaiah 35:5-6 *"Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy."* These blind men saw, realised and understood the one they'd heard about was the Messiah, the Son of David.

These men, when they realise Jesus was close by, began to shout continually, to holler, to cry out for Him to have mercy on them. They realise their need could only be met by Jesus and so they call out to Him and Him alone for mercy - for His unearned help and kindness.

Last week we saw some of the pictures true of all people - being dead to God and we could do nothing about it - just as Jairus could not do

anything about his dead daughter. Also, we noticed there is a disease affecting all of us that makes us offensive and separated from God - the 'disease' of sin was pictured by the blood problem the woman had, which cut her off from religious life and from the every-day life of society. Now another Bible picture of all people shows we all have blindness - we are blind to God, to the things of God, blind to who Jesus really is and blind to our need of Him. We are so blind, we cannot see God and His claims from the Bible, neither can we see and appreciate the wonder of God in His wonderful Creation around us.

That is why we need to hear of God and Jesus. The Bible says that faith comes by hearing of the word of God (Romans 10:17). This why we as a church stress the importance of preaching, also reading God's word for ourselves. Doing so makes us wise to salvation, brings us to faith and helps us go on in our Christian life as we live that faith out. These men heard of Jesus and had a faith and trust in Him as the Messiah who would have mercy on them.

As you begin to understand of Jesus, who He is, then you can also ask Him in prayer *"Have mercy on me, Son of David!"* This is not to be done glibly or lightly, but in a serious way, a desperate way, a genuine way. These 2 blind men knew they could only ask Jesus and they were desperate, serious and genuine. Yet, it seemed as if they were not heard, or were even ignored! We know that Jesus was not cruelly or mockingly ignoring them, but was causing their cries to be more and more intense - for He was testing their genuineness. You may be wanting to believe, follow the Lord Jesus for various reasons and yet nothing seems to happen; your prayers may seem to be useless, unheard or even ignored. Can I assure you they are not useless, unheard or ignored! The fact you realise your need is already proof that God is drawing you to Himself and the Son of David (Jesus) will have mercy on you, but He knows when to do so! *Story of butterfly emerging from cocoon, little boy cut silk thread and it*

*cannot fly*. The Lord Jesus not only wants to save you, but wants you to fully realise and appreciate the wonder of your salvation and it is not just a case of easy believism, making an easy choice as it may seem it is easy come and therefore easy go and it is considered valueless.

These blind men did not give up, but went to Jesus and He Jesus questions them in v28 about if they really believed He could do such. They own that they really believed He could heal their blindness. Humanly speaking they knew they had no choice, but they ‘*saw*’ that Jesus was more than human and if He is God in a real body, then He who designed and made eyes would have the power and ability to give them sight.

We are to see in Jesus the only One to cure our spiritual blindness and realise that unless we recognise Him as that One, we will not go to Him. If we recognise and see Jesus can remove this spiritual blindness, then we are to go and tell Him so, ask and call on Him to help us see Christian things clearly.

Jesus owns their faith and heals them. His words in v29 do not mean that they generated enough faith to be healed, but that a cure was granted because they had faith in Jesus alone, that He could do such. Jesus often healed with no mention of people’s faith, but here their faith in Him was great and they asked great things believing, and so they were granted a gracious answer in line with their faith. They honoured Him with such faith and He blessed them with their blindness being removed.

If we honour Christ by owning that only He can deal with our spiritual blindness, meet our spiritual needs, then He will not disappoint us. No one has ever been disappointed by Jesus if they genuinely and seriously sought Him. Jeremiah 29:13-14 gives a promise from God to serious seekers “*You will seek me and find me*

*when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD..."*

These men were healed and yet were told to keep the matter quiet, so as not to stir up excitement, or give people wrong ideas or encouraged their wrong ideas of Jesus as a political Messiah (*which did happen*). These men did not listen, but they spread the news everywhere (v31)!

Thankfully we have no such command to keep the news of Jesus and all He has done for us quiet. We have the opposite command - we are to be those who go and tell of Jesus and, as we will see next time, Jesus wants more workers to go into the harvest fields (v37-38). We are not to keep the good news of our Saviour and all He's done for us quiet, but are to spread it all around and tell what God has done for us and that He can do it for others.

## **2. The Silent Speak.**

Some people bring a mute man to Jesus. Matthew tells us that this man could not talk because he was possessed by a demon. Demon possession does not mean all possessed ones are mute - the 2 Gadarenes were demon possessed and could speak, but their minds and behaviour were affected. It certainly does not mean that all who are mute, cannot speak are demon possessed! There is a danger, which some fall into, of ascribing all sickness or mental problems to demons.

The NT writers did not do such and they distinguished between demon possession and medical problems e.g. epileptics and demon possession in Matthew 4:24. This case, and other cases in NT are identified as demon possession and were extreme cases of such, in which the possession by the demons produced physical effects. We must be careful in helping people that we do not ascribe spiritual causes to physical effects and also vice versa. Some people speak in

terms of a spiritual oppression causing spiritual depression, when they are overtired, stressed and physically rundown. As Christians, we need to realise there is close connection between our bodies, our mental well-being and even our spiritual vigour.

This man here was possessed and it caused him a serious handicap - unable to speak. He is brought to Jesus and Jesus drove the demon out and the mute man spoke and no doubt declared God's goodness and mercy towards Him. For this demon to be driven out meant it was driven out by one who was far more powerful than it.

This miracle points to Jesus being more powerful than the forces of evil. Yet it does not give us the full picture, for we may imagine Jesus is just a little bit more powerful. Yet the Bible declares that He is God Almighty - God in human form with all the power of God at His disposal. We are told that Jesus was the active agent in Creation. He who gave light at Creation's dawn, was the One who allowed light into the blind men's lives. He who cast out demons, was the one who cast them out of heaven when they as angels rebelled and went against God. He was not limited in any way in His power when He added humanity to His deity.

It is this same almighty Saviour who we needed to come to save us from the control and bondage of sin and Satan in our lives. We may feel we are freethinkers, free spirits, but the Bible shows us we are in bondage to the Devil's control and sin's power in and over us, that we are influenced to go their ways and our wills are in their control. Going to Christ as our Saviour liberates us from slavery to sin and Satan and we become God's free children.

This miracle here, on top of, in addition to all the others we have looked at recently, caused the people to marvel - the crowd was amazed and said "*Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.*" (v33b) They were not saying God had never done glorious miracles

previously in Israel's history, but that these miracles they saw were numerous, glorious, staggering and amazing. I wonder if some in the crowd began to see and to recognise that these were signs, clues as to who it was who was among them and doing such things!

The crowds marvelled and were amazed. Do we marvel at Jesus and all He did? Do we marvel at what He offers to do for us today in and through the gospel? We should! If we don't, we could find ourselves ignoring Him, even speaking out against Him as did the Pharisees. Now we see:

### **3. The Religious Rejection.**

The Pharisees were very, very, very religious! They knew their OT inside out and added a whole list of other dos and don'ts that they worked out was the right way to live out what they read in OT. Yet these ones, with all these miracles, the signs and clues as to who Jesus was, rejected the evidence and accuse the Son of God of being in league with the devil himself!

It seems unbelievable that the Messiah, the very Messiah they looked for, longed for and expected, should come among them and because He didn't fit their little theories and ideas, they not only rejected Him, but slandered Him. Even though they knew the OT Scriptures, they had Him crucified, executed and done away with. At this point their hatred and rejection begins to show as they accuse the holy Son of God of being a partner with the evil devil.

The ordinary people were amazed and we assume they, like on another occasions, praise God. The Pharisees in contrast, blaspheme and curse the Son of God to His face. What would we have done? More to the point what are we doing at this moment in time? I pray we would not be so openly foolish to go against Jesus and would never do so in our attitude, but we can be content with being religious, a churchgoer, a moral and nice person, even a young

person who has been brought up in a Christian home and yet neglect or reject Jesus for our lives. In so doing we say in effect “*We don’t need you, your salvation, your power. We can do fine as we are!*” We may not openly blaspheme God in Christ, but in reality, we are saying “*Christ is worthless*”! We then are joining in with those who said such things along with the Pharisees, with those who clamoured for His crucifixion! Perhaps we have not considered that our stubbornly refusing to believe in Jesus in such dramatic terms; but what else is it!?

I urge you not to remain like that, but to call on Jesus to have mercy on you, even cause you to see your need of Him. Then call on Him to meet your need, to release you from Satan and sin’s bondage. Don’t neglect and so reject such this amazing Saviour Jesus. I urge you to take Him as your Saviour - which it is a most wonderful and amazing thing - it is described as born-again, born anew of God. I ask you, call on you not to neglect or reject Him, but accept such a glorious Saviour. When we do so, an even more amazing thing will happen, in that He will have mercy on you, accept you and make you His child for ever and one day welcome you to His home in heaven.