

CALMING THE STORM

Date: March 21, 2020

Scripture: Matthew 9:27-31

Good morning! My name is Justin Ireland, I'm on our Mandarin campus team. This Lent season we are working through some of the miracles that Jesus shared with us across the gospel accounts. We are looking at how each of these miracles points us to the greatest of all the miracles, which is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The miracle we are focused on today is found in Matthew 9:27-31, which highlights the faith of two blind men.

²⁷ And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." ²⁸ 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." ²⁹ Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." ³⁰ And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, "See that no one knows about it." ³¹ But they went away and spread his fame through all that district.

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What miracle do we see from this encounter? We see blind men whose practiced and professed faith in Jesus as Messiah, as Savior, stirs Jesus to restore sight; the ultimate miracle being the power of a solidified faith in Jesus and proclamation of a God that engages His people in their need.

We see Jesus moving from one place of performing miracles onto the next. Miracle after miracle and in this moment, we find two men, blind, yet following Jesus. We could ascertain that the commotion around Jesus had carried on from one miracle to

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the next and only by listening to the people it was easier for these blind men to find Jesus. They couldn't see Jesus nor Jesus's miracles of others, so they believed based on the testimony of others, literally a blind faith. Without knowing their distance from Him or His exact location, in their desperation they are crying out to Him to be heard, to be found, to be engaged, to be healed. So desperate in fact, they followed Him into the house where He was staying.

They address Him, "Son of David." The importance of His title here is their recognition of Him as the Messiah, the Savior. Based on prophecy they understood and believed that the Messiah would come from the line of David, so in their faith they addressed Him as such. Additionally, in Psalms 146 and in Isaiah chapters 35 & 42, prophets foretold that Jesus would open the eyes of the blind. Though they were more than likely referencing the spiritual blindness, the people took this to mean He would heal physical blindness. In this moment, Jesus utilized healing physical blindness to address the spiritual blindness. God often uses our finite understanding to communicate, explain or address His infinite desires for us, His children.

Once away from the crowds, inside a home, Jesus engages these individuals with intentionality. As He often does, Jesus engages them beginning with a question, "Do you believe?" More than "just heal me" Jesus wanted the two men to verbally affirm their belief in Him, not because He needed it, but for their own faith proclamation and testimony to others that by their faith Jesus would act. So, He touches their eyes and they were healed. Then immediately Jesus tells them not to tell anyone. But why, why would He do this?

Jesus spent much of His time healing and addressing the needs of His people, but His presence was not the role of 'miracle wonder-worker.' He didn't want to throw the

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people into confusion of what His primary mission was. His presence was to address the spiritual health of His neighbors, those He encountered on His journey. He made much of the power of their faith in God alone and ultimately to make much of His Father. But their lives just changed, how could they not talk about it?

Men that had been blind their entire lives with no hope of a medical intervention had just received a true God miracle. They couldn't help themselves! Can you imagine the life change they just experienced? Because of their faith encounter with Jesus they have just begun perceiving their entire lives in a completely new way. In an instant everything was new again. When you encounter life-change of that magnitude you can't help, but express excitement. Even if they had been able to contain their excitement, someone was going to pick up on the change. Someone was going to recognize that all of a sudden these men who spent their entire lives blind were now able to see. The questions would surely come in rapid fire. What in the world happened? Their physical lives were undeniable evidence of their faith in Jesus and His role as great physician. They literally encountered Jesus, demonstrated bold faith and now everything had changed.

That's exactly how it should look when our spiritual eyes are touched by Jesus and suddenly we can see. Our eyes suddenly opened to a completely new world, a new way of life, a life lavished in love and grace and freedom in Christ. So joyous of the hope we have found that even if we could contain our excitement, the evidence of life change would be so great that people are going to notice.

Do you live like that? After connecting with you, can people tell there is something very different about the way you talk, the way you live, the joy that you have, the way that you love others? That life change is exactly what God gave us when He

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offered His Son as a sacrifice for the penalty of our sins. He gave us completely new life that simply can't be, nor should it be, denied or hidden. Live as formerly blind men that have received a whole new perception of life and freedom.

Let's pray.

God, thank You for opening our eyes to Your love and forgiveness. Please forgive us when our lives aren't undeniable evidence of the new life You've given us. And God, I pray that we will be so overwhelmed by Your love that we can't help but make much of You. That our lives will be evidence of our encounter with You. In these things we ask. Amen.