

Best Seen Through Eyes of Faith — Delivery Transcript

Matthew 9:27–31 (CSB) • Wes Terry • Sunday, October 11, 2026 • *What Man Is This?*

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Well, thanks to the team for leading us in worship. If you've got a Bible, we're going to be in Matthew chapter 9. If you don't have a Bible, there should be one on the chair in front of you — you can just grab that Bible underneath there. If you're new to Broadview, we're going through a series where we're exploring the life of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, trying to answer one specific question: **What man is this?** We've been looking at a series of encounters Jesus has with individuals after his big, famous sermon called the Sermon on the Mount.

And one of the things we're going to see in this text — something you've probably noticed in your own life — is that sometimes you can be really close to something, and it's *because* you're too close that you don't actually notice what's really there. I've seen this dynamic in a lot of different areas of life. One of them is the smell in people's houses. I don't know if you've ever noticed that other people's houses smell different than your house. Not always bad — sometimes bad, but not always bad. It's just a smell. Your grandma's house has a smell. Your boyfriend's house might have a smell. Whatever house you go to, you just kind of smell something different. But when you go to your house, you don't smell your smell. You've got to ask someone who comes to your house, and they'll tell you what the smell is.

And it's not just with things like that, although that's probably the easiest example. I think of when I was in college writing papers. I could proofread my paper ten times, then give it to someone else, and they'd find like a hundred typos. And I'm like, "Whoa, how did you find those? How come I couldn't see them?" But that's just part of human nature. When you read the paper you wrote, there are things you're assuming are there. And even though they aren't

there, because you think they're going to be there, you don't notice their absence. You've got to have fresh eyes — someone who hasn't looked at it before — to catch the typos.

And it's true in so many arenas of life — from smells, to typos, to the ugly painting in your hallway that everyone else knows needs to go. It's from the 1930s, but you think it's so great. Actually, you don't think anything. You don't even know it's there. You just keep passing by it without being aware of it.

This is a dynamic called **inattentional blindness**. It's an actual human phenomenon. One of the ways they verified it is with a study done at Harvard¹ — there's a video of it playing right behind me. They asked a group of fifty or so to keep watch as a ball got passed between six people, and they wanted to know how many times the ball got passed. They watched and watched and watched. By the time the study was over, they asked how many passes there were — something like fifteen. And then they asked, "How many of you saw the big gorilla right in the middle, beating its chest?" And a good majority of the people watching never saw the gorilla. How many of you saw the gorilla? A little easier to see when you're not trying to count the passes. But most of them never did see it.

This video right here is of a world-famous violinist who, three days prior to this hallway performance, had sold out Boston's Symphony Hall² and made hundreds of thousands of dollars. Three days later he goes to this hotel — not a hotel, the L'Enfant Plaza Metro station in Washington, D.C.,³ plays there for about 43 minutes,⁴ and gets a total of \$32 in tips. About seven people stopped to listen to him play. They had no idea, because they were so accustomed to that workday — they'd just go in and do their thing. They didn't anticipate greatness being where it was. They didn't have eyes to see it when it was standing right in front of them. Inattentional blindness.

And it's a human phenomenon that doesn't just happen in relationships and in your house. It happens in your spiritual life as well. It's something we've seen in Matthew's Gospel as we've made our way through it line by line: people who should have had eyes to see, not seeing — and people who should not have had eyes to see, seeing. **You can be really close to something and not see what's there.**

And I can testify to that in my own spiritual life as someone who grew up in the church. My mom and dad — good Christian people — raised me to know the Lord, raised me in the things of God, in the fear and instruction of the Lord, as they should have done. And as a result of that familiarity, I became blind to its glory. There was a good season of my life where I ran from the Lord because of my inability to see. The gospel was not something precious to me. Christ was not glorious to me, because I had become so accustomed to it, so close to it, that I failed to see the greatness of what was really there.

And maybe your experience, if you grew up in the church, was something similar. It's not enough, in other words, to know all the right answers. It's not enough to be close to God. In fact, sometimes it's through closeness that blindness can materialize in your life. It's not enough just to be close. It's a question of what kind of eyes. With what kind of eyes do you see when you look at the Lord? **It's not enough to be close to Jesus if you're looking at him with the wrong kind of eyes.**

In Matthew's Gospel, like I said, we've seen this dynamic. The religious leaders — the scribes and the Pharisees — who should have known the truth, when the Messiah stood in their midst, not only didn't see him, they actively rejected him. And then it was the so-called blind people — the marginalized, the outcasts. In Matthew 8 it was the leper. It was the Roman centurion, a pagan Gentile, who looked at Jesus and recognized his authority. It was the paralytic. It was the woman with the bleeding problem, who was ostracized from temple worship, cut off from spiritual things — and yet she was the one who had eyes to see.

Jesus is best seen through certain eyes. And the eyes you need, if you want to see Jesus, are the eyes of faith. **Jesus is best seen through eyes of faith.** That's what we're going to see this morning. It's what we saw last week. It's what we'll see next week, as we address this final triad of miracles.

If you're a student of the Gospel of Matthew, it's brilliantly constructed. After the Sermon on the Mount you have nine different encounters — three sets of three — and each triad makes a different point. After each triad, or before each triad, there's a little lesson on discipleship. And this triad we're in is all about eyes of faith. It's about people who rightly answered the question, *What man is this?* And the people who rightly answered that question were not the religious leaders, not the people who should have seen, but the people who had eyes of faith. We saw a synagogue leader who had a daughter who had died, and he was powerless to help her. He comes to Jesus and sees with faith, and as a result, Jesus responds. We saw a woman who'd had a bleeding problem for twelve years, alienated from temple worship; she had eyes of faith and reached out and touched the hem of his garment. And today we're going to see two literal blind men — people who could not see with their eyes — and yet they see more clearly than almost anyone else on the question, *What man is this?*

The text

So with that said, let's pick it up in Matthew chapter 9, starting in verse 27. Jesus, of course, had just raised this young girl who was dead back to life, and the news spread throughout that whole area. Verse 27:

As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" (Matthew 9:27)

"Crying out" is a present-tense verb, so it's this idea of continual calling out. They're screaming at the top of their lungs: "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" They're the first people in Matthew's Gospel to use this designation, *Son of David*, which is itself significant. And they won't stop — and yet Jesus doesn't even respond. Notice verse 28:

When he entered the house, the blind men approached him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I can do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes, saying, "Let it be done for you according to your faith." And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus warned them sternly, "Be sure that no one finds out." But they went out and spread the news about him throughout that whole area. (Matthew 9:28–31)

He doesn't speak to them. He doesn't turn and acknowledge them. He just keeps on walking to the house. It's only after they get into the house that Jesus says, "Do you believe that I can do this?"

When you're reading the Bible, especially passages like this, you want to ask: *What reason does Matthew have for putting this passage here?* Pay attention to the context — what comes before, what comes after. And the main point of this stretch we've been reading is the role of faith in being able to see — in answering rightly the question, *What man is this?* The irony is that Matthew uses two people who could not see to say they see better than anyone else who could. They see better because they see with eyes of faith. So ask yourself: *What can we learn from these blind men about faith that can see?*

But they're not just a positive example of the kind of faith that seeks the Lord. They're also a negative example. Jesus gives them one command, and he gives it strongly. The word translated "warned sternly" is the word for when a horse snorts. Have you ever heard a horse snort? It'll get your attention. It might make you pee your pants a little bit if you're not paying attention. He warns them strongly: *Don't tell anyone*. And right after he says it, they go out and do the opposite.

So in some ways they're a positive example of the kind of faith that sees truly, and in other ways their faith was not sufficient. It wasn't *following* faith, because they weren't willing to submit to the will of God. So I want us to spend some time thinking about faith through the lens of these two men and learn what Matthew wants us to learn, both positively and negatively.

And the thing about faith — whether you're a Christian or not a Christian — is that it works the same way. I think there's so much misunderstanding about faith in our context as Western Americans. A lot of people think of faith as an emotional sentiment, a commitment to believe something in spite of the evidence. The way the Bible talks about faith is completely different. And until we understand faith the way the Bible describes it, we're never going to walk by faith as we need to as Christian people.

1. Faith is where you start

The first thing Matthew shows us is two blind men who hear Jesus coming down the road, and as soon as they recognize it's Jesus, what do they do? They turn and they *follow* — the same word Matthew's been using again and again, the verb of discipleship. And they're following Jesus as blind men, which I imagine was not easy to do. They can't see where he's going. They can't see what he looks like. They can probably hear the crowd, maybe hear Jesus saying what he's saying, and they're feeling their way forward.

What they demonstrate in their commitment to follow Jesus — even though Jesus never responds, and even though they don't have eyes to see — is something really important about faith: **Faith is not where you end up on your quest to know about God. Faith is where you start.** It's your starting place in the Christian life.

This is where so many people get it wrong. They think of faith as where you land: "I've got questions about God, so I'm going to answer all my questions, and when I get them all answered, then I can have faith." The reality is, faith is your starting place, not your finish line. It's the things you assume to be true about the world even though you may not be able to prove them. Sometimes we call these our foundational assumptions. And that's true whether you're a Christian, atheist, agnostic, Buddhist — all across the board.

If I were to ask you, "How do you know you exist right now? How do you know you're a real person and not a brain in a vat in an alien spaceship? How do you know you're not in the Matrix?" — you'd say, "I just know." And I'd say, "Prove it." And you'd try, and I'd say, "That doesn't prove anything." Because you cannot prove with absolute certainty that this is not the Matrix and we don't need Neo to bust out and save the day. You're assuming you're a real person, that I'm a real person, that we're not on an alien spaceship. You're taking it by faith.

Now you'd say, "I've got pretty good reason to believe I exist. Everything in my life up to this point suggests I'm a real person." And I'd say, indeed — but you cannot prove it. You're *starting* with that conviction. And that's true on a whole host of questions. Those are your faith commitments. Sometimes atheists or agnostics think they don't have faith, but the reality is they do. They believe by faith certain things about the creation of the world, about God, about mankind, about sin — what's wrong and how to fix it — about what happens when you die. Those are all foundational faith commitments, because **faith is not where you finish; faith is where you start.**

And for that reason, you don't want to require certain or perfect knowledge before you have faith. That's what's so instructive about these blind men. **They act on what they know.** They don't know everything. There are big, important things they don't have answers to. But they act on what they do know. What they know is: *I'm blind, I have a need, and I can't fix it.*

What they know is: *God is faithful; God has promised us a Messiah.* What they know is: *Jesus is powerful* — he has power to heal that only God possesses.

And all of that is revealed in what they say, which is why it's so profound: "Have mercy on us, Son of David." That title is used only a handful of times in Matthew's Gospel, and every time it's used by blind people or a Canaanite woman.⁵ It signifies God's commitment to his covenant promise to David.

If you're not familiar with the Old Testament, it's a series of promises from God. God promises something to Eve. He promises something to Noah. He promises something to Abraham. These are often called the covenants of the Old Testament — a covenant with Noah, with Abraham, with Moses, a promise to Eve in the garden. And there was a covenant with David, who was king over Israel, and God's promise was: *From your line you're going to have a son who will sit on your throne and reign forever.* When that promised child comes to power, he's going to bring in the kingdom of God. Not only will he rule over Israel with truth and justice and righteousness, he will rule over all the earth and liberate God's people from their oppressors.

So when they scream at the top of their lungs, "Son of David," they're making a political statement. They're making a theological statement that was polarizing. They're under Rome. If Herod had gotten wind of it, it could have brought a lot of negative attention. And yet they believe, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Jesus is the promised Messiah. They didn't know if he would heal them. They didn't know whether he'd respond. But they did know he was the Messiah, and they acted on what they did know.

So when it comes to faith — I think in your notes I said — **don't require omniscience.** What I mean is, don't require yourself to have every answer to every question. Just because you have questions about why God does this or that, just because you have intellectual barriers, doesn't mean you can't have faith. One of the most liberating things for me as a struggling, skeptical college student was knowing that **the presence of doubts is not the same thing as unbelief.** Sometimes the doubts you have are actually a vehicle for faith to function. What's required is for you to move forward in faith even though you don't have all your questions answered, because some questions can only be answered from a place of faith.

As Anselm said in the introduction to one of his theological works: I don't seek to understand in order to believe; I believe in order to understand. There are certain truths that come from *faith seeking understanding*, not the reverse. You'll never know what you could know until and unless you cross the threshold. It's only after you cross the threshold of faith that certain answers begin to materialize in your life. I saw this in the humanities class I'm teaching at Abilene Classical Academy, with a pagan author talking about a pagan Greek god — the same exact dynamic. He was unable to see the thing because he wasn't willing to

believe. It was only after he decided to believe that he could actually see what he needed to see.

Jesus says the same thing in John's Gospel: *If anyone wants to do his will, he will know whether the teaching is from God* (John 7:17). Those who do the will of God will then know. In other words, you only get answers to certain questions by faith. Faith is not where you finish; it's where you start. Don't require a level of complete knowledge that prevents you from starting the faith journey. Sometimes the answers you desperately want will only be found as you walk. So carry your questions with you, as you do what these men did — follow Jesus to the house, even though there were some things they didn't know.

2. Faith keeps you on the way

Not only does faith show you where you start; it also keeps you on the way. That's illustrated in these blind men too, because Jesus does not initially respond. Jesus never turns around. He doesn't say, "Who's calling my name?" He keeps on walking until he enters the house, and the blind men approach him there. When I first read this passage, I read right over that and didn't think it was very significant. But the more I thought about it, the more powerful it became.

These are blind people. I want you to imagine — imagine if you were blind, what that would have taken. You cannot see Jesus. You're blind, and in that cultural context that meant you were cursed. It meant that either you sinned or your parents sinned, or something like that. You were ostracized from the spiritual community. And so you're feeling your way forward, trying to follow Jesus, and he doesn't respond. The crowd's probably hostile, and he's going into somebody's house. If you closed your eyes right now and tried to make it to the bathroom, I bet some of you couldn't get there. And if you did, you'd probably need some help from somebody else. It would be embarrassing. It would be frustrating. It would be all manner of difficult. These blind men would have faced all of those things, and they didn't quit. They kept going. They kept seeking.

And that's what faith does. **Faith doesn't let you quit.** Faith is not only where you start; it's what sustains you on the journey. All kinds of obstacles would have surfaced to keep them from that house — spiritual obstacles, relational obstacles, physical obstacles, and more — and they keep pressing. They keep pushing.

That's instructive for our faith. **Don't let obstacles restrain you from doing what you know God wants you to do.** This idea that God's will is easy is not a biblical idea. "If it's God's will, everything's just going to fall into place" — that's nonsense. That's certainly not what you see in the New Testament. Often God's will is very hard. Very difficult. And that doesn't mean your faith isn't sufficient. **Just because God is silent doesn't mean your**

faith isn't real. Just because God allows difficulty into your life doesn't mean it's punishment or that he's angry.

And this isn't the only passage that shows that. There's one a few chapters later, and it's so on the nose because of the similarities. In Matthew 15, a Canaanite woman has a need, and she cries out to Jesus using the exact same designation: "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David!" It's crazy. If you don't know, the Canaanites were not good guys in the Old Testament. They were the big bads — the pagans, the Gentiles, the ones who would never know God, the ones Israel had to purge. And this Canaanite woman, who should not see, not only sees — she cries out to Jesus as the Son of David: "Have mercy on me."

And what does Jesus do? It's so crazy. He doesn't say a word. In fact, he says to his disciples, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And he keeps walking. And she doesn't stop. She keeps pursuing, following him all the way. Then she kneels before Jesus and says, "Lord, help me." Her daughter is tormented; she needs his help; he can fix it. And Jesus responds — not with gentleness, not with "Why don't you tell me what's going on?" He says, "It isn't right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

I don't know any woman who wouldn't have responded, "How could you be so cruel, Jesus? How could you be so harsh?" And what Jesus said is in some ways true. Generally speaking, culturally speaking, the Canaanites were not seeking after God, and there was hostility between the Jewish people and them. But instead of getting discouraged, instead of giving up, instead of blaming Jesus for being rude, she responds, "Yes, Lord — yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." And Jesus sees that response and says, "Woman, your faith is great. Let it be done for you as you want" (Matthew 15:21–28).

What that tells me is that the reason God was silent had nothing to do with faith. The reason there were obstacles and hardships was not because her faith was deficient. Her faith was sufficient. It was pure. It was good. It was commendable. And yet there were obstacles, and yet there was silence, and yet it was really, really hard. Jesus was silent on purpose. We don't know all the reasons he's silent, just like I don't know all the reasons your journey is so hard. But I'd venture to guess that whatever God's reasons are, it isn't because your faith is deficient. It's not always because God is punishing you. It's not always because you did something wrong. Sometimes it's just the will of God, because there's something he's doing in the seeking.

And if you choose not to let obstacles restrain you, and you keep seeking when things are hard, it's actually in that process of seeking that God will materialize in your life what you desperately need. Now, it doesn't always come through as a healing, as we'll see a little later. But keep seeking — especially when things are hard. Especially when things are hard.

Sometimes God will hide. One of my favorite authors is a guy named Blaise Pascal — I named my firstborn son after him. He wrote a book called the *Pensées* that he never published before he died. It was a bunch of little scraps of paper with his thoughts, which they collected and published posthumously. That's what *pensées* means in French — "thoughts." And one of the arguments Pascal advances in that book is about why God hides himself.

I've asked that question. I'm sure you've asked it. Isaiah says, *Yes, you are a God who hides* (Isaiah 45:15). It's just a fact. Sometimes it feels like God is distant, like he's not showing up, like he's not talking. Why, God, do you hide? And Pascal offered this — again, it's not a Bible verse, but I think it makes sense. He says God gives enough light that those who desire to see, will; and he conceals enough of himself that those who don't want to seek, won't. It's both a form of grace and a form of judgment. It's grace to those who see the light and seek, and seeking, find God and his reward. But it's also judgment, because there's enough light that you might seek — and if you don't, you're guilty for having not done so.

So when people ask, "Why doesn't God just reveal himself in Madison Square Garden? If he wants us to believe, why doesn't he just force us to believe?" — the reality is, that's not how faith works. **Faith requires the seeking.** And the kind of faith God desires from you is a faith that perseveres and pushes through. That's the kind of faith that makes any relationship worth having. So sometimes God hides so that you will seek, and in your seeking, keep persevering through the obstacles. These men show us that reality.

3. Faith shows you where you stand

Faith is where you start. Faith keeps you on the way. And finally, faith shows you where you stand.

They get to the house, and Jesus asks a very specific question: "Do you believe that I can do this?" And they say, "Yes, Lord." I think that question is fascinating, because he doesn't say, "Do you believe?" He says, "Do you believe *that I can do this?*"

There are many people in our culture who think faith is sufficient if it's passionate — so long as you really, strongly believe something, God will respond. That the power of faith is in the quality of the one who possesses it. But Jesus is doing the exact opposite here. They started with their attention on themselves: "Lord, have mercy on us. *We're blind. We need healing.*" Me, me, me. And in response Jesus makes them seek. They overcome the obstacles. And when he finally responds, he doesn't focus on them. He draws their attention off of themselves, away from their need, and says, "Do you believe that *I can do this?*"

And I think Jesus is helping us see something about real faith, the kind of faith that pleases God: **it's less about the person who exercises the faith than about the One in**

whom the faith is placed. We've seen this I don't know how many times in this series: **what makes faith powerful is not the one who has it; what makes faith powerful is the object in which it's placed.** And the way faith works, it will show you — and show other people — in what or in whom your hope is found. That's what I mean in your notes: it shows you where you stand.

What Jesus is curious about with these men is: *Is your hope in me? Is your faith in me — or in what I might do for you?* That's why he leaves it general. He doesn't say, "Do you have faith that I can heal your blindness?" He says, "Do you believe that I can do this?"

And that question has rich Old Testament context. In the Old Testament there's not a single documented example of anyone being healed of blindness through a human healer. The only blindness story is in the life of Elisha, where he prays and God strikes the Arameans blind and then opens their eyes again (2 Kings 6). It's so rare that it became a given, a starting conviction: only God blinds people, and only God can heal the blind. If you're blind, it's because God allowed it, and if you're going to be healed of blindness, only God can do it.

That conviction was so pronounced that when they told the messianic prophecies, one of the signs that God had visited Israel was the healing of blind eyes. Isaiah 35: *Say to the cowardly, "Be strong; do not fear! Here is your God ... he will save you." Then the eyes of the blind will be opened* (Isaiah 35:4–5). How do we know God is here? The eyes of the blind will be opened.

So when Jesus says, "Do you believe I can do this?" he's saying: *You believe I'm this guy? You believe I possess the power of God? You believe I can do what only God can do? Do you really believe that about me?* And they respond, "Yes, Lord" — which shows you where their faith really stood. Their faith was not in Jesus providing a certain outcome. Their faith was not, "I'll believe in you so long as you give me the life I want." Their faith was: *You're God. You can do whatever you want. And whatever you do, I'll be good with it, because of who I know you to be.*

That's why Jesus says, "Let it be done for you according to your faith." He's not saying, "Your faith is so strong you've twisted my arm; I've got to heal you." He's saying, "If you believe I'm God, then let the reward of your faith be consistent with that belief." And if you don't believe he has that power — if you believe a good life is only possible if you can see — then the reward of your faith will be consistent with where you're actually standing.

In our context, so many times people will pray for God to do something, and God doesn't do what they want — or doesn't do it when they want — and they give up. They check out. "I'm done with God. I'm done following Jesus. I prayed so hard for him to heal my baby. I prayed so hard for him to save my marriage, and he didn't do it." And they give up. And this is going to sound harsh, but I really believe it's true: **their response exposes where their hope**

was the entire time. Their hope was not in Christ. Their hope was in the outcome they thought he could provide — the quality of life that answered prayer would have given them. And in some ways, who can blame you for wanting what you wanted?

But if you're going to have faith in Jesus like these men had faith in Jesus, you're going to believe he's God no matter what — that his grace is sufficient even if he doesn't. As Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said before the fiery furnace: *Our God is able to rescue us ... But even if he does not ... we will not worship the gold statue* (Daniel 3:17–18). Because our faith isn't in a certain outcome. **My faith isn't in what God can do. My faith is in God.** And Jesus responds to that kind of faith the way he does to these blind men: if that's what you believe, may you receive what's in keeping with your faith.

So faith shows you where you stand. The invitation for you and me is not to ask, "Do I have the right amount? Am I sincere enough, passionate enough?" Ask: **Is my faith rightly placed?** Have I put my faith in the right object? Am I believing Jesus for who he is — or because I think he can fix the thing I want most in life? "I'm only doing the church thing, I'm only following Jesus, because of what he might do for me." If that's where your faith is found, that faith is deficient. It's wrongly placed. And when Jesus doesn't deliver the timing or the outcome you'd choose, genuine faith is able to trust him anyway — because where else can we turn? As Simon Peter said, *Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life* (John 6:68).

So learn to walk in faith such that your strength is not found in yourself. Your strength is not found in your ability to control outcomes. It's not found in your ability to manicure people's thinking about you. It's not found in your money or your skill set or any of those things. **You find your strength outside yourself, in Christ alone.** *On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.* Find your power to live, find your power to persevere, find your power for whatever may come in Christ, as these men do.

4. Faith surrenders everything

Faith is where you start. It sustains you on the way. Faith shows you where you stand. And lastly, **faith surrenders everything.** This is the negative example.

Their eyes were opened, and Jesus warns them sternly, "Be sure that no one finds out." And they go and tell everybody. Some people read this and say, "Oh, how cute — they just couldn't help themselves. They had to tell everybody about Jesus. Isn't that great?" No, it's not great. He said don't tell anybody. Matthew says *but* for a reason: "But they went out and spread the news." This is not what they should have done.

And because they did that, here's what happens: everybody finds out. Because everybody found out, the opposition to Jesus grew and intensified. Because that opposition grew, the

religious leaders came up with a plan to kill Jesus. And that plan kicks into motion Jesus' arrest, crucifixion, and the rest.

The reason Jesus wanted it kept secret is that it was not yet God's time. God had a mission, a purpose, a redemptive plan — and it had a certain timetable. Certain things needed to happen, and you didn't want to prematurely kick things off. Jesus wanted them quiet because that was God's will for that moment. And they were not willing to submit themselves to the will and redemptive plan of God.

In that way, they show what real faith isn't. **Real faith surrenders everything.** Real faith submits itself to the will and plan of God, even when that redemptive plan creates discomfort or hardship in your life — even when you might have good intentions for your disobedience.

I know many people living in disobedience right now who justify it because of all the great things they do for God: serving in church, teaching this or that, consistent in my tithe. It's almost as if they think, "Because I'm doing so many good things, God is going to let me slide here. I can slide on what I'm doing with my sexuality. I can slide on this addiction in my life, because I'm doing all the right things everywhere else." And that's what these blind men are doing. They're demonstrating an unwillingness to submit to what God said — and doing it while doing a good thing, maybe with good motives, just like many of us do today.

You don't want to do that. That's not the kind of faith that sees the Lord. **Faith that sees the Lord and his faithfulness is faith that surrenders everything.** It responds to the Lord with full obedience, even when obedience is going to bring suffering and hardship into your life.

And that's exactly the kind of faith Jesus demonstrates in his life and his death. I think that's why Matthew does this the way he does. If you read a little further, in Matthew 20, there are two more blind men — one of the last healings in Matthew's Gospel. Around verse 29, they're leaving Jericho on the way to Jerusalem, and two blind men say the exact same words: "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" Same title. Same plea for mercy. The crowd tells them to be quiet. They say no: "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" They're persistent, just like the Canaanite woman. Jesus stops and says, "What do you want me to do for you?" They say, "Lord, open our eyes." Moved with compassion, Jesus touched them, and immediately they could see — *and they followed him* (Matthew 20:29–34).

The first pair of blind men received healing, but then they went out. The second pair received healing, and they *followed*. And where do they follow? If you keep reading, they follow him right into Jerusalem. And what happens in Jerusalem? Jesus is crucified. They follow Jesus into the very place God's redemptive plan required. And it was that redemptive plan that would bring about Jesus' torture, suffering, and crucifixion. Even though it would create

discomfort and hardship in their lives, because Jesus had healed them, because they had faith in Jesus, they were willing to follow and submit themselves anyway.

And they're a model of what Jesus himself will do. He goes into the Garden of Gethsemane and prays, *My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will* (Matthew 26:39). Jesus is willing to trust the Father, even though he probably had some questions. He cries out on the cross, *My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?* — and yet he keeps his faith in the Father: *Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit* (Luke 23:46), all the way to the very end. He didn't let the opposition restrain him. He didn't let the suffering and hardship deter him. He was faithful to finish the very thing God had called him to do.

And because he was faithful to the end, God responded to that faith — with a resurrection. God raised Jesus from the dead. And after his resurrection, before Jesus ascended to the Father, he told his disciples: *Go — tell everyone what has happened; make disciples of all nations* (Matthew 28:19).

Invitation

So the invitation for you and for me is, in response to that great gospel of grace, to model in our faith what we see in Jesus and in these two blind men.

Maybe this morning you're not a Christian, and the reason you haven't become a Christian is those barriers — intellectual hurdles, other things — that make you think, "I can't be sincere and follow Jesus." If I can just liberate you this morning: you don't have to have every answer to every question. In fact, some of the hardest questions in the Christian life will only ever be answered from a place of faith. So maybe today you start the journey imperfectly — maybe with questions, maybe with doubts — but you say, as Peter said, "Lord, where else can I go? You have the words of life." "I may not have answers to why you did this in the Bible or why you allowed that in my life as a kid, but I'm going to choose to follow you."

And some of you are maybe on the verge of giving up, because you did everything right and you thought that because you did everything right, God was going to come through for you — and he didn't. This morning is an invitation for you to persevere, to keep seeking and keep knocking until he finally opens the door.

Some of you may be like these blind men, in that your faith needs to be challenged on where it stands. You've been praying for an outcome instead of situating and setting your hope on the person of who Christ is. And maybe the disappointments are an invitation for you to repent — repent of trying to get God to do what you've wanted, instead of trusting him for being good enough for who he is.

There are lots of different ways the passage today might apply to you as an individual. If I can help you process that decision or help you take that next step, I want to be able to do that. There's a connect card on the chair in front of you. You can indicate any kind of response you want to make. You can also come down for prayer, if you want, after we've had a time to respond.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "Stanford"; the study was conducted at Harvard by Daniel Simons and Christopher Chabris (1999). Source: D. J. Simons & C. F. Chabris, "Gorillas in our midst," *Perception* 28 (1999): 1059–1074 (Harvard University). [↵](#)
 2. Transcript note: spoken as "Madison Square Garden." Three days before the experiment, Joshua Bell had filled Boston's Symphony Hall, "where merely pretty good seats went for \$100." Source: Gene Weingarten, "Pearls Before Breakfast," *The Washington Post*, April 8, 2007. [↵](#)
 3. Transcript note: spoken as "a workplace where people rent office space." Bell played in the arcade at the top of the escalators at the L'Enfant Plaza Metro station during the morning rush on Friday, January 12, 2007. Source: Weingarten, "Pearls Before Breakfast." [↵](#)
 4. Transcript note: spoken as "six hours." Bell played for 43 minutes; 1,097 people passed, seven stopped, and he collected \$32.17. Source: Weingarten, "Pearls Before Breakfast." [↵](#)
 5. Transcript note: in Matthew the crowds also use "Son of David" of Jesus (Matthew 12:23; 21:9, 15), so the title is not limited to blind people and the Canaanite woman. As a direct cry for mercy, though, it does come only from them (Matthew 9:27; 15:22; 20:30–31). [↵](#)