

Today's focus is on two simple but profound words: believe and see. The world tells us to demand proof before we trust, but God calls us to believe first, and then we will see His faithfulness unfold. In Luke 18, Jesus tells His disciples that everything written about Him by the prophets will be fulfilled, but they do not understand. Their expectations of a triumphant, earthly Messiah clouded their ability to grasp the deeper, redemptive plan of God. We are often no different—our own assumptions and desires can blind us to what God is truly doing.

The story of the blind man outside Jericho is a powerful illustration of faith that refuses to be silenced. While the disciples, who could see with their eyes, struggled to understand, the blind man, who could not see, recognized Jesus as the Messiah and cried out for mercy. He was persistent, undeterred by the crowd's attempts to quiet him. Jesus responded not just to his need, but to his faith. The man's sight was restored, and he followed Jesus, praising God.

This challenges us to examine our own faith. Do we believe the promises of God, especially those that seem distant or mysterious, like Christ's return? Are we ready to meet Him, living with expectation and hope? God's timing is not ours, and there are truths He reveals only when we are ready. Our role is to trust Him, even when we do not understand.

God invites us to ask specifically for what we need, even though He already knows. This is not for His benefit, but for ours—a way to deepen our relationship with Him and to exercise our faith. Like the blind man, we are called to cry out for mercy, to persist in prayer, and to trust that God hears and responds. When we believe, we will see—not always in the way we expect, but always in the way that brings us closer to Him.

Key Takeaways

- Faith Precedes Understanding

God often asks us to trust Him before we fully understand His plans. The disciples could not grasp the meaning of Jesus' words about His suffering and resurrection because their expectations were shaped by their own desires. In our lives, faith means holding on to God's promises even when circumstances or understanding lag behind. Trusting God in the unknown is the soil where true faith grows. [41:41]

- The Certainty of Christ's Return

Scripture is clear: just as Jesus' death and resurrection are historical facts, so is His promised return. Living with this expectation shapes our priorities, our hope, and our readiness. It is not enough to acknowledge these truths intellectually; we are called to live as people who are prepared to meet Jesus at any moment, letting this hope purify and energize our daily walk. [46:22]

- God's Timing and Revelation

God reveals truth according to His perfect timing, not ours. We may long for immediate answers or clarity, but God's wisdom often withholds understanding until we are ready to receive it.

Rather than striving to predict or control God's plans, our calling is to be ready, to walk by faith, and to trust that He will make all things clear in His time. [50:48]

- The Power of Persistent, Honest Prayer

The blind man's cry for mercy was not polished or reserved—it was desperate, persistent, and honest. God honors prayers that come from the heart, especially when we refuse to be silenced by doubt, discouragement, or the opinions of others. Persistent prayer is not about wearing God down, but about aligning our hearts with His and demonstrating our dependence on Him. [53:43]

- Ask Specifically and Expectantly

Though God knows our needs before we ask, He invites us to bring our requests to Him specifically and boldly. This act of asking is relational, building intimacy and trust. When we ask specifically, we open ourselves to recognize God's answers and to grow in gratitude and faith as we see His hand at work in our lives. [58:23]

Luke 18:31-43 (ESV)

31 And taking the twelve, he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. 32 For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. 33 And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise." 34 But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

35 As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. 36 And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. 37 They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." 38 And he cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 39 And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 40 And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, 41 "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me recover my sight." 42 And Jesus said to him, "Recover your sight; your faith has made you well." 43 And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Observation Questions

1. What did Jesus tell his disciples would happen to him in Jerusalem, and how did they respond? (Luke 18:31-34)
2. How did the blind man address Jesus, and what did he ask for? (Luke 18:38, 41)
3. How did the crowd react to the blind man's cries, and what was Jesus' response? (Luke 18:39-40)
4. What was the result of the blind man's persistent faith? (Luke 18:42-43)

Interpretation Questions

1. Why do you think the disciples struggled to understand Jesus' words about his suffering and resurrection, even though they had been with him for so long? How might their expectations have affected their understanding? [41:41]
2. The blind man could not see physically, but he recognized Jesus as the Messiah and called out for mercy. What does this say about the nature of faith and spiritual insight? [42:35]
3. Jesus asked the blind man, "What do you want me to do for you?" even though he already knew the man's need. What does this reveal about how God wants us to approach him in prayer? [57:47]
4. The sermon said, "Faith means holding on to God's promises even when circumstances or understanding lag behind." What are some reasons God might withhold understanding or clarity from us for a time? [50:48]

Application Questions

1. The world says, "Show me and I'll believe," but God says, "Believe and you will see." Can you think of a time when you had to trust God before you saw the outcome? How did that experience shape your faith? [01:03:58]
2. The disciples' expectations of Jesus as a political or earthly Messiah kept them from understanding his true mission. Are there ways your own assumptions or desires might be blinding you to what God is really doing in your life right now? [41:41]
3. The blind man refused to be silenced by the crowd and kept crying out for mercy. Is there an area in your life where you need to be more persistent in prayer, even if others discourage you or you feel like giving up? [53:43]
4. Jesus invites us to ask specifically and boldly for what we need. Is there something you have been hesitant to ask God for? What would it look like to bring that request to him honestly this week? [58:23]
5. The sermon challenged us to live with expectation and hope for Christ's return. How does the reality of Jesus' promised return affect your daily priorities, choices, or attitudes? [46:22]
6. God's timing is not our timing, and sometimes he withholds understanding until we are ready. Is there a situation in your life where you are waiting for God to reveal his plan? How can you practice trusting him in the waiting? [50:48]
7. The blind man's faith led him to follow Jesus and praise God after his healing. What is one way you can respond to God's faithfulness in your life this week—either through praise, sharing your story, or serving others? [43:11]