

HAVE YOU THE SIGHT OF A BLIND MAN?

by Carl McMurray

In Matthew 20:29-34, as Jesus was leaving Jericho, a roadside occurrence happened that points out the importance of really noticing what goes on around us. The multitude that followed Jesus must have made quite a stir as they followed Him. As they passed two blind men by the roadside, the blind men heard that Jesus was passing by, and they began to shout. Heedless of the people who sternly told them to be quiet, they kept calling out. When Jesus heard them He stopped, spoke with them, and healed their blindness in a gesture of compassion. This all leads to the question, "Do we have the sight that these blind men had?" But they were blind, you might say. And that's true, but they still "saw" some important things.

They "saw" that **Jesus was passing**. Their time was short and possibly there would never be another opportunity to cry out to the Lord. Jesus was passing and would soon be out of their reach, and that is more than many of us can see today. Jesus is still "passing by" each one of us. He is close and repentance is available for just a time. James reminds us that life is just a vapor that passes quickly away. When it is gone it will be too late to cry out to Jesus, no second chances. Only now, only today are we sure that Jesus stands on the road within our grasp.

Perhaps even more dangerous, because of its deceit, than losing our opportunity is losing our ability to cry out to Jesus. It is something that we don't like to admit about our self, but with most of us there can come a time in our life when our heart becomes hardened. If we keep refusing to obey the Lord, there will come a time when our disobedience becomes a habit, an action we don't even think about anymore. It is not that the Lord has passed beyond our reach, but we have pushed Him away with our rejection. We have rejected Him so many times that it would take a mighty act of will to consciously turn and cry out to the Lord. How sad it is for us to let Jesus just pass us by.

The blind men also "saw" that **Jesus had mercy for them**. They cried out for mercy because that is what they needed first and foremost. Did they learn this from overheard conversations or did someone tell them about the Nazarene? We have no clue in this regard, but we do know that these men knew their real needs and cried out for them to be fulfilled. Men cry to the Lord for food, for shelter, for career advancement, for every worldly thing, but do we remember to ask for mercy? When the whole world is gone, it is mercy that we'll cry for; mercy in forgiveness, mercy in salvation, mercy in eternal life. The amazing thing is that this mercy is available now in Jesus Christ, just for the asking. Don't let it get out of reach.

These blind men "saw" that **getting the attention of the Lord** was more important than the efforts of the crowd trying to "hush" them. It was so important that they suffered "stern" rebuke and would not be silenced.

Does Jesus mean that much to us? When the crowd sternly rebukes you for gaining the attention of the Lord, do you quit? Ladies do you give in to the fashion crowd and silence your modesty when they tell you to? Men, do you silence the fruit of the Spirit so that anger can speak, so selfishness can win out, so good works are put off till later? Young people, do you silence noble traits of character to follow the crowd of popularity in dancing, drugs, and drink? No matter who we are, the crowd around us is always trying to hush up the one who would desire the attention of Jesus more than anything else.

And lastly, these blind men "saw" in **Jesus the way to walk**. When Jesus gave them their sight, the Scriptures teach that they "followed Him." They didn't head off exploring. They didn't run to see what they could see. Two men, now able to see, kept their perspective and saw that Jesus was the most important thing to them. They followed Him.

Do we take our cleansing for granted or do we keep our focus on Jesus also? To know the right way in this life, the way that leads to glory, we need to be able to at least see as much as these blind men. We need to see Jesus as the one to follow, and keep our eyes on Him.

At some time in all our lives we will all be sitting beside the road. We'll be waiting there when Jesus passes by. He will have mercy and compassion enough for each and all of us. What happens next will be up to us. Whether we will have the good sense to know the Lord is near, whether we will stand against the power of the crowd, whether we will commit ourselves to following Him...that will all be up to us. Then we will know for sure whether or not we even have the sight that blind men had.