



# *The King's Ransom*

Matthew 20:28

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Text

Matthew 20:29-34

Topic

Jesus heals two blind men who follow Him shouting for mercy

Title

*"Blind Man's Blurt"*

Introduction

Finding a genie in a bottle never quite works out the way you think it will.

There's an *X-Files* episode where Mulder comes across a genie. Because he releases her, the genie tells him he must make three wishes.

Earlier in the episode, one guy wished for the ability to turn invisible at will. The wish was granted, but the guy didn't realize that, while invisible, he remains solid, and he is stuck by a car and killed.

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Later the guy's brother wished that he was brought back to life. The wish was granted - but he still had all the injuries from being struck by the car, and was in a state of decay from having been dead.

Mulder wishes for peace on earth. The genie grants his wish by wiping-out the entire population of Earth.

Mulder wishes for his first wish to be undone. He begins writing down his third wish in great detail to be safe, but stops before finishing it.

The episode ends with a scene that indicates he used his last wish to free the genie, similar to the way Disney's *Aladdin* ends.

Jesus is no genie and is not obligated to grant all of our wishes. Prayer is not at all similar to asking The Lord to grant three wishes; and, if The Lord does answer our prayer, it isn't with a sinister twist.

Keeping all that in perspective, our text in Matthew presents a situation in which two blind men who encounter Jesus are asked by Him, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

If Jesus asked **you**, "What do you want Me to do for you?", what would it be? World peace? The cure for cancer? An end to all ethnic prejudice? An end to poverty?

Or would it be something more personal – a healing for yourself, or a loved one?

It's a pretty intense question, packed with a lot of responsibility and ramifications. How you answer it says a lot about who you are and what you value.

**You answer the question every time you pray.** Every time you ask for something in prayer, you are revealing what it is you want the Lord to do for you.

It might be a good idea to first ask yourself a question: What *should* I ask the Lord to do for me?

Is there something – a principle – that should guide my asking?

There is; and you see it illustrated in the story of the blind men. Sure, they asked for their own healing. But, in his case, it was just the right request, because it resulted in them following Jesus and bringing glory to God.

That's the principle: Ask for those things that will result in you following Jesus, glorifying God.

We'll organize our thoughts around two questions: #1 What Do You Want Jesus To Do For You?, and #2 What Do You Want Jesus To Do Through You?

#1 What Do You Want Jesus To Do For You?

(v29-32)

This story is also told by Mark and Luke in their Gospels. Luke focuses on only one of the blind men, Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus.

Mat 20:29 Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him.

Luke and Mark indicate that Jesus was coming near Jericho, but Matthew says that it occurred while Jesus was departing Jericho.

It should never surprise us that the accounts in the Gospels give slightly different details. We do the same thing as we tell events to people. The Gospel writers, inspired by the Holy Spirit, picked those details most important not just to the story, but to the unique spiritual truth they were seeking to teach from the story.

There are a number of possible explanations to clarify whether the two blind men were healed as Jesus entered or as He departed Jericho. One is that the two blind men were at the gates of Jericho when Jesus entered the city, and then followed Him through the city until, as He was about to depart, He stopped and called for them to come to Him.

Mat 20:30 And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

The two blind men 'saw' something the rest of the people missed. They saw that Jesus was the "Son of David."

The Jews believed that their Messiah would be a descendant of King David; and that he would sit on King David's throne, ruling over Israel.

The blind men were declaring that Jesus was the promised Son of David. He was their Messiah, Who was to rule the kingdom of Heaven on the earth.

It's always good to be reminded that you cannot remain neutral about Jesus. I like Josh McDowell's contemporary approach to folks debating who Jesus is. He's either the Lord; or He's a lying lunatic. There is no middle ground upon which to say He was a great teacher... or a philosopher... or a religious leader.

Mat 20:31 Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

What's up with the multitude? I know this happened before the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed, but it seems extreme to be telling blind men to shut-up.

We sometimes tell ourselves to shut-up; or to remain seated. For example, you might hear a message from God's Word and, at the end, be prompted to go forward for prayer. Instead you remain seated, talking yourself out of the Holy Spirit's leading.

In a sense, Jesus is "passing by," but you maintain the spiritual status quo. We all need to shake-up the status quo and take advantage of the Lord's presence more often.

These guys were blind, but like all first century Jews, they knew their Book of Isaiah. In the thirty-fifth chapter, Isaiah said, when the Messiah came, "then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped" (v5).

In chapter forty-two Isaiah said the Messiah would, "open the eyes that are blind... bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness" (v7).

The equation these guys were trying to solve was, Two blind men plus One Messiah equals Sight.

What is the equation you are working on today?

- Is it something in your marriage?
- Does it have to do with variables regarding your children?
- Maybe it is job or career related?
- It could be about sin in your life - how to overcome it.

If you're not a believer in Jesus Christ, you must first solve this: One sinner plus Judgement Day equals X, where 'X' is your eternal destination - whether it be Heaven or Hell.

These two blind men took advantage of the spiritual opportunity that God had placed right before them - right within reach.

We have so many spiritual opportunities, do we not? We have the Word of God, the indwelling Spirit of God, the fellowship of the saints. We have prayer.

There's no excuse to just sit there while Jesus is walking by. We need to get engaged on every level.

One reason we do not get more engaged, get more involved, is that we don't realize we are blind. Take any of the big issues in our lives - like marriage, family, and career - and you should approach them as if you have absolutely no clue as to what to do, and no strength to do it once you do know.

You and I are to be wholly dependent upon The Lord, upon His Holy Spirit, to live spiritually in all of those things, and in all things at all times. We are like blind men and women, groping along, until He illuminates.

Look at it this way. I can read hundreds of books on marriage, but they all come down to this:

- If I'm a husband, I am to love my wife as Christ loved (and loves) the church.
- If I'm a wife, I am to submit to my husband as unto The Lord.

No one can do that by developing a list of ten things... Or by maintaining a date night.

Those things have their place. But I'm gonna need to be filled and constantly refilled with God the Holy Spirit to love Pam the way Jesus loves her.

Jesus doesn't simply want to date her once a week at *In-n-Out*.

- He wants her to know He will never, not ever, leave her or forsake her.
- He wants her to understand that her light afflictions are but for a moment and are working for her an eternal weight of glory.
- He wants her to live in the truth that her sins have been forgiven at the Cross, thrown into the deepest part of the ocean, as far from her as the east is from the west.
- Jesus wants her to be comforted by His presence 24/7.

I'm a miserable failure at all those - if left to myself. I absolutely cannot do any of those things apart from the Spirit of God working in me and through me. No one can.

Mat 20:32 So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

Do you really need to ask a blind man what he wants?

Let's give the question some perspective. There is a healing in the Gospels in which the friends of a paralytic tear through a roof to lower the man down to Jesus. The Lord responds by forgiving the man his sins. Only after the religious leaders get stressed thinking that He has no authority to forgive sins does Jesus tell the paralytic to rise up - demonstrating by the healing that He has the power and the authority to forgive men their sins.

With The Lord, you need to be aware of what you really need; and what He really wants.

What you really need is always spiritual. And what He really wants is for your life to bring Him glory by pointing others to Him, either so they can be saved, or further sanctified in their walk with Him if they are saved.

#2 What Do You Want Jesus To Do Through You?

(v33-34)

At first, on the surface, it seems that the two blind men settle for something merely physical. Maybe; but I think not, and anyway it speaks to us of that which is more spiritual.

Mat 20:33 They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened."

Clearly, they were asking to receive physical healing - to have the ability to see.



I like the way their response is worded, though, because it can be applied spiritually.

In Ephesians 1:18, we read,

Eph 1:18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

In Acts 26:18, God tells the apostle Paul He was sending him out to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."

We sing, "Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord," and it resonates with us because we understand that there is often, in our lives, spiritual blindness, or short-sightedness, or tunnel-vision, that needs to be addressed.

Truth is, it is too common for us to think on the material level. It's our default way of thinking.

On the job, for instance, if things aren't going well, we too quickly start asking God for a new boss, or new employees. Or for a whole new job.

There's nothing necessarily wrong with those requests. Except that most of the time God wants us to ask for things that are a little more in the spiritual realm.

That's why we read things like:

Col 3:22 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.

Col 3:23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

Col 3:24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

Col 3:25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

Col 4:1 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

And,

1Pe 2:18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.

What was true of bondservants and masters is much more true regarding employees and employers.

The point is, we should be thinking of the spiritual impact of our asking, not just the physical.

Jesus is no genie, but we can think He is when we ask Him for something, then try to accomplish it ourselves.

Example: You don't like your job situation, so you ask The Lord to get you a new job. He wants to change your heart about your job; but you don't wait, and, instead, on your own, you go out and get a new job.

The new job turns out to be ten-times worse than your old job. Guess who gets the blame?

God gets the blame for it - even though He had nothing to do with it, other than politely not violating your free will.

Jesus then seems to you as if He were a genie who tricked you into something terrible.

We need the eyes of our hearts to be opened, rather than having tunnel-vision or short-sightedness or blindness.

Mat 20:34 So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

Yes, Jesus healed them physically. But, remember, these guys addressed Him as the Son of David. They addressed Him as their Messiah, Who was to establish the kingdom of Heaven on the earth.

We saw that, in that kingdom, The Lord would be glorified by conquering blindness, as well as deafness and all other physical disabilities.

I say, therefore, that the request of these blind men was consistent with what Jesus wanted to do to bring glory to Himself. To all onlookers, by healing them He was giving evidence that their Messiah had come.

Although Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, He reveals Himself to mankind in different ways at different times. Theologically, it's called *dispensationalism*.

When the Lord was on the earth, in His first coming, He was revealing Himself to the Jews as the Son of David. He was their promised and prophesied Messiah.

He thus went around performing the works, signs, and miracles that the Scriptures said would accompany the Messiah.

Was Jesus received by the Jews as their Messiah? He most certainly was not. He was rejected. He was crucified, then rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. He promised to return to earth a second time. When He returns, in His Second Coming, He will establish His rule over all the earth; He will fulfill all the Old Testament promises and prophecies regarding the kingdom of Heaven on the earth.

We live in the mean time – in a “between time.” We call it the church age. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever; but He is being revealed to mankind somewhat differently as we await His return.

By far, the prevailing characteristic of the church age is the patient suffering of believers empowered by the grace of God.

Jesus promised His followers that, in the world, they would have tribulation. Then He told them to be of good cheer – because He had overcome the world.

That’s your life in a nutshell. Suffer with grace, and reveal Jesus to others by following Him no matter what, glorifying God.

It’s why the apostle Peter could say,

1 Peter 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

1 Peter 1:7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

It's why the apostle James could say,

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

James 1:3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

James 1:4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

It's why the apostle Paul could say,

Romans 5:3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

Romans 5:4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Romans 5:5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

It's why the apostle John could describe himself as your companion in tribulation (Revelation 1:9).

Perhaps Paul put it best:

2 Corinthians 12:9 ...Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

What strengthened Paul? It was these words of Jesus, in answer to Paul's request for healing:

2 Corinthians 12:9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness..."

Jesus can still heal blindness - or anything else, for that matter; and we should ask Him to. But healing blindness at His first coming meant something a whole lot different than it does now, in the church age. And that's why I'm saying it is much more likely that Jesus will give you the supernatural strength to endure your trials rather than end them.

Jesus asks you, "What do you want Me to do for you?" When you answer, just remember that we live in an age in which it often gives God the most glory for us to boast in [our] infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon [us].