

The Gospel According to
Luke

“Show Me the Mercy”

Chapter 18:35-43

Introduction

If Jesus asked **you**, **What do you want Me to do for you?**, what would it be? Peace in the Middle East? 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? Or, to put it another way, Is there something – a principle – that should guide my asking?

There is; and you see it illustrated in the story of the blind man. Sure, he asked for his own healing. But, in his case, it was just the right request, because it resulted in him **following [Jesus], glorifying 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? (v35-41)

This story is also told by Matthew and Mark in their Gospels. If you read all three accounts, you discover that there were two blind men and that one was Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus.

[Luke 18:35](#) Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging.

Luke and Mark indicate that Jesus was [coming near](#) Jericho, but Matthew says that it occurred while Jesus was departing Jericho (Matthew 20:29). 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 Bartimaeus was 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.

[Luke 18:36](#) And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant.

Each day, Bartimaeus would get up and find his way to a particular spot along the road leading into Jericho where he would set up shop. Beggars, I'm told, spread-out before themselves on the ground their long, outer garment; passers-by would put any offerings on the garment. At the end of the day, Bartimaeus would gather up the coins in the garment and make his way home.

A large group passing by was a jackpot moment for a blind beggar! He wanted to know something about who was in the [multitude](#) – perhaps to gear his presentation to the appropriate audience.

[Luke 18:37](#) So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

Of all the possible titles and descriptions of Jesus, why tell Bartimaeus He was **Jesus of Nazareth**? We can't be certain; but we do know that **Nazareth** was considered a backward and poor village. To describe someone as being **of Nazareth** was a derogatory remark. The crowd was telling Bartimaeus to not expect anything to be put on his begging garment – it was just **Jesus of Nazareth** and His rag-tag band of poor, itinerant ministers; and their needy followers.

Expectations are powerful *helps* or *hindrances*. If you don't expect that Jesus can do anything for you, you're not likely to ask Him anything. If you do expect that Jesus can help you – then you're going to call out to Him.

Luke 18:38 And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Bartimaeus 'saw' something the rest of the people missed. He 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. Bartimaeus was declaring that Jesus was the promised Messiah – the **Son of David**.

Bartimaeus had heard about Jesus before He showed up in Jericho. Jesus was big talk everywhere. To some, He was **Jesus of Nazareth**; to others, **Jesus Son of David**. It's a reminder 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. **You must give Him a title.**

Luke 18:39 Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Bartimaeus may have followed Jesus through Jericho, crying out the whole time. It illustrates the persistence of his faith.

What's wrong with **those who went before** – warning Bartimaeus to **be quiet**? They seemed to be more interested in *getting* somewhere than in *going* somewhere. They wanted to get through Jericho, and to their destination. Jesus had a sense He was going through

Jericho; and, as He was going, listened to the promptings of the indwelling Holy Spirit, stopping to minister.

Christians have been given what we call the Great Commission – to go into all the world, making disciples. The sense of the commission is *as you are going*. We may get somewhere that God is leading; but ministry takes place as we are going as well as when we get there.

Luke 18:40 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him,
Luke 18:41 saying, “**What do you want Me to do for you?**” He said, “Lord, that I may receive my sight.”

This was not the only time Jesus asked someone, **What do you want Me to do for you?** In the Gospel of Matthew, in chapter twenty, the mother of James and John came to Jesus. He asked her, **What do you wish?**

Matthew 20:21 ... She said to Him, “Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.”
Matthew 20:22 But Jesus answered and said, “**You do not know what you ask...**
Matthew 20:23 ... **to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father.**”

You can't blame her; she was just acting like any good mom. But the Lord did not grant her request. It wasn't part of His greater plan for her sons.

The Lord did not, and He does not, always give you or grant you what you ask for. He will overrule your requests if they do not result in your **following Him, glorifying God**. In the case of James and John, God had other plans – glorious plans. John, for example, would be exiled to the Island of Patmos, where he would receive and record The Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Was it really necessary to ask a blind man, **What do you want Me to do for you?** It was, for at least two reasons:

1. For one thing, it revealed the heart of the asker. What you ask for in prayer is a gauge of your values and beliefs.

2. For another thing, it reveals the heart of God. **What do you want Me to do for you?** is a question that a servant would ask. Though He was and is God, Jesus came to serve.

Jesus wants to serve you; He desires to grant you your requests. He still asks, **What do you want Me to do for you?**

But He won't always give you what you ask; we saw that in the case of the mother of James and John. His answers seem guided by whether or not they will result in your **following Him, glorifying God**. Even when I don't, or can't, understand His ways, what God does is for my good and for His glory.

Which brings us to our other question – the one that puts your prayer requests into context.

#2 What Do You Want Jesus To Do Through You? (v42-43)

Jesus was and is God. He can save... He can heal... He can raise people from the dead. *Why doesn't He do all these, and more, when we ask Him?*

First, let me say that **He still does do many of these things!** Just because you haven't recently seen a healing, or a resurrection, doesn't mean they aren't occurring. You do see people passing from death to life as they are born-again by faith in Jesus. We need to be reminded that salvation is a miracle.

We always think that the healing, the miracle, the wonder, will bring God the most glory. **That wasn't true when Jesus was on the earth; it's not true today.** Often the thing that gives God the most glory is for others to see His grace is sufficient for you in your suffering.

Jesus *did* heal Bartimaeus. But that's not the main point. The main point is that Bartimaeus then followed Jesus, glorifying God:

Luke 18:42 Then Jesus said to him, **"Receive your sight; your faith has made you well."**

Made you well can, and probably should, be translated, **has saved you** (KJV). Bartimaeus had put his faith in Jesus Christ to save him. Receiving his sight was simply a sign to show that Jesus had the power to forgive sins and save him for eternity.

Luke 18:43 And immediately he received his sight, **and followed Him, glorifying God**. And all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise to God.

Bartimaeus knew his Scriptures. He knew that, when the Messiah came, He would give sight to the blind (Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:18). He asked for something consistent with the promises and purposes of God's Word. Bartimaeus' request was in harmony with **following Jesus glorifying God**. It allowed Jesus to be glorified through him at that time, and in those circumstances.

Here's a perspective to ponder: Although Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, He reveals Himself to mankind in different ways. 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 God 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 asked blind Bartimaeus, **What do you want Me to do for you?** Bartimaeus asked to recover his sight. At that moment, as Jesus was revealing Himself as the Messiah, still offering the kingdom, it brought God the most glory to give Bartimaeus his sight.

Jesus asks you, **What do you want Me to do for you?** 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].**

Applying the Word:

Believer... You're going through the world, towards a New Jerusalem, with Jesus. You're gonna get there; stop along the way as you are prompted and serve others. Remember to **boast in your infirmities**, to the glory of God.

If you are not yet a Christian... You are a spiritually blind beggar. If you only 'see' **Jesus of Nazareth**, you will sit begging your entire life. You may build an empire; you may gain the whole world; but, in the end, it will be nothing more than a few coins spread out upon your beggars garment.

See Jesus, the **Son of David** – the One Who can save you.