

August 16, 2015
18:35-43

“The Prayer Of A Man In Need”

LUKE

Where this episode took place in the ministry of Jesus is important. Jesus was approaching the city of Jericho. What do you know about Jericho. Joshua led the warriors of the Hebrews into a land that God had promised them. They came to Jericho. It was a walled city. The leaders of Jericho had made excellent preparations. They had stores of water. They had stores of food. They were utterly convinced that this was another band of careless would be conquerors. The citizens of Jericho intended one thing. Hunker down and wait it out. It was rumoured the Hebrews were led by their one and only God. What the leaders of Jericho knew was they lacked the supplies stored in that city. In time the Hebrews would simply have to pack up and move on or themselves perish for want of food and water.

And then....you know what happened. The Hebrews did not even try to storm the walls. The promise of God was that He would give them this city. They did what Joshua ordered them to do. They marched around the walls instead of trying to storm them. At precisely the right moment the order was given to blow the ram's horns. They shouted, in praise of God's name. And the walls that protected the fortress city shook, and crumbled and came tumbling down. The fortress literally dissolved before their eyes. And so to the glory of the Almighty God, Jericho was conquered. And Rahab the prostitute became a part of the would be nation Israel, and part of the birth line of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Redeemer.

This city is steeped in the reality of redemption. This city a living reminder that God does miracles. Jericho is a place where lives change. A place where the impossible becomes possible. And

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Jesus was approaching that city. A man who who blind was doing what the helpless and the homeless do. A man without options. He was begging. He could tell from the comotion that something of real significance was occurring. A movement of people was flowing up the road towards the city. When he asked what was happening somebody took the time to tell him, Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

Not just a man named Jesus, but Jesus of Nazareth. His reputation preceeded Him. Jesus teaches the people about God and His grace. About God and the Kingdom of God. A kingdom not just meant for the privileged and the powerful! A kingdom in which all of God's children can benefite. Yes, Jesus was a preacher, yes he was a teacher, but more importantly to this blind man....Jesus heals people. Heals them of their real life maladies. Heals people so that they can live for God and taste His love. Frankly, the blind man wants in. Here is the simple prayer of a man in need. "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me."

Last year I had the opportunity of viewing and listening to a video of my favourite Christian author, Max Lucado. The subject was prayer. The essence of prayer. 4 simple things. "God, it's me, I'm in need, and so are they." So here on the doorstep of Jericho where God's power is part of the history of the place, where Grace and Deliverance are time honoured memories, the blind man cries out in his need. "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me."

Remember this. Too often we forget it. Sometimes we willfully deny it. We are a Christian people. That doesn't mean we are good. It doesn't mean we are privileged. It certainly does not mean we do not face trials, experience pain, and never face

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challenges that threaten to dash all our hopes. I remember the words of a country song from a decade ago. "But this time you've made me a mountain. A mountain that's too hard to climb." Sometimes we do. We experience problems that we cannot solve, cannot overcome, cannot make go away. Regardless of our problems and our pains one thing makes us Christian. We trust in Jesus for the writing of our destiny. We trust in Jesus that things will work out as they should. As the Creeds help us to celebrate Jesus is Lord. Lord of our lives. Lord of this world. In spite of what most people think, or think they see with their eyes. We do not simply trust to our own understanding. We follow Jesus. We serve Jesus. We walk with Jesus people.

Have you watched any baseball games recently? I am talking about Blue Jays. Many of the players in that sport come from Latin America. Many have been given the name Jesus. Or Jesus. Even in Jesus time the name Jesus was surprisingly common. You may remember that

character Barabas. He was bandit. He had murdered people. Read the gospel accounts of Jesus trial and crucifixion and you learn his first name was Jesus. Jesus Barabas. Pilate gave the crowds a choice, this Jesus of Nazareth or Jesus Barabas. Which one would you have me set free?

This blind man on the side of the road at the approach to the city of Jericho has made a choice. A decision if you will. He wants the attention of Jesus. But there are many who may go by that name. This blind man wants Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus who is the Son of David for He is born of David's line. This man in need has been as specific as he could be. He does not see with his eyes. He has not heard Jesus speak. But he knows who it is he wishes to have the attention of, Bethlehem's baby, matured and grown. Jesus, Son of

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David, the proclaimer of the Kingdom of God, the one who meets needs that cannot be touched by this world's understanding of power. The One, the only One who pours out the grace of God on those whom HE touches.

The prayer of this blind man, a man with remarkable needs. He has physical needs. He lives on the streets. He does not have a job. What is he to do, he cannot even see the world around him, with all its challenges. He calls on Jesus. And he immediately identifies Jesus as the Messiah for whom his nation and his people are supposed to be awaiting. He makes the connection made in the Scriptures that the one who can change everything, no matter what we are experiencing, the one who can change everything is Jesus who is of the house and lineage of King David, according to the writings of the prophets.

Jesus! The Biblical Jesus! When I say the Jesus of the great Christian Creeds I am saying the same thing. Please remember and do not forget the historic creeds that are part of our Christian tradition were not forged out of philosophic, theological councils and gatherings. They were forged on the basis of the Biblical Word. They were forged on the basis of the Scriptures. They were hammered out based on what the Word of God says about Jesus. We call the Apostles's Creed by that name, not because it was written by the disciples. It was not. But everything to which that Creed testifies can be found in the gospels written by the followers of Jesus. In the letters written by Paul and John and Peter and the rest of the Biblical-gospel cast. We must never move away from that rootedness in

the Word of God we call the Bible. We are not at liberty to recast Jesus in some other likeness as though we knew better. He is the Son of David. He is the son of God. Because the

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Bible tells us so!

This lost and desperate needy man cried out his simple prayer. “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.” If recent illness has taught me anything it is surely this. What I need and can find nowhere else. What I need and starve for more than food and drink. What I need more than life itself for surely illness teaches us that we are looking death in the very eye, that our need goes to the very roots of our human nature. “Jesus have mercy on me.” What the world needs now is not 'love sweet love' with the implication that that is something we can get on our own. What the world needs now, what I have needed more than anything else, what you need beyond all other wants...is the mercy of God, revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

You have to give this blind man credit. There were a lot of people who listened to Jesus and who wanted to be touched by Jesus. This man knew what was at the top of his list of needs. Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. There were those who said, “Be quiet.” The implication is you are embarrassing us with your wailing and crying out. They rebuked him. But the man shouted all the more. Praise God he did! “Son of David, have mercy on me.” He created such a storm of noise and naked need, Jesus in the midst of this pedestrian crowd heard him, and stopped and instructed others to bring the man to him.

Jesus does not make assumptions as we so often do. He asks the pointed question. “What is it you want me to do for you?” And the man replies, “Lord I want to see.” I ask you, who but God could give such a gift, answer such a request, supply such a need? Who but the Son of David as the Bible defines him. The highlight of

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this episode in Jesus ministry to me, is the prayer of a man in need. And the revelation that the blind man got it right is surely in the result...Jesus heals the man and tells him the power that heals is the man's faith. “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.”

Let us pray

Lord Jesus we come before you in the nakedness of our need. We confess that what we need most is the mercy of Calvary. We are what we are. We are who you know us to be. Grant us your mercy. Forgive us. You know when we forget, that this is our greatest need. Heal us in Jesus name we pray. Amen.