

• *The connection between Jesus predicting His death and resurrection and the blind man's healing*

• *Both we and the disciples need the gift of sight to appreciate the cross*

The cross – the central point of history

1. *We need to 'see' the cross*

2. *It is necessary for Jesus to suffer*

3. *It is necessary for Jesus to die*

4. *It is necessary for Jesus to rise from the dead*

There is a connection between Jesus predicting His death and resurrection¹ and the healing of the blind man². Jesus is approaching the greatest event in the history of the world, the fulfilment of everything that was predicted and foreshadowed in the Old Testament Scriptures³. This journey to Jerusalem will be Jesus' last, for He expects to suffer greatly and to be killed⁴ and after that to be raised from the dead⁵.

But the disciples find all of this entirely impossible and incomprehensible. They cannot believe that Jesus means what He says. They are totally bewildered by His predictions. *'They did not understand anything of all these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not understand what was said'*¹.

Immediately after this statement of the disciples' spiritual blindness comes the story of the gift of sight for the blind man. Jesus comes into the neighbourhood of Jericho. Actually he was going out of the city¹ but what happened in connection with Zacchaeus brought him back again¹. Since Luke tells the story of Zacchaeus which involves a return to the town it would not be appropriate to say 'as he was leaving Jericho' (as Mark 10:46 has it).

The miracles of Jesus are literal events, but they are also acted parables. The disciples' blindness has just been mentioned¹. They need to cry out to have their 'blindness' cured. The story of the healing is literal but it is also a parable and carries a lesson for us.

1. **We need to 'see' the cross.** The disciples had been followers of Jesus for three years. They were sincere people who had faith in Him as the Son of God and had been seeking to obey His teaching. And yet when Jesus spoke of His cross they were entirely blind. Jesus is about to fulfil everything that was predicted and foreshadowed in the Old Testament Scriptures¹, and yet they are blind to what is about to happen.

This is what the entire Scriptures were pointing to. Jesus is to be the seed of the woman who crushes the serpent's head¹. He is to be God's Passover Lamb, the fulfilment of all of the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the predicted Prophet, Priest and King. This is the central point of history – but the disciples do not see it and are not ready for it.

2. **It is necessary for Jesus to suffer.** He will be mocked and shamefully treated. He will be beaten and insulted. Jesus has to become a sympathetic Saviour. He must endure every kind of trial so as to be able to sympathise with men and women who suffer in similar ways.

3. **It is necessary for Jesus to die.** On the cross He will be bearing the sins of the human race. The Father will put upon Him the just penalty for the sins of the world. There can be no salvation unless Jesus pays the price of our sins.

4. **It is necessary for Jesus to rise from the dead.** A dead Saviour would be of no value to anyone. The human race needs a Saviour who has conquered death.

Jesus said to them, *'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem . . . Everything that is written... will be accomplished...'* He gave them

18:31-43
18:35-43

18:31
18:32
18:33

18:34

see 19:1, 5, 6

18:34

18:31

see Genesis 3:15

advance knowledge of what would happen – but they were blind. And it is in this context that the story of the healing of the blind man shows us what the disciples needed.

The blind man – whose eyes were opened

1. The blind man knew his need

2. The blind man was persistent in his request

3. The blind man knows of Jesus' Messiahship

4. The blind man gets what he wanted

5. The blind man glorified God

1. **The blind man knew his need.** Do they realise their need? Do they see that they are blind to what will be the greatest event in Jesus' life?

2. **The blind man was persistent in his request.** He heard that Jesus was nearby and started crying out, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' There were people walking ahead of Jesus who wanted to get him out of the way, but the blind man refused to be discouraged. He knew what he wanted. Will the disciples be similarly determined to see what Jesus is saying about His destiny? The blind man was needy, but he was not lazy. He took steps to get his need met by Jesus. He took steps to make sure his request got to Jesus. People discouraged him but this did not hold him back. He was determined to get his sight given to him by Jesus. The disciples are blind also, not physically but in a spiritual manner. The eyes of their hearts are blinded. Will they be similarly determined to be cured by Jesus?

3. **The blind man knows of Jesus' Messiahship.** He knows that He is the 'Son of David'. Yet he wants something in addition; he wants Jesus to do His Messianic work of opening blind eyes. The disciples have also realised Jesus' greatness. They too know that He is the 'Son of David'. Will their eyes be opened to the fact that this mighty 'Son of David' must suffer and die, and be raised from the dead?

4. **The blind man gets what he wanted.** Jesus was compassionate. He stopped and found out what was happening. God likes to give us what we want! He also likes us to want the right things. So the man is healed by his faith. It leaves us with the question: will the disciples persist in their faith until they too have their eyes opened – in a deeper manner than the blind man ever experienced?

5. **The blind man glorified God.** When our eyes are opened, we see the greatness of what God does for us – and we give Him the praise.

Note

1. See Eaton, *Mark* (Preaching through the Bible), Ch. 23, for comments on the three slightly different versions of this story in the first three gospels.



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