

Easter! So What?
What Do You Want Me to Do for You?
Matthew 20:29-34

February 18, 2018

Dr. Steve Horn

Text Introduction: Today we begin a series of messages that will take us all the way through the week after Easter Sunday. Through the years you have grown accustomed to my question, “So What?” at the conclusion of my messages. I fell into this practice a few years ago as the result of making sure that every message ends on a note of action. As I routinely say, “We gather not so much for information, but for inspiration and transformation.”

As we journey toward Easter this year, we are going to pursue what I would call the ultimate “So What” preaching series. My preaching series beginning this Sunday through the week after Easter will be “Easter! So What?” We will be considering several questions surrounding the Easter accounts in the Bible. Some of the questions come from Jesus. Others questions come from the disciples. A few of the questions come from adversaries of Jesus like Pilate. Many of the questions are our questions. I think you will discover that every question impacts us. That is, all of the questions cause us to ask “So What?”

I hope that you will pray specifically during this Easter season. Pray for your preacher. Pray for your own participation. Pray for those you could invite to join you.

Our text today focuses on the beginning of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem. That is an important contextual clue for our message this morning. I want you to feel the agony of Jesus as He heads to Jerusalem. As we immediately find out in our text today, you may be surprised as to what Jesus does on this journey.

Text: As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰There were two blind men sitting by the road. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” ³¹The crowd demanded that they keep quiet, but they cried out all the more, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!”

³²Jesus stopped, called them, and said, “What do you want me to do for you?”

³³“Lord,” they said to him, “open our eyes.” ³⁴Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they could see, and they followed him.

Introduction:

This is a simple story.

(A Profound Scenario) As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. (Two Men with a pathetic situation) ³⁰There were two blind men sitting by the road. (Purposeful Strategy) When they heard that Jesus was passing by, (A Persistent Shout) they cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” (A Plea for Silence) ³¹The crowd demanded that they keep quiet, (More Pronounced Shouting) but they cried out all the more, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!”

(Providential Stop)³²Jesus stopped, called them, and said, (A Powerful but simple question) “What do you want me to do for you?”

(Practical Supplication)³³ “Lord,” they said to him, “open our eyes.” (Compassionate Solution)³⁴ Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. (Prompt Resolution) Immediately they could see, and (Personal Surrender) they followed him.

To be sure, the fact that Jesus healed these two blind men is an incredible story. In fact, it is a miracle. But the fact that the story happens at the place that it happens is the significant thing to me. Consider the scene: A crowd is following Jesus, two men crying on the side, the crowd rebukes them, they cry even louder, and then something happens...Jesus stops. Now you don't read it in the story, but you can visualize it—the whole crowd stops too. Then they watch as the conversation takes place between Jesus and the two blind men. A short conversation at that point ensues. Jesus says, “What do you want me to do for you?” “Open our eyes.” That's it. They answered in the only way we expect them to answer. This is the whole reason they have strategically positioned themselves on this road. And then 3 things immediately happen. He touched them, they regained their sight, and then they follow him. We can learn a lot when Jesus stops. We learn at least three lessons in this miracle.

- **Jesus' invitation reveals His tenderness for all and to all.**

Scenario:

Here is the scenario. He is going to Jerusalem. He is going to the cross. He has just revealed this to the disciples. Understand what is going on here in this simple story.

- (1) The humanity of Jesus is considering the earthly sorrow in His future.

Humiliation, betrayal, abandonment, suffering, death. One of the most amazing things to me about the cross is Jesus knew. What a picture of his love for us?

- (2) The divinity of Jesus is considering the eternal significance in His future.

In the cross, for once and all the final death blow will be dealt against sin, Satan, death, and Hell.

In the midst of the earthly sorrow and eternal significance, Jesus Stops! Why? Because He cared, He had compassion on the needs of two men.

Significance:

- (1) God is never too busy to be concerned about my problems.

- (2) God is never too bothered to be concerned about my problems.

Is the journey to Jerusalem important? Yes! Is the blindness of two men important! Yes!

Are there more significant problems in the world than your problems? Yes! However, there is nothing more important to God than what you are facing.

- **The answer from the blind men reveals a testimony to be followed.**

The testimony is in the way they ask.

Characteristics of Right Asking:

- (1) Faith
- (2) Humility
- (3) Desperation

And notice how this stands in contrast to the disciples in the above passage. They are debating who is the greatest and even the mother of two of the disciples was asking Jesus for the prominence of her two sons. But not so with the blind beggars. They are filled with faith, filled with humility, filled with desperation. Their prayer wasn't much, but it was from the heart. "Lord, open our eyes."

- **The response from Jesus reveals that Jesus touched more than their eyes.**

Jesus healed the blind men because He cared for them. He healed them because they asked with faith, humility, and out of desperation. But he ultimately healed them because He desired for them to follow Him. I am intrigued with the original language of this text. The word for eyes in verse 34 is not the same word that is used for eyes in verse 33. The word used in verse 33 is the familiar word, used 100 times in the New Testament. The word in verse 34 is a peculiar word used only one other time in the NT. Is there any significance? It may be hard to say for sure, but the word used in verse 34 is used in non-biblical sources in reference to the "eyes of the soul." Perhaps Matthew is saying, Jesus touched their eyes, and at the same time He touched their souls. The result was that they followed Jesus. In fact, Mark records that Jesus said, "Go" as in "Go your way." Their way was to follow Jesus.

So What?

1. **God loves us more than we can imagine.**

He stopped. The crowd is following. The crowd seeks to silence the two. The cross is before Him. But, He stopped.

2. **God longs for a heart that asks with proper motives.**

The blind men are great examples of the saying, "You don't know that Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you've got."

3. **God lifts us out of our earthly circumstances so that we might follow Jesus as Lord.**

You can't imagine God's love for you. Those of you who feel far away, you cannot imagine His love. He is pursuing you. He is pursuing you today. To those of you who have followed Jesus for a long time, don't ever forget or doubt His love. To all of us, He calls us to follow Him as Lord. This is not just a title, "Lord" reflects a testimony of following Him in every decision of life.