

Miracles of Jesus 12-11-18a

This is Sunday, the 18th of November, 2012. In the series on the miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have come to the restoration of sight for blind Bartimaeus, or the healing of the two blind men. We will begin in Mark chapter 10, verse 46.

We will be looking at the parallels in Matthew and Luke. Let's take a moment as we address ourselves to this portion of God's Word to go before the Lord in prayer, ask His blessing on us, ensure that we are receptive to the ministry of God's Holy Spirit, without which we can't learn. Shall we pray? Father, what a comfort it is to know that we are not dependent on our human strength, our physical resources, our genetic inheritance, or the strength of our own will to fulfill and accomplish the purposes of Your plan for us.

We are dependent upon Your grace and Your provision, and that is a wonderful encouragement because we know that Your grace is limitless and Your provision is perfect. We thank You for the Lord Jesus Christ who secured our salvation, who made it possible to span the gulf between our hopeless, helpless condition and the eternal realms and the righteousness in which You dwell. We thank You for Him.

We thank You for our place in Him, the unique relationship we have to You through Him in this age as the church, as His body and bride. We thank You for the gift of the Holy Spirit. What a privilege it is to have His ongoing, enduring presence with us to guide us, to encourage us, to teach us, to bring to our minds the things that we've learned.

And with the power of Your Word and the presence of Your Spirit, we know that we are able to meet any challenge, we are able to overcome any adversity, to surmount any obstacle, and to lay hold of that righteousness by faith that reflects Your glory and prepares us for service in the ages to come. We pray that as we look at this passage, that God the Holy Spirit will superintend, that He will enable both the presentation and the reception of these things, that we will individually and personally find meaningful points of application, and that through these things we will grow in grace and in knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray it in His name.

Amen. This is bringing us into the approach ramp for the conclusion of our study of the miracles. We only have a few left, and it is such a wonderful thing to be looking at the Lord Jesus Christ in person, His actions, His words, the ways that He reinforces His teaching in these miraculous acts.

It's fascinating to look at the context in each gospel where the preceding and subsequent context informs and is illuminated by these miracles. What I'd like to do here is take a quick look at the actual account of this healing of Bartimaeus. Then we're going to step back just a little bit and look at what precedes and what follows, and it is a revelation.

It is like opening, for me, my own blind eyes to step back and see how appropriately placed this particular account is. But if you're in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10, verse 46, you will see that they are traveling toward Jerusalem. Jesus has announced His intention to go to Jerusalem.

This is recorded in all of the Gospels, but He's taking sort of a meandering path, but that's His destination. Now, they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. Then many warned him to be quiet. But he cried out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me.

So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, Be of good cheer, rise, he is calling you. And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

So Jesus answered and said to him, What do you want me to do for you? The blind man said to him, Rabboni, that I may receive my sight. Then Jesus said to him, Go your way, your faith has made you well. And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

Well, knowing you as I do, I know that you have already picked up on some interesting key details in this account. There are some freighted verbs. There are some interesting actions out of all the things that could be recorded, all of the things that could be said.

There are details of position and movement in particular in this account that are going to be signposts, are going to be indicators to tell us what the meaning and purpose of this is. The first thing we're going to do, however, before we address those is take a look at the parallel accounts. So stick a marker there in Mark chapter 10 and turn to Matthew chapter 20, verse 29.

You need to keep your finger in Mark because we've got to flip back and forth to note one particular detail. This is Matthew chapter 20, verse 29. Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

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. 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. So Jesus stood still and called them and said, What do you want me to do for you? They said to him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes, and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him. This is a little bit of a subtlety, but what's the very first

difference between these two accounts that you notice? And it's not the number of blind men. What's the very first difference in the accounts? Good.

Kate got it. Look at 46 in Mark. Now they came to Jericho as he went out of Jericho with his disciples, with a great multitude.

Here's Bartimaeus. What does it say in Matthew 20? As they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed him. They came to Jericho as he went out of Jericho.

Matthew doesn't say anything about coming to Jericho. It says as he leaves, right? Well, for the remaining piece of the puzzle, turn over to Luke, chapter 18. Luke 18, beginning in 35.

There's something about the location here. Luke 18, 35. Then it happened, as he was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging.

Hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, and he cried out, saying, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. 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.

So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to him. When he had come near, he asked him, saying, What do you want me to do for you? He said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. Then Jesus said to him, Receive your sight, your faith has made you well.

Immediately he received his sight, followed him glorifying God. All the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God." Unique details in each account, but the first difference, no two accounts of these three agree exactly in the way they present how the story starts. It's Jericho in all three books, right? Matthew says, Now as they went out of Jericho.

Mark says, Now they came to Jericho as he went out of Jericho. You could say, well, he has to come before he goes, so that's not really a conflict. But you get to Luke, and he says, Then it happened as he was coming near Jericho.

So is he on the way in, or is he on the way out? That's the first question. And you say, What? What's the two-word response to that? Who cares? It makes a difference. It makes a difference.

There are no errors. There are no, oh, well, it's a minor discrepancy, don't pay attention. There's a reason why Luke says that he was coming near, and why Matthew says he was coming out.

There's a reason for this. Mark assures that you don't miss it, because he says both. He came near to Jericho, and as he was leaving, this thing took place.

So before we can get to any of the juicy details, this is the very first clue that something is going on. How do we reconcile it? Well, you can look around, you can check commentaries and various things have been suggested by way of solution to this apparent contradiction. As people who won't even see the story, they just say, Ah, contradiction.

See, they can't even get their story straight. One of them says he was going in, one of them says he was going out. What is it? One of the more common suggestions is that there were two Jerichos.

There was the old Jericho of Joshua fame. Walls of Jericho came tumbling down, and this was the destroyed city that was not to be rebuilt. Remember, it would be a curse on anybody that rebuilt it and so on.

And that this large ruin of the old Jericho was still there, and there was just a little village on its outskirts. But then there was a new sort of Herodian age Jericho, and so one account says as he was leaving the old Jericho, the other one is talking about as he entered this other Jericho, the modern version, the more popular one. We do know that this took place at many sites in the ancient world where an ancient tell or mound would exist and the city would drift or move or be relocated because maybe a new Roman road went through.

We saw this when we were looking at Ephesus and Colossae and some of those towns where a river might shift its banks and what used to be a port is no longer a port. Well, that's a little bit stretchy to me, maybe, but why would that be significant? You want to go look at the old Jericho or the new Jericho, and especially the distance that Luke is, why would he be trying to draw this difference out? Luke is the real fly in the ointment. It's pretty easy to reconcile Matthew and Mark, but when Luke says that he was drawing near and says nothing about him coming out, you can't be drawing near if you're leaving, unless you're Michael Jackson and you're moonwalking.

You look like you're drawing near, but you're actually going the other way, and he doesn't do that anymore. So what's going on here? I don't think the two Jerichos solution, I don't find it compelling. If you want the two Jerichos solution, God bless you, maybe you can work something out.

Here's what I think, and this, by the way, once I got to looking, is also the solution that is proposed. I always like to find somebody that agrees with me, but my Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties, if you go and check that, happily, he drew the same conclusion that I do. This is what I think.

Blind Bartimaeus is sitting by the side of the road, covered in his mantle. Jesus is on his way to Jericho. The people in Jericho hear that he is coming.

You know, Jesus often would send an advanced party. We know that he sent two disciples ahead of time to get ready for the upper room thing. Jesus didn't just blow into town with no planning or no preparation.

Generally speaking, if he was going to go and spend any time in a town, there would be some preparation and some knowledge. He didn't just show up on the doorstep with 12 disciples and say, hey, got any food? That would be kind of rude. So some way unknown to us, knowledge of his impending arrival in Jericho has preceded him.

I suspect that Thaddeus or somebody went ahead. It could be that somebody overheard or somebody had been in the previous village and some fast young man ran ahead and said, hey, do you know Jesus is coming this way? Once the people of Jericho hear that he is coming, he is very notorious. He is very well known.

And so a large crowd of people goes out to meet him. So you've got Jesus coming to Jericho. You've got a crowd coming out to meet Jesus.

And then, you know, welcome. Maybe a key to the city or maybe we just want to hear what you have to say because you're so infamous. And so this crowd and Jesus are moving back toward Jericho now.

So there's been a sweep of people out. There's a sweep of people coming back in. Bartimaeus says, what's all the hubbub? Bub.

And they come and they say, this is Jesus of Nazareth. You have to be a Warner Brothers cartoon fan to recognize that. And he asks about it.

And perhaps at this point he cries out, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. But the whole crowd and Jesus, this huge welcoming committee and all of this noise goes on into the city. Bartimaeus is still sitting there.

Jesus spends his time in Jericho. And as he comes out of the city, Bartimaeus is still there, by this time probably joined by another blind man. And they cry out, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us.

Alternating with Bartimaeus, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. He hasn't given up. It's interesting that the procession goes by apparently, and it is on the way out.

Now that reconciles all the accounts. What you see is a great deal of compression, which we have seen before in these stories, where the entire interval between Jesus going by the first time and going by the second time is omitted in Matthew and Mark. And actually in Luke, because none of them say he blew by and you have to compare all three accounts.

So it's sort of a hidden truth. Pay attention now. It is sort of a hidden truth that you only

get by careful comparison of Scripture, that there is an interval between the first time Bartimaeus sees Jesus and the second time he sees him.

There is a gap that is hidden, unless you very carefully look at Scripture, between Jesus' first appearance and his second appearance. There is a gap between his first appearance and his second appearance. There is a gap between his first appearance and his second appearance that does not seem obvious to your Old Testament saints that are watching.

Bartimaeus has to wait for the second appearance to get his healing. He calls out the first time, but Jesus is going somewhere else. Jesus has something else to do.

Now what is that something else? Matthew doesn't record it, and Mark doesn't record it. Luke records it. What happened when Jesus went into Jericho? Well, first of all, what's the significance of Jericho? Not a difficult question, at least for us.

You ask a run-of-the-mill Christian, there are a lot of people who don't even know that the walls of Jericho fell, don't know about Joshua, don't know about the details of how that took place. They need to take the city of Jericho. It's the gateway to the whole land of Canaan as they cross the Jordan.

They've got to be circumcised first. They wait the three days. Where do they go? Jericho.

What do they do? They march up, blow a trumpet, the walls fall down, and the city is theirs, right? Is that what happened? How did Jericho fall? How was it taken? Do you remember the story? Seven days, Israel goes and marches around the city silently. Actually, six days. What happens on the seventh day? They go to the city and march around, and then march around, and then march around, and then march around, and then march around, and then march around.

And after they have marched around the city seven times, blown the trumpet, Joshua fit the Battle of Jericho, and the walls come tumbling down. Jericho has a delay between the initial approach and the final deliverance into the hands of Israel. It's a week-long delay, right? Jericho, whatever else you want to say about it, is a town where stuff takes time.

You don't walk up, and behold, Joshua, blow in the direction of Jericho, walls fall down. It didn't happen that way. They had to be obedient, and they had to wait, and they had to march, and they had to have faith.

Well, that's the freight. That's the background and the back story, the frame of reference for Jericho. So Jesus goes into Jericho.

Well, what happens there? If you look at Luke's account, there's a little bit of disposition, there's a little bit of chronological out-of-orderness, because in verse 35 it says, as He was coming near Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the road begging. That's on the way in, as He came near. All of the accounts agree.

What happens when Jesus enters Jericho? Look at chapter 19 of Luke. Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho, went all the way into the city and went to the far side. Behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector.

We know this story. He sought to see who Jesus was, but he could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. He was a sandblower.

He was a small guy. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a tree. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him and said to him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.

So he made haste and came down and received him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner. Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, Look, Lord, I give half my goods to the poor, and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore it fourfold.

Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house. Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Bartimaeus sees Jesus going in, cries out to him. He goes into Jericho. Zacchaeus has salvation come to his house, even though everybody says he's a sinner.

He's an outcast despised by the Jews. Jesus says, He too is a son of all the possible things he could say. He too is a son of Abraham.

What does Paul say about sons of Abraham? We are all sons of Abraham. How? By faith. Zacchaeus has faith.

Zacchaeus wants to see who Jesus is. As soon as Jesus says, I'm coming to your house, sort of standing at the door and knocking as it were, he opens the door and in comes the Lord Jesus and sups with him and says, Deliverance has come to your house. This man is also a son of Abraham, despite popular opinion.

Having dined at Zacchaeus's house, Jesus now leaves. Because remember, there's entrance and exit. If you're coming from the north to Jerusalem, there is a road that goes from Jerusalem to and through Jericho.

But if you pass through Jericho and leave on the other side of town, you're not heading toward Jerusalem anymore. You're heading east. If you're coming from the north and you detour into Jericho, to go to Jerusalem, you've got to come back out the same way you came in.

So he must go back by the same place where Bartimaeus is. Now, all of that is background. I wish we had time to do Zacchaeus, but we did it when we did the Gospel

of Luke.

So, you know, that would be a good review. By the way, our studies are now all playable on any device. I get rid of all the WMAs with Daniel's help.

Daniel did the conversion and I did the swapping out and uploading yesterday. So if you can get to the folder, they will play on anything now. Apple devices wouldn't play the WMAs.

Secondly, I've started making the lists where you don't have to do FTP at all. You just like the new ones that have the year afterward. I got the hardest one done yesterday, which is Genesis, but they will all be playable now by just going to the list and clicking.

It'll play on anything. Apple, Android, iPod, iPad, I this, I that, I wish, I won't. It'll play on anything.

So give me a little time this afternoon to finish copying the lists up and from now on we shouldn't have any download difficulties. So you can look for Luke. You can look for chapter 19 and get the full story on Zacchaeus.

Say all of that to say this, Jesus has come and there was a man of faith, a son of God, a son of value, a son of worth, Bar Timaeus, which we have not only his name in Aramaic, but then it's translated for us, Bar Timaeus, the son of Timaeus. If we missed it, Bar Timaeus, son of Timaeus. What is Timaeus? Timae is value, worth, righteousness, honor.

Timae is honor, translated honor in many places. But he is bypassed. Jesus goes, and this is not an easy detail to pick up.

There are people who argue with this interpretation because they say, it just doesn't look that way if you read the account. I don't see any gap. Well, do you see any gap between the first and second advent of the Lord Jesus in the Old Testament? You do not.

You have to really look carefully to differentiate the suffering servant appearance from the conquering king appearance of the Lord Jesus. There is a seamless presentation of the Lord Jesus in the Old Testament that leaves out that gap. John the Baptist struggled with this, remember? He had to send servants to ask the Lord Jesus, I know you're the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

I know you're the suffering servant, but are you he that shall come? Are you the conquering king, or do we look for another? Are you one Messiah that does both, or is there going to be a second conquering king? It was tough to get it from the Old Testament. It's tough to get this exact route from just one gospel. Why do you think we've got four? There are times when we're supposed to compare them, and here's what happened.

Jesus didn't heal Bartimaeus on the way in. Matthew and Luke tell us that he got healed on the way out. Luke includes the full account of Bartimaeus before the story of Zacchaeus, just for convenience, and because you're not supposed to be able to get it out of one account.

But you look at all three and this is what happens. So there is this single account by Luke. He's the only one that talks about Zacchaeus.

So as he was coming near Jericho, here's a certain blind man sitting by the road begging. Son of David, have mercy. Who is this? Well, it's Jesus.

Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. Now, did the person that he asked his name explain that he was the Son of David, or had Bartimaeus already heard about this and realizes this isn't just any old buddy, this is the Jesus of whom I have heard, and I'm already inclined to believe, and I think he's the real deal. And once he finds out that this is, in fact, Jesus, he thought, you know, what are the chances he's going to come to Jericho? Here he is.

He cries out and cries out, and Jesus passes by. Now, what is it that Bartimaeus does not do that we saw a previous pair of blind men do back in, what was it, Matthew chapter 9? Yeah, Matthew chapter 9, verse 27. Jesus passed on from there.

Two blind men followed him, crying aloud, Have mercy on us, Son of David. When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, Do you believe I'm able to do this? You remember that? We've done that miracle, the healing of the two blind men. What did they do that Bartimaeus does not do? They jumped up and followed him to the house.

If that was this, Bartimaeus and or his companion, not real sure when the companion joined him, would have jumped up and followed him, and this would have happened at Zacchaeus' house, right? It didn't happen. It's one of the ways we know it's not the same account. There's people that try to say, Hey, you know, I think that's just a corruption.

It's the same story told two different ways. The same thing they say about Abraham going to Egypt and saying that Sarah was his sister, and you have that in Egypt, and then you have it again with Abimelech, and they think, Oh, it's just a corruption. It's the same story told two different ways, and then you have it happening here.

Not so. Very specific. For some reason, Bartimaeus is not able to follow, does not follow.

Jesus goes in, spends hours eating at Zacchaeus' house. On the way out, he calls out again. Well, we're going to pause and take our break and come back and look at the significance of these details, but if you only have time to hear this lesson, somebody has to leave during the break, somebody is listening to this on a recording, this is all you get, and you say, Well, but what do I take away from that? It's all prospect.

It's all background. It's all just laying the foundation. One thing you can see from this is that often in the plan of God, example after example after example, there is the promise of deliverance, there is the opportunity for deliverance, but we must be patient and wait.

We must be patient and wait. Joseph's God, O Lord, deliver me, he doesn't get delivered for years. He gets sold into slavery, goes from bad to worse.

He's falsely accused at Potiphar's house and thrown in prison. Now he's not just a slave, he's a prisoner slave. He thinks he's got an opportunity with the butcher and the baker, doesn't happen.

Ultimately, finally, there is deliverance. Ultimately, he is raised up on high and becomes a means of deliverance to others, but not without this delay. Faithful Israelites, you think of Simeon and Anna and others who recognized who Jesus was, Elizabeth and Zechariah and Joseph and Mary and others who were ready and waiting for the deliverance of God and the person of the Messiah, and he came and they saw him be born.

The shepherds who came and saw the child, the wise men who came and recognized who he was, well, three decades pass. It's not like he's born and behold, the kingdom descends out of heaven and lights on earth. Three decades later, he comes and thinks, okay, now it's going to happen, and once again, there is a disappointment and it doesn't happen.

We must be patient and wait on God's timing. God's timing is perfect and God's timing is purposeful. There is a reason why Bartimaeus has to wait, and we're going to see it when we come back from the break.

There is a reason why we have to wait. By the way, in the interval, this is our opportunity for faith. If you say, oh Lord, and plunk, they've got commercials for this now.

As soon as you speak, the insurance man shows up or whatever. That's not Christianity. Where would faith be? Oh Lord, before you ask, I will answer.

Plop, here comes the answer. Where's your opportunity for faith? Where's your opportunity for endurance? These, by the way, are the things that spread the field. If you've watched the sprints at the Olympics, those people, you know, the little short dashes, there's not a lot of distance between the first guy and the last guy.

Look at the marathon. If you want to see who's got the legs and who's got the wind and who's got the heart and who's got the willpower, look at a marathon. You've got a spread of minutes, in some cases hours, between the first finisher and the last one.

Why? Because that wait from the start to the finish and everything that's in between spreads the field and you find out who is really qualified to win that race. Very, very seldom. Once in a while you'll see a sprint to the finish in a marathon, but even then you

say, those two, that's what I call a marathon runner.

But it spreads the field. How is God going to reveal people of great faith and people of great obedience and great fruitfulness and differentiate them from others if there is not a period of time? God gives this opportunity to the nation of Israel. I will dig around it.

I will plant it. I will keep a wall around it. I'll cultivate and I'll give it time to see if it bears fruit.

It's not just going to be a, you know, one question pop quiz. This is going to be a 50 question final. This is how we find out who knows what they should know and who doesn't.

So delay is valuable. Peter talked about this. Everything goes on as the beginning.

Do you not know that the long suffering of God is designed to encourage your change of mind? God waits in the days of Noah to see if somebody will wake up and realize that deliverance is available. God waits in this day to see who of us are going to persevere and grow and get strong in this time of resistance and this time of pressure. Who's going to use it to advantage? Who is going to overcome? No such thing as an overcomer if there's no obstacles.

I overcame what? Stepping from here to there on a flat surface? That's not overcoming. Overcoming is hitting obstacles. Bartimaeus has to wait.

It's not immediately evident unless you compare all three Gospel accounts, but he has to wait. And it's interesting. He's not a guy that runs in and follows and gets his deliverance at the house.

He's got to wait for the return of the Lord Jesus to get it, and that is the significance that we'll be looking at when we come back from the break.