

The Beggar & The Climber • Teaching Notes

Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem for his Final Passover. And to get there, he is traveling along the road that will take him through Jericho while he's on the way. It is on this road that he meets two men, each in a different situation. As we read these stories, see if you can relate to either of these guys! Let's start with the beggar just outside of Jericho . . .

1. Read the full text of Luke 18:35-43

So here he is - In a desperate position: Desperate position: can't see, economically dependent, socially invisible – "sitting and begging."

- He's Blind. He has no way to provide for himself. In that culture, blindness meant total dependence on the mercy of others.
- He's Poor. The text says he was "sitting by the roadside begging." That's the lowest rung of society. He's literally living off scraps.
- He's Invisible. The crowd walks right past him every day. He's just part of the background noise.

Maybe that's where you feel like you are. You've been stepped over, ignored, pushed aside, and passed by. But I want you to notice something: Jesus sees the people no one else sees!

This man had a Faith that would not quit

Verse 36 says he heard the crowd going by. He couldn't see, but he could hear. That's how faith works. *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God"* (Romans 10:17). Use what you have!

When Jesus is passing by, he cries out, *"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"* That's not a casual prayer. That's a desperate, faith-filled cry. And immediately, the crowd tries to shut him down. Verse 39 says: *"Those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent."* Isn't that always what happens? The moment you start to pursue Jesus, the moment you finally get something going, and then voices come to silence you.

- "Don't get your hopes up."
- "God doesn't care about little you"
- "God doesn't do miracles anymore."
- "You're not gonna make it"
- "You've cried out long enough; nothing's changed."

But the Bible says, **"he cried out all the more."**

Verse 40 is awesome: *"And Jesus stopped."* Imagine this. The Creator of the universe, the One who spoke galaxies into being, is on His way to Jerusalem, on His way to the cross, with eternity hanging in the balance—and He stops for a beggar nobody else cared about. Why? Because faith stops Him. Jesus will keep right on passing by until somebody calls on Him in faith.

Then, in Verse 41, Jesus asked this man A Personal Question

"What do you want me to do for you?" Now, that's a strange question to ask a blind man! It's obvious what the man needs. But Jesus wants him to declare it. There's power in speaking what you believe.

The beggar says, *"Lord, let me recover my sight."* Notice he calls Him "Lord." He isn't just looking for healing—he's recognizing authority. And immediately Jesus says, *"Recover your sight; your faith has made you well."*

Then, There's The Ripple Effect . . . Verse 43 says, "Immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God."

Now, Think about this: the crowd that tried to silence him is now praising God Because of Him. The same people who said, "Be quiet" are now saying, "Glory to God!"

It took a blind man seeing to open THEIR eyes! Your breakthrough might be the very thing that helps others see Jesus clearly. Isn't it something that the Blind Man could see far more than the crowd? They were looking at natural things, but he was seeing spiritually. They were limited; he was unlimited.

Alright, now let's follow Jesus a little further down the road into Jericho. A few steps later, He meets Zacchaeus. Same road . . .

2. Read the full text of Luke 19:1-10

Zacchaeus is a surprising character, and he is the opposite of the beggar.

- He's rich. The beggar had nothing; Zacchaeus has plenty.
- He's powerful. As chief tax collector, he oversees others and has authority.
- He's Completely Visible . . . But he's despised. Tax collectors were seen as traitors, partnering with Rome & cheating their own people out of hard-earned money. Greedy.
- The other man was Blind, Poor, & Invisible! What a contrast!

Consider this: The beggar was outcast because he couldn't see anything; Zacchaeus was outcast because he could see too much! He saw an opportunity to exploit people, to line his own pockets. Both are rejected, just for different reasons. But, . . . He has The same hunger as the Blind Man!

Verse 3 says, "*And he was seeking to see who Jesus was.*" That's the same longing as the blind beggar. Two very different men, but the same hunger in their hearts.

But Zacchaeus had two problems:

1. He was Physically short. He couldn't see over the crowd. Did you ever hear that children's Sunday school song? "Zacchaeus was a wee little man and a wee little man was he, he climbed up in the sycamore tree, for the Lord he wanted to see!"
2. He was Spiritually short. Short on righteousness, short on peace, short on fulfillment.

So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree. More like a FIG TREE This is God's provision ahead of time! Don't rush past this. Who planted that tree? Years, maybe decades before Zacchaeus was born, somebody planted a seed in the ground. That tree grew right in the spot where Zacchaeus would need it.

God always provides ahead of time. Think about Abraham—when he took Isaac up Mount Moriah, God had already put a ram in the thicket. God's provision was waiting before the need was even there.

It's the same here. That tree wasn't an accident. It was a divine setup. Jesus comes to the place where He has already made provision.

Then, Jesus calls him by name. Verse 5 says, "When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.'" Notice the wording:

"the place." Not just a place . . . the place. The exact spot God had chosen. And Jesus calls him by name. He doesn't say, "Hey, you, up in the tree." He says, "Zacchaeus." Jesus knows your name. He knows exactly where you are. He knows exactly what tree you've climbed to try and see Him. For the beggar, Jesus said, "What do you want?" For Zacchaeus, He said, "I want you." Both were personal. Both were face-to-face meetings.

The joyful response in Verse 6 says, "So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully." Zacchaeus hurries down and receives Jesus joyfully; then he repents publicly and pledges restitution – a transformed life. Jesus declares, "Today salvation has come to this house... For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Think about the contrast: the blind man was told to rise up; Zacchaeus was told to come down. One had to be lifted, the other humbled. But both had to move. Both had to respond in faith.

And then comes the grumbling. Verse 7: *"And when they saw it, they all grumbled, 'He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.'"* The crowd is at it again! They don't want Jesus stopping for the beggar or dining with the sinner. But Jesus doesn't take His cues from the crowd. He came to seek and save the lost.

In Verse 8, Zacchaeus stands up and says, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone, I restore it fourfold." He's had a A Transformed Life

What a change! The man who had been taking is now giving. The man who was despised is now generous. That's what happens when Jesus enters your house – you don't just get salvation, you get transformation. You get a Lasting Impact!

And Jesus seals the deal in verse 9: *"Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."*

3. Words, Obedience, and Reaction Time

- Words are important. The blind beggar had to speak (cry out) – and he received exactly what he asked for. The Bible warns: *"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits."* (Proverbs 18:21).
- The tongue matters: James warns that the tongue, though small, can set a whole forest ablaze – choose your words with care.
- Obedience is important. Zacchaeus *obeyed* – he came down and opened his home. James declares: *"So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin."* (James 4:17).
- If Jesus asked you, "What do you want me to do for you?" Would you be ready to answer?
- What are you short on? – time, money, strength, hope? Zacchaeus was short in stature; what are you short on today?

4. Contrast of the Beggar & the Climber sounds like this :

- One was lost, sitting by the road.
One was lost, sitting in a tree.
Neither knew what was about to happen!!
- One was low to the ground.
One was high above the crowd.
Neither one started in the right position.
- One was hearing, but not seeing.
One was seeing, but not hearing.
Neither could see Jesus!
- One was a beggar with nothing.
One was rich with plenty.
Neither could buy the miracle they needed!
- One was hated because he could see nothing.
One was hated because he could see too much.
Both needed to see Jesus!
- One would have been passed by unless he cried out.
One would have been passed by unless he climbed down.
Both had to take some kind of action!
- One couldn't see the crowd, but heard Jesus was coming.
One could only see the crowd until he heard Jesus call him.
Both had a crowd problem!
- One had nothing to give.
One had plenty to give.
Both gave up their pride to see Jesus!
- One had no vision in his eyes.
One had no vision in his heart.
Both saw Jesus for the first time that day!
- One couldn't run at all.
One ran ahead and climbed a tree.
Both used their faith that day!
- One had to look up to see Jesus.
One had to look down to see Him.
Both had to focus their attention on Him!

- One sat in an uncertain place on a long road.
One sat in a certain place on a sturdy tree.
Both came from a position of humility!
- One knew he had to SAY something.
One knew he had to DO something.
Both had to act on what they knew!
- One answered the questions Jesus asked.
One obeyed the directives Jesus gave.
- One came to where Jesus was.
One had Jesus come to where he was.
- When the crowd saw the blind man healed, they praised God.
When the crowd saw Zacchaeus forgiven, they grumbled.

Different circumstances, same Savior.

- Both needed Jesus
- Both were sincere.
- Both got what they came for.
- In both cases, Jesus did what He said He would do.
- Both spoke directly, face to face with Jesus. Exodus - Moses
- Both had to break through the opposition of a crowd.
- In both cases, the crowd was a problem. Don't go with the crowd
- With the blind man, things were not rushed at all.
- With Zacchaeus, he ran ahead and climbed, then Jesus told Zacchaeus to hurry and come down.
- The tree provision got Zacchaeus to the place where he could see, but ultimately, he had to leave the provision and approach the provider!

Sometimes when Jesus touches you, there is a physical change, and sometimes there is a spiritual change. The blind man received his sight that day, but Zacchaeus didn't get any taller! Zacchaeus didn't come that day to get taller; he came to receive Jesus into his house and get saved. The blind man's crowd didn't disappear, but he pressed through the opposition to be healed. All of these contrasts show that no matter who you are, no matter where you are, no matter what your condition is . . . Jesus comes to meet you.

- Whether you are low by the road or high in the tree.
- Whether you have nothing to give or more than enough to give.
- Whether you are blind in your eyes or blind in your heart.
- Whether the crowd praises or the crowd grumbles.

Jesus doesn't pass you by. He seeks you out. He calls you by name. He brings salvation right where you are.

Here's the The Good News in these stories . . .

- The blind man shows us: *Jesus hears the cry of desperate faith.*

- Zacchaeus shows us: *Jesus sees the seeker before the seeker even knows what he's looking for.*
- Together, they show us: Jesus responds to both the cry of the needy and the curiosity of the searching.

And then the whole thing is summed up in that great final verse. The Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is openly displayed in Chapter 19, verse 10 . . .

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

That's the thread that ties these two stories together.

5. Practical Points – "So what can you do?"

1. Cry out if you're desperate.
 - Don't let the crowd silence you. Call in faith – *"Jesus, have mercy!"* God hears that cry. Billy Graham says, HELP!
2. Climb up if you're searching.
 - Take an action step: remove obstacles; do what it takes to see Jesus. Zacchaeus ran and climbed to get a view. What distractions should you eliminate in your life?
3. Come close when He calls.
 - When Jesus asks, "What do you want?" or says, "Come down," respond immediately with humility and obedience. ACT NOW
4. Leave the provision; embrace the Provider.
 - Don't mistake the provision (tree, money, resources, routine) for God. Zacchaeus had resources – but salvation is in the Person of Jesus Christ, and no other!
6. Shorten your reaction time to obedience.
 - When will you put God first? – now, next week, next month, next year? God may be calling you *today*. Tomorrow is a dangerous word!

How does any of this affect me and my daily life?

At some point . . . You've got to finally Recognize that no matter your position in life, no matter your problem, Jesus is able to meet your need. It could be big or small! Jesus is seeking, he has provided, but are you ready to stop him in his tracks? Are you ready to call on him in Faith? The question is: Will you call out? Will you come down? Don't miss Him today. Call on Him. Come to Him.