

Thursday, August 20, 2020

Open my eyes Lord - Pastor Hank French

As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. There were two blind men sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" The crowd sternly ordered them to be quiet; but they shouted even more loudly, "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!" Jesus stood still and called them, saying, "What do you want me to do for you?" They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they regained their sight and followed him (Matthew 20:29-34).

This is a highly symbolic story, crying out for interpretation. A large crowd was following Jesus as he left the city of Jericho. His fame as a healer was spreading. Matthew 4 gives a clear picture of what was going on: "So, his fame spread..., and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains..., and he cured them. And great crowds followed him."

They weren't necessarily following him for religious reasons; they wanted healing, they wanted relief from their suffering, and who could blame them. Out of his compassion and mercy, Jesus healed folks, but it was not only their bodies he wanted to heal—he wanted to heal their spirits as well, he wanted to open their hearts and minds, open their "eyes" to the truth about God. He wanted them to know that they were loved by God and that they possessed the dignity of the children of God. That's really what he came for—to disclose the truth about God by living the truth about God.

There were two blind men sitting by the side of the road when Jesus and the crowd were passing by. They symbolize those who have heard of Jesus, but their "eyes" have not been opened to "see" who he is and to understand what he has to say about God and their relationship with God. They have heard that he is a healer and so they shout out, "Lord have mercy on us, Son of David!"

The crowd doesn't like it and tries to shut them up. The crowd want Jesus' attention for themselves and has little if any compassion for the blind men sitting on the side of the road. You could say that their "eyes" were not open.

But the blind men won't shut up. They keep crying out to Jesus and Jesus hears them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asks. They said to him, "Let our eyes be opened." And Jesus was moved with compassion; he touched their eyes and they were opened—they could "see."

And what could they "see" with their newly opened "eyes?" The love, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, and salvation of God in the man Jesus. And they followed him, as do all whose "eyes" are opened to his truth. And as the gospels make clear over and over again, to follow Jesus is to mirror his love, compassion, mercy, forgiveness and salvation, because you can "see" that it's the right way to live.

Prayer: Jesus, make this our daily prayer: "Lord, let my eyes be opened so I can know you and truly follow you." Amen.