

Blind Resistance (part 1)

Matthew 9:27-31.

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Introduction –

Do not confuse this story with the famous story of the blind man Bartimeus...

1. The blind men.

- A- Have mercy on us.
- B- Son of David.
- C- Do you believe I can do this?
- D- Disobedience.

2. The mute man.

- A- Spiritual discernment.
- B- 5 characteristics of a Miracle: (i) Immediate, (ii) Public, (iii) Testable, (iv) Beyond medicine's capability, (v) not premeditated.

3. The Pharisees.

- A- As blind as the first men.
- B- Speaking lies by the devil's power (the opposite of the second man).

Conclusion –

Matthew's goal is to summarize the pressure Jesus was facing.

- A- Jesus is who he says he is.
- B- Resistance on both great and small level.

First, the funny aspect of this verse is that it says, “the blind men followed him.” Any skeptical person would quickly say “this is impossible.” But just look a couple verses below and you will see that a mute person was “brought” to Jesus. There is no mystery here, the blind men were both brought to Jesus by people willing to take them to Jesus. The emphasis on the fact that “they followed” Jesus, tells us that they went to Jesus “on their own;” they requested to be brought to Jesus.

Their statement: Son of David have mercy on us” gives us two pieces of information: (i) Mercy, Jesus is merciful. (ii) Son of David, a title used only to describe the Messiah the King. The two blind men, though they have an impaired vision, know a lot about who Jesus is. Most of the people in Jesus’ time, with eyes to see, couldn’t see that Jesus, the merciful one, and the king, was walking among them.

Now, their remarkable faith must be commended. Despite all their limitations, they managed to get themselves inside the same house as Jesus. They have overcome (i) physical limitations, (ii) social barriers, (iii) requested help from others to take them to Jesus. Speaking in today’s terms, they are by far above the average of what is seen out there. However, their faith would be “tested” a last time before Jesus grants them healing.

Jesus asks a question, “do you believe I can do this?”

What an interesting question. You might think, after all they have conquered, why would Jesus still ask them another question? Why would Jesus “raise up another barrier” to their faith? Why doesn’t Jesus just grant their request? It is funny, speaking from a very practical perspective, you would think, “Jesus, it is obvious they believe in you. *That’s why* they are here in front of you!”

There is a reason behind Jesus’ question. If we are honest, it is “easy” to say we believe, but when challenges knock at our doors, that’s the moment our faith is truly tested. The old saying is true, “easier said than done.” That’s the very reason Jesus is asking the question. “You say you believe me, do you?”

We can sum up this interaction with two illustrations:

- (i) Doctor and patient. If you go to the doctor but do not disclose your need, the doctor can't help you. Here these two blind men are given the opportunity to be in the doctor's presence; and they open up and truly believe, and Jesus says "it will be done according to *your faith*."
- (ii) Golf vs Tennis. There is no "challenge" from an opponent in a golf game. Basically, you hit the ball by yourself until the hole. Most of us think of our beliefs just like a golf game: "I believe this and that and *nobody* will change my mind; I am SURE what I believe is true." Now here is an interesting fact: Jesus treats our beliefs like a tennis match. The two blind men put the ball on Jesus' court "Son of David, have mercy on us;" and Jesus puts the ball back to their court, "do you really believe I can do this? Because as a matter of fact, it will be according to *your faith* I will do this miracle."

The two men believed and received! Their faith was not just theory, but reality. Their (golf kind of) beliefs were indeed unshakable, because Jesus "did put the ball back to their court" and according to *their faith*, Jesus healed them.

This first section of the text finishes with the sad note that, though they had great faith, they were disobedient to Christ. Jesus warned them severely not to tell anyone about their healing; and yet they disobeyed the Lord.

Moving forward to the next person in this story, the mute one. He was brought to Jesus, and what's apparent in the text is that everyone knows he is dealing with demonic oppression. What was unclear to the people, was that the oppression was affecting the voice of the person. Now Jesus, with spiritual discernment, notices that both the speech and the oppression were tied to one another; then he delivers the person from the demonic oppression, and automatically the person speaks.

I would like to point out the five characteristics of an authentic miracle: (i) Immediate, (ii) not premeditated, (iii) public, (iv) testable, (v) beyond medicine's capability. If noticed, all these characteristics are found in here.

This is important because we can't mix common grace with miracles. It's true indeed, when we pray because we are sick, take our meds, get some rest, and 3 to 5

days later, we feel well; we still can give glory to God by saying “I am healed and well, thanks to God.” But that’s common grace, that’s not miracles. A miracle is immediate, not premeditated, beyond medicine’s capability, an intervention of God in our lives. It’s important we keep those separated when talking about healing.

Moving forward, the final person (I should say group of people) we see in this text are the Pharisees. And the text is ironic/paradoxical because the Pharisees are the picture of true blindness and true muteness. (i) The two blind men were naturally blind; the Pharisees are spiritually blind. (ii) The man was mute due to demonic-oppression; the Pharisees open their mouths to speak lies – and the devil is a father of lies. Oh how much they wish they were mute, so that they would be spared of the judgment that is to come upon them.

The Pharisees couldn’t deny the miracles they were seeing, therefore they deny the source of the miracle. The obvious logic is that the good overpowers the evil. That’s common sense (even non-religious people agree to that). However, the Pharisees went all the way wrong by spreading fake news about Jesus Christ. Their lies are so inappropriate, since the Prophets have prophesied that God’s Anointed One would “open the eyes of the blind” and “the tongue of the mute.” (Isaiah 42:6-7, 35:5-6. & Ezekiel 3:26, 24:27)

The conclusion of this section functions like a summary of Jesus’ life: He keeps himself busy by doing good, the opposition keeps themselves busy by resisting him. We can learn a valuable lesson: People reject/resist acts of kindness.

Application: If Jesus suffered resistance and the fake news came after him, do not be discouraged when it happens with us as well. Because it is indeed happening right now!