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Sermon Notes

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## **Two Astounding Miracles, Two Opposite Reactions**

### **Matthew 9:27-34**

#### Introduction: The Gifts of Sight and Speech

##### Marvel of eyesight

- “Fearfully and wonderfully made” Psalm 139... perhaps nowhere more true than the organ of sight
- At this moment, your eyes making billions of calculations per second
- Astounding amount of information comes through light and sight: “If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light.”
- Eyes funnel two million fibers into the optic nerve-auditory nerve (hearing) only 30,000

##### Dependence on eyesight

- Beauty of creation flows in through the eye
- Sight mediates, validates other senses-when we hear, touch, smell something, we turn to look
- Try this: look at an object near you for a second or two; then turn away or close your eyes... you will be able to reach out and touch the object immediately; vision has burned spatial location into your mind; VISION ORDERS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF THE WORLD
- Vision saturates language: “**insight**” for poets view of world, what we pray for when reading scripture; “**foresight**” for business analysts who write for Wall Street Journal and for prophets; “**hindsight**” is said to be 20/20 for regretful people who are sadder but wiser; “**out of sight, out of mind**” is the excuse for forgetful people; “**We shall see**” a phrase which means “we shall learn or experience”; “**Seeing is believing**” for the skeptic... BUT NOT FOR JESUS’ enemies!!!

##### Fear of blindness

- Poll showed that Americans fear blindness more than any other disability
- YET myopia (focal point even a millimeter in front of retina) affects ¼ people in world!
- BLIND PEOPLE MUST BE COURAGEOUS!!

##### Modern medical knowledge

- Eye doctors have made incredible strides... Dr. Alan Carlson (baptized a few weeks ago) does amazing things with LASIK; others doing research even on regenerating optic nerve with certain proteins
- Great strides since Dr. Georg Bartisch. An eye doctor during the Renaissance, went around poking people's cataracts with sharp, pencil-like object!
- NO ONE CAN COMEPETE WITH JESUS
- Taken together: more astounding evidence of the deity of Christ, of His role as Savior of the world
- YET: evidence also of the hardness of people's hearts... division displayed

## I. Two Blind Beggars: Healed by Christ (vs. 27-31)

### A. Faith Pursuing Christ

***vs. 27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"***

#### 1. True Beggars: Totally Destitute

##### a. prevalence of blindness

44.8 million people worldwide, World Health Organization 1997 study  
 most in third-world areas  
 much more common in ancient times  
 Jesus healed more cases of blindness than any other disease

##### b. causes of blindness

unsanitary conditions, infectious organisms, blowing sand, accidents, war,  
 malnutrition, excessive heat, bright sunshine  
 infants born blind from diseases suffered by mother during pregnancy... others  
 became blind several days later from exposure to venereal disease while  
 passing through birth canal

Illus. Eye camp in Pakistan; holding flashlight for eye surgeon during trichiasis operation

##### c. plight of the blind

- impossible to work
- stripped of beauty, information
- stripped of hope for the future... utterly INCURABLE
- "blind leading the blind": sometimes blind people stayed together... perhaps these two had been "**companions in darkness**" from their childhood

d. advantage of blindness

removes all pride  
 makes one able to beg  
 makes one BOLD & PERSISTENT

***Mark 10:46-48 Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 48 Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"***

2. Unrelenting Persistence for Mercy

***vs. 27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"***

They followed after Christ... stumbling along pathetically trying to get His attention

Despite the delay, they kept calling out after Christ... they refused to be deterred

Calling for MERCY... they didn't deserve healing... they were humble; spiritual beggars

John MacArthur: "These two men came to Jesus not only with a right understanding of His great worthiness, but with a right understanding of their own great unworthiness. That is the attitude of the heart the Lord honors and accepts."

"Christ was the most merciful human being who ever lived. He reached out to the sick and healed them. He reached out to the crippled and gave them legs to walk. He healed the eyes of the blind, the ears of the deaf, and the mouths of the dumb. He found prostitutes and tax collectors... and drew them into the circle of His love and redeemed them and set them on their feet. He took the lonely and made them feel loved. He took little children and gathered them into His arms and loved them. Never was there a person on the face of the earth with the mercy of this One."

3. Uncommon faith

a. "Son of David": openly Messianic title

b. Matthew began his gospel

***Matthew 1:1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David***

c. later controversial to Jewish leaders: children at Triumphal entry

d. later corrected by Christ: whose Son is the Christ

Leon Morris: "We should not overlook the fact that, being blind, they could not have seen anything Jesus had done. They had to believe what people had told them." So it also is with us...

***Romans 10:17 "Faith comes by hearing the message about Christ."***

These blind men could see by faith what the Pharisees and teachers of the law refused to see with their own eyes... Jesus was the Christ, the Son of David

B. Faith Tested by Christ

1. Christ didn't even answer them... simply walked past and went on
2. Entered "his house"... possibly Peter's home
3. Blind men came to Him... Christ tested them further

***"Do you believe that I am able to do this?"***

4. NOTE: rare use of "believe THAT"... a specific content, rather than merely "do you believe in me?"
5. Odd statement, especially since it seems they clearly believed He could as proven by their urgent persistence
6. BUT Jesus wanted the public declaration of their faith

***"Yes, Lord."***

God frequently tests our faith, to prove its genuineness: will it stand the trial?

C. Faith Rewarded by Christ

***vs. 29-30 Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you"; and their sight was restored.***

1. Astounding Miracle... unique to Christ
2. No miracles of restoring sight to the blind in OT
3. None in NT after Christ (not counting scales falling from Saul of Tarsus's eyes)
4. Giving of sight a divine activity

***Exodus 4:11 The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"***

***Psalm 146:7-8 He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, 8 the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous.***

5. Messianic prophecies in Isaiah

***Isaiah 29:18 In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.***

***Isaiah 35:5-6 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. 6 Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.***

***Isaiah 42:6-7 "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, 7 to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.***

The recovery of sight to the blind was a specific aspect of Messiah's reign... this clearly marked Christ as Son of David... even more, as Son of God

***Luke 4:17-21 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, 21 and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."***

6. NOTE: "According to your FAITH it will be done to you"

- a. faith not something we need to strive and strain to achieve
- b. faith is essentially passive... receiving from Christ what Christ is giving
- c. like the EYE, passively receiving light beams and filling the body with sight

Archbishop Richard Trench: "The faith which in itself is nothing is yet the organ for receiving everything. It is the conducting link between man's emptiness and God's fullness... Faith is the bucket let down into the fountain of God's grace, without which the man could never draw water of life from the wells of salvation. Faith is the purse which cannot of itself make its owner rich, and yet effectively enriches by the wealth it contains."

These two blind men have displayed full confidence that Jesus was the Messiah, able to do astonishing miracles

BUT SADLY their faith did not extend to unquestioning obedience to Christ's commands

#### D. Faithless Disobedience to Christ

**vs. 30-31 *Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this." But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region.***

1. Clear command, clear disobedience
  - a. word very strong: "He sternly warned them"... upbraided them
  - b. Christ very serious and intense about this
2. Why the command? The so-called "Messianic Secret"
3. Possibly didn't want too early an association with title "Son of David"
4. Possibly also did not want too much emphasis on the miracles
5. Whatever the reason... the two men disobeyed BLATANTLY

**vs. 31 *But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region.***

- a. it's easier for the heart to believe than to obey
- b. the one who can open the eyes of the blind should be TOTALLY obeyed
- c. how wicked are our hearts!! How entrenched our rebellion against Him!

## II. Demon-Possessed and Mute: Healed by Christ (vs. 32-33)

**vs. 32-33 *While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke.***

#### A. Demonized

1. Another example of demonic power
2. Here, the demon is able to still a man's tongue
3. Physical effects of demon-possession: a body in bondage!!
4. Impossible to know for sure how many afflicted people in the world

#### B. Dumb

1. Imagine the tragedy: completely unable to speak
2. Usually associated with deafness
3. Christ asks for no assent of faith... no can be given!

Chrysostom: "The affliction was not natural, but the device of an evil spirit... For this cause neither does he require faith of him, but straightaway heals the disease."

#### C. Destitute

1. Another spiritual beggar
2. "Without hope, and without God in the world"
3. Completely without resources... can't even make a simple request

#### D. Delivered

1. Simple command from Christ... the demon is GONE
2. The formerly silent mouth is enabled to speak at last

I wonder what his first words were? Did He say "Thank you"? Did he scream "Praise the Lord I can speak again!!" Did he use his mouth for blessing? Or did he speak out of the fullness of an unregenerate heart? Did he go home and argue with family members? The next month, could he be overheard telling an unseemly joke or spreading gossip about a neighbor?

How vile are our tongues, if not the servant of a converted, Spirit-indwelt heart!

***James 3:2, 7-10 We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. ... All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, 8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been***

***made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.***

Jesus warned us that the words of our mouths would give suitable evidence for the state of our heart, on which basis we will be judged on Judgment Day

***Matthew 12:34-37 You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. 36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."***

The text only tells us that this man's tongue was now free from demonic control; but the tongue is NEVER free from the control of the heart, and the text tells us nothing about the man's heart

His words, spoken in the years that followed this day would give ample evidence of the state of his heart... did he love and trust Jesus Christ as his Savior, or was he merely healed to sin openly?

### III. Assessing Christ: Amazed & Open vs. Angry & Opposing (vs. 33-34)

***vs. 33-34 The crowd was amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." 34 But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."***

A. Christ on the Dock: How Will You Judge??

B. Evidence the Same

1. Everyone saw the same miraculous power
2. Everyone heard the same sounds of deliverance
3. No special treatment of one group over the other

C. Reactions Radically Different

1. Some: amazed and open

***"Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel!!"***

- a. searching their minds for all the miracles of Moses, Elijah/Elishah, Daniel
- b. no record of this kind of miraculous power

- c. absolutely astounded at what they have seen
  - d. ready to believe in Christ
2. Others: angry and opposing
- a. jealous
  - b. offended by His independence
  - c. angry at His rebukes
  - d. guilty by His holy example
  - e. set against Him FOREVER

D. Everywhere the Same: Division... Believers and Unbelievers

***Luke 12:51-53 Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. 52 From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. 53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."***

John's Gospel: Jews constantly divided by Christ's words and actions

***John 10:19 At these words the Jews were again divided. 20 Many of them said, "He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?" 21 But others said, "These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"***

Division on Judgment Day:

- Wheat from chaff
- Good fish from bad fish
- Wise virgins from foolish virgins
- Sheep from goats

#### IV. Application

A. Astounding Power of Christ: Creator of Light and Eyesight, Creator of Sounds and Speech

1. Christ Himself created light
2. Christ Himself created eyesight
3. Christ has power to restore sight to the blind
4. Christ also created sounds and speech...
5. Christ has power to restore speech to the mute
6. All this points to one conclusion: the Deity of Christ!!

B. What Do You See?

***2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.***

True conversion occurs when God opens your eyes to see Christ for who he truly is:

***2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.***

Matthew's accumulated evidence:

Genealogy...Virgin Birth...Gifts of the Magi...Baptism...Temptation...Fulfillment of prophecy

**Astounding Teachings:** Sermon on the Mount

**Astounding Miracles:** leper, centurion's servant, Peter's mother-in-law, stilling of the storm, demon-possessed man in the Gadarenes, paralytic, woman with twelve years of blood flow, Jairus's daughter, two blind men, demon-possessed mute man

You have all the evidence you need... do you now believe in Christ?

C. What Do You Say?

First... can you speak a word of confession of faith in Christ

***Romans 10:8-10 But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: 9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.***

Second, is your mouth a vessel of blessing for the world around you? Do you speak so as to advance the Kingdom of Christ... or does your mouth pour forth words that ought not be said?