

Trusting Jesus, Our Merciful King

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[0:00] I don't know about you. I don't know if it's age, my age, probably, something to do with it. But, you know, it's getting more difficult to see things. Last year I got myself the plus one from Clix, these glasses.

They're not prescription glasses, you just go there and they make everything bigger. And they worked for a little while and then this year I had to get the plus one and a half. And especially if I need to read the instructions on all the medicine I've got to take now.

And also when I look for stuff at home, maybe it's just being a guy, you know what it's like. We just find it so difficult to see things, to see where things are placed. And I'm often reminded of that old Cremora advert, if you guys remember that.

The guy looking for Cremora in the refrigerator, he's getting more and more anxious. And there's no Cremora in the refrigerator! And the famous line, it's not inside, it's on top.

Now for the teenagers, that's a meme for us older people. Before TikTok was around. But like that guy, you know, many of us struggle with physical sight.

[1:09] And today's story is about seeing Jesus as he really is. And to see him as he really is, we need to see him as the son of David. And that it's only God who can cure us of our spiritual blindness if we don't see him.

Because the irony in the story is, even though we have physical sight, when it comes to knowing Jesus as he really is, we're blind without God opening our eyes, our spiritual eyes to who Jesus is. And so let's have a look at how Matthew sets that out for us. Our first point is that we need to see Jesus as the son of David.

Real faith, real sight, really knowing Jesus, we've got to know him as the son of David. And so in our story today, two blind guys rock up, making a racket, crying out, have mercy on us, son of David.

You know, they're not directly asking Jesus for healing, but Jesus knows that they want one. He pulls them into a house and he checks if they really believe that he is the son of David and that he has the power to heal them.

[2:18] Matthew has shown us in the previous story that Jesus doesn't need a lot of faith or strong faith and he won't contradict himself now. So this isn't about having enough faith to get your miracle.

Rather, what Matthew is highlighting is it's their faith in him as the son of David that he wants us to get in the story. So, verse 27, As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, Have mercy on us, son of David.

And he entered the house. The blind men approached him and Jesus said to them, Do you believe that I can do this? Do you have faith that I can do this?

They said to him, Yes, Lord. And he touches their eyes saying, Let it be done for you according to your faith. And their eyes were opened and Jesus warned them sternly, Be sure that no one finds out.

But they went out and spread the news about him throughout the whole area. So why is it that Matthew highlights here that we must get that Jesus is the son of David?

[3:30] You know, they don't cry out to him, Jesus, save us. Jesus, heal us. Son of David, have mercy. They don't even ask for healing. They ask for mercy.

And they ask it based on the fact that they recognize, even though they're blind, that here is the son of David. It can be a bit confusing for us Christians.

We're not Jewish. We don't have a Jewish inheritance and background. So why is it important to see Jesus as the son of David in his Jewish context? Why not just son of God, for example?

We need to see him as the son of David because that means he's the Messiah. And the number one thing that the New Testament wants you to get about Jesus of Nazareth is that he is the Messiah.

This whole thing, the son of David, the Messiah, puts Jesus in his Old Testament context. And that's important because the gospel doesn't stand by itself in the New Testament.

[4 : 33] The gospel doesn't start in the New Testament. By now, if you've been with us, you know the gospel starts in the Old Testament. Right in the very first pages of Genesis, where God promises to humanity that they're going to find the serpent crusher, the one who's caused all the trouble in the world.

That's Genesis 3. But it really kicks off in Genesis 12 with God's promise to Abraham to make a covenant people through which he's going to bless the world. The gospel in the New Testament is the culmination of a story, the story of the whole Bible.

That's important for us to remember because often as non-Jewish Christians, we sometimes think that the New Testament, well, the gospel starts in the New Testament. I remember one, there was a church that grew up, sort of sprouted up, all these new churches that sprout up.

And I think they call themselves like the Acts 2.37 church. Well, we're a New Testament church. And you almost tell which direction they're going to go in for that. But, you know, the gospel doesn't start in the New Testament.

Jesus came as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. And the gospel about Jesus is that he is the Messiah.

[5 : 48] And so here, by now you know that Messiah means Christ. Messiah is the Hebrew word. In our Bibles, it says the word Christ. That's actually a Greek word.

Both Messiah and Christ both mean king. So, in the Jewish context, if you said someone was a Messiah, they'd be like, oh, you're saying that that person is the king. You with me? We all know this by now.

But sometimes we can forget these things. And now, because Jesus is the king, but because he's so powerful, he's actually got a number of titles. Here's one of them. Son of David. In these miracle accounts, we've seen actually many of the titles of Jesus.

He's got more than the ones that Matthew gives here. But he's son of David, son of man, and son of God. And there's many more titles given to Jesus. It's a bit like the kings of England.

You know, they don't just call themselves the king of England. They're like the king of England and Northern Ireland and Great Britain and Scotland and all our overseas territories. The more powerful you are as a king, the more titles they give you to tell you exactly over which realm you're the king of.

[6 : 59] So, what does it mean that Jesus is now just calling himself the son of David? Does that diminish his kingdom to just a little bit of sand and dust in the Middle East where they're busy fighting over?

Is that what it means? Actually, funny enough, no. So, to give him the title son of David is the same thing. Essentially, there's some differences, but there's a huge overlap between calling him the son of David, the son of God, and the son of man.

What they really mean is that Jesus of Nazareth is the king and lord of every human that has ever lived and will ever live and including all of us sitting here.

He's the king of kings and the lord of lords. So, don't think when you see son of David, it's diminishing his power and glory. It's actually telling us exactly who he is the king of.

The reason for that, when you go to the Old Testament, you see that it's the Davidic king, the king of the tribe of Israel, the king of the tribe of Judah, that's going to inherit the kingdoms of the world.

[8 : 04] And so, that's what that title means. But how is it that these blind guys know that Jesus is the son of David and not just some random miracle worker?

How come they know that he's the son of David? What have they heard? What have they seen? Well, they haven't seen anything, but they can see. And they tend the story.

We've got other people in Israel who should be able to see the Pharisees, and they can't see who Jesus is at all. Well, Matthew puts these two miracles together.

The one of healing blind men, and then this demon-possessed person who's mute. Actually, he's a deaf mute. The word for mute is the same word as the word for death in that culture, and often people who are mute are deaf as well.

So, he's put miracles of saving someone from being blind, giving sight, and saving people from deafness and muteness. And Matthew's putting these two miracles together to show that Jesus is fulfilling Old Testament prophecy here.

[9 : 18] Because one of the markers that would identify the Messiah is precisely these two miracles. Matthew doesn't have to spell that out because he's speaking to Jewish people, but for us, we're going to just take a quick dive into the Old Testament.

Here's one of those passages. It's from Isaiah chapter 35. In the context, God is, in fact, the whole of Isaiah is God is saying to the Jews in about 600 BC, you're not following me, you're not listening to me, your time is very short.

So, Isaiah lived about 600 BC, 700, 600, and the Jews were taken out more or less 500 BC by the Babylonians. God had given them about 100 years after he had sent a message through the prophet Isaiah.

You're not listening to me. You're not doing what I say. You need to repent. Because if you don't, I'm going to bring judgment on you. He does bring judgment.

But the fantastic story, all the prophets of the Old Testament are like this. God at once saying, listen, you're going to get judged, but that's not the end of the story. I'm going to bring blessing.

[10 : 26] The reason he does that is because it's all based on those promises that he made to Abraham and to David, his king. But this is what he says here in Isaiah 35 about what he's going to do, how you can know that my mercy, that my new age, the new kingdom has arrived.

And he says this, say to those with fearful hearts, be strong, do not fear, your God will come. I am going to be your God again. At the moment you're in exile.

He's foreshadowing the exile in Babylon. But I am going to come back. And when I come, I'll bring vengeance. He will come with vengeance and with divine retribution. You think, okay, well, that doesn't sound like a good idea.

But that is to come and save you. Because his vengeance and divine retribution isn't aimed at his people, but it's aimed at their enemies, so that he can come and save them. In the same way that he saved them from the Egyptians in Exodus, he's going to come and save them from the Babylonians.

And then this amazing promise. Then, when I've come to save you, when I've come to be with you, then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

[11 : 39] Then will the lame leap like a deer and the mute tongue shout for joy. Isn't that amazing? So by doing these miracles in Matthew chapter 9, Jesus is broadcasting to the whole nation.

Your Messiah is here. God is here. The day of salvation is here. But also the day of judgment if you don't trust in the salvation that God has sent.

But essentially, the new age of the kingdom has dawned. And what is needed is for people to trust him, that is Jesus, and obey him as their king.

Okay, so that's what's happening in these stories in Matthew. Now, just based on the prophecy alone, Jesus is totally worthy of our trust and obedience.

Well, first of all, the actual miracle. So here's a person who can give blind people their sight back. I mean, it's an incredible miracle. And then he chases out this demon.

[12 : 53] And we saw last week, any issues that we've got in life, the biggest problems, Jesus can take care of them. And that's exactly what it means for him to be our king. He can defend us and save us from all of our problems.

But based on the prophecy alone, 600 years before Jesus was born, God is making these promises. I'm coming. I'm going to send a guy that can do this. And when you see this guy doing that, trust him for your salvation.

He is my king. Do what he says. Listen to him. He's got divine wisdom at his right hand. He's got the Holy Spirit available to him. I have sent him. He is my king.

Trust him. Obey him. Do what he says. No one else in all of history has this kind of power and ability, let alone being foretold the degree of this accuracy, these prophecies.

So to be blind to this level of divine proof is to put yourself in the most dangerous place. It's to put yourself outside the bounds of God's mercy in Christ because it's so obvious what's happening here.

[13 : 57] John 3.16 talks about the love that God has for his people, which everyone knows. But it goes on to say this.

It will come up on the screen for us. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe, talking about Jesus, stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

This is the verdict. Light has come into the world, but people love darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

Make sure that you're not one of those that knows who Jesus is, has been told about Jesus, can see what's happening in front of your very eyes, and yet prefer darkness and your evil deeds instead of coming to the light and seeing Jesus for who he truly is.

The awful truth is we don't actually deserve God's love. What we actually deserve, talking about all of us now, is his wrath, and that's because of the way we live our lives.

[15:14] Now, I got a reminder of this just yesterday. Well done to everyone who came and helped clean up the neighborhood. And for our sins, we decided we'd go and clean up the Victoria Road parking lot just outside ShopRite.

And it's really yucky there. And we cleaned up the people's rubbish outside ShopRite.

It's really like a microcosm of what we all do to God's earth. You know, we just mess things up so easily. It's so easy to mess things up, and it's so difficult to do the right thing and to bring goodness into the world.

Whether it's polluting God's world with our stompies and leftover bottles, alcohol, or if it's messing up God's world or polluting it with our greed and our selfishness, we've all, in our way, contributed to messing up God's world.

And, you know, as I'm cleaning up, I'm getting very irritated, more and more angry, because now these guys, they're actually sitting there, and they're just throwing their stuff on the ground as we're cleaning. Actually, a few of them did help us.

[16:26] And they're like, oh, we would, yeah, we normally do this, we just don't have the rubbish bags. Oh, you're in luck. Boom, here's a whole bunch of rubbish bags. But, of course, we're going to have to go clean it up again.

Adrian made the point that cleaning up the rubbish bags, it's like a sin in our lives, because you walk through the Grasperk once, the grass is this high, and you can see the rubbish, it's easy, you pick, pick, pick, pick, boom, in the bag, one big bag, and then you go over it again, and, oh, there's like a layer below that.

Okay, fine, and you pick, pick, pick, pick, pick. Now, we're finished, but Sylvia, she's going deeper. She's going to take everything out there, and you go lower and lower and deeper and deeper, and the deeper you go, the more muck and ugly and, that's hectic.

Now, multiply that little bit there, the mess that those people are making, but the mess that we make in our lives of God's world, multiply that by 8 billion people, just on earth today, by 60 minutes an hour, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and the thousands of years that humanity existed, and you're trying to clean up that mess.

Can you imagine the white, hot, holy anger of God against the world that's not listening to him? And when you look at that, I think we don't begin to understand or appreciate the patience, the love, the grace, and the mercy of God that he doesn't give us what we deserve, but gives us the exact opposite.

[18:15] He gives us all these wonderful things in Jesus Christ. And that's beyond anything else we need from Jesus. It's his mercy, and that's the other thing that's highlighted in our passage today.

So to really see Jesus as he is, we need to see him as the Messiah, the son of David, son of God, the Christ, God's king, but the main thing that we want to get, that we need from him, is his mercy.

And so we're going to look at the mercy of the king. The most amazing thing about Jesus is his mercy. I know we take it for granted, because we understand it and we know it as Christians.

But what you see in the Gospels is Jesus is a king always willing to help those who come to him with deep need, with deep humility and with faith. In fact, our Old Testament story, the one we read from 1 Samuel 24, shows us that God's king is literally defined by his mercy.

In that story, David had Saul exactly where he wanted him. He's in the back of the cave. Saul is relieving himself. Ooh, that's his enemy.

[19:27] God has given him his enemy into his hands. He just has to walk up behind him, stup, dagger in, story over. David is king. There's not one of us who wouldn't have put that knife into Saul's ribs.

Talking about the guys now. Some of the girls are more saintly. And yet it's pure, the pure mercy of David that saved Saul's life.

And that's why Saul recognizes him as the true king of Israel. So at the end of that section, Saul says this. It'll come up on the screen. When a man finds his enemy, does he let him go away unharmed?

Answer? No. You take your enemy out, because he's your enemy. David doesn't do that. May the Lord reward you well for the way you treated me today.

I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. And so friends, the whole point of the gospel is to tell us that Jesus is the Christ, but not only that, that he's the king, he is the merciful king of God's kingdom.

[20 : 48] That when you come to him, you will receive mercy if you ask for it. Not giving us what we deserve, God's judgment, giving us what we don't deserve, forgiveness of our sins, and friendship with God.

Luke 1 says this. It's in the song of Zechariah, the Magnificat. He talks about God sending David to forgive us, or sending one like the son of David, essentially, to forgive us our sins.

So he says this, Luke 1, from verse 68, Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel. He has come to his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant, David.

What is he going to do? How do we know he's going to save us? He goes on to say, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins because of the tender mercy of our God.

The tender mercy of God allows people to make a mess of God's world, a mess of their lives. And God says, You know what?

[22 : 16] I know you've messed up. I'm not going to look at that. I'm not going to worry about that. And the reason I'm not going to is because this guy, Jesus, is my King, the Messiah, who's come to take away your sins.

And so, friends, if you trust in Christ, if you see him as he is, your merciful king, you need to know, trust that your sins have been forgiven, that God loves you, that you've got an eternity of joy to look forward to.

And so you enjoy and hold on to that mercy, into that truth. It's the wellspring of all the other good things that God gives us. It's the greatest thing that Jesus has done, knowing that our sins are not counted against us.

And so when your sins bother you, remind yourself, Jesus has paid the price. I am forgiven. He is merciful.

He's given me mercy. I don't need to feel guilt or shame. Instead, rejoice in the freedom that is yours as a child of God. But we can't end there.

[23 : 33] The big question, really, in the passage, yes, who is Jesus, but is whether God has opened your eyes to who he is. Because our problem is that we are like the blind people in the story.

In order to truly see and know Jesus, we need a miracle of God's power. And so just to end up by talking about the miracle of sight. The miracle of sight. To see Jesus as he really is, we need God to open the eyes of our mind.

You know, our minds are dark. We are blind men groping through life. We are like that Cremona guy. Things are right in front of us, and we can't see it. We can't even find things in our own fridge, let alone find God on our own.

And the truth is, we're not really looking. After all, if there was anyone who should have been able to recognize Jesus as their Messiah, it's the Pharisees. They've been studying the Scriptures.

They've been waiting for God's kingdom. And yet here they are, not only not seeing Jesus as the Messiah, saying that he's come to bring the bringer of all of God's blessings, they say the very opposite of that.

[24 : 50] He's from the devil. Now how's that? They're the ones that can see physically, and yet they're spiritually blind. Why is that? How come they don't see?

And how come physically blind people are able to see? How does that work? So just to make the point, in that second story about driving out the demon from verse 32, it's in Matthew 9, 32.

Just as they were going out, a demon-possessed man who was unable to speak, and probably also deaf, was brought to Jesus. When the demon had been driven out, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowds were amazed, saying, nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.

So the crowds are moved. They can see something is happening. And then that last little hook, that little bombshell that Matthew puts in there, but the Pharisee says, he drives out demons by the prince or ruler of demons.

You know, this is like a Saturday Night Live skit. For those who know, it's a comedy skit show on TV. Well, whatever, you view things on these days.

[26 : 04] But what you've got is, here's the most learned people of God's people, and they're like, Lord, you know, we know we're not living up to your law. You know, but it's not our fault.

We're trying to, but if only you'd send the Messiah to help us, you know, get rid of the Romans, then we would serve you as you want. Lord, send the Messiah.

If only we could see him, then we would know and we would be able to serve you. And so there's Jesus with this basically big sign with lights.

Hey, the Messiah is here. Look at the accounts of Matthew. You've got the birth, the angels at his birth, telling everyone exactly who he was.

You've got all this fulfillment of prophecy. You've got the miracles. You've got two blind guys sitting there. Jesus walks past. Son of David, have mercy. Shazam! They get healed. Just like that.

[27 : 06] Boom! And then Jesus is like, Yes? Can you see who I am? Shazam! Jesus heals a deaf mute. And the Pharisees are like, If only God would send the Messiah.

We just, just don't know where is he. Ah. He heals the deaf and the mute person and they go like, Oh, yeah, we know who that guy is.

He's from the devil. Jesus is standing there stroking his shoulders. Like, What? Are you guys blind? Or something?

Oh, friends, there's lots of people like the Pharisees. that reason like this. God, you know, they'd say, God, I'd really like to believe in you. I really want to do the right thing. You know, but it's so hard.

I just need a sign. Something that will show me you're real and want me to follow you. And then they wait. And they wait. All the time, using that as an excuse not to follow God.

[28 : 06] Not to follow Jesus. And all they have to do is ask God to open their eyes to see him as the Messiah and to trust in him. But if you're that person, you need to know that this is the gospel about Jesus.

You know his claims to be the king of the world is true. There's no one else that can do this stuff.

You don't need more signs. What you need to do is repent and see him for he truly is.

But lastly, for those of us who do believe, we need to know that seeing Jesus as our merciful king is not because of any special spiritual insight that we have in and of ourselves.

It's only because God has graciously opened our eyes to the truth of who he is. And this makes us far more dependent on God than we realize.

I think too many Christians think it's their free will choice that has put them into relationship with God and the Bible says no, that doesn't happen that way. The eyes of our heart are blind unless they are opened up by the power of God.

[29 : 15] And so 2 Corinthians 4 says this, the God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, anyone who's not a Christian, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ who is the image of God.

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 God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

And friends, when that light shines in your life, it brings with it blessings that we can't even begin to imagine. Blessings both now, but then future blessings upon blessing upon blessing.

It's not a one-off light, it's a light that we need all the time. And so in your time of need, in your time of confusion, what you need to do is cry out to Jesus, Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Save me, help me, let me see, help me to understand what's happening around me. Give me sight, spiritual sight, so I know who you are and I know how to live. Ask Jesus to give you this kind of sight and you'll receive the light of the world.

[30 : 38] Jesus is the light of the world, you'll receive that light into your life. It's light enough to overcome every doubt and fear that we have about him and about the problems that we face. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we are so lost without you.

our minds are naturally blinded to your truth, Lord, of who you are and even in our day-to-day lives, Lord, we don't really see you sometimes, especially when problems face us.

Lord, you alone, by your spirit, can give us the faith that we need and the spiritual eyes to see you as you truly are. Give us, Lord, that glorious vision that we too can see the glory of God in your face and trust him and receive mercy and help in our time of need.

In Jesus' name, Amen.