

REASONS FOR A SINGULAR QUESTION

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A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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“What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?”
Mark 10:51

THAT was a very strange question to ask a blind man. Everybody could see that he was blind, they could tell by the way he struggled through the crowd that he was blind. His very voice, which had long been used in begging, would show that he was a blind mendicant. There he stood before the Savior, and Jesus knew what he wanted, yet He put to him this singular question, “What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?” The great Son of David knew that the man who cried to Him, “Have mercy on me,” really meant by that plea, “Lord, give me my sight.” Yet our blessed Lord never asked a foolish question, and never spoke an idle word.

There is a deep meaning, a gracious reason, in all that He says. It will be my business at this time to try to show you the reasons for this question, and while I do so, I want to speak, not so much to you people who are converted, and who know the Savior, but I want to address any here who have not yet been brought to the feet of Jesus, but who are longing to be saved by Him. Oh, that God would help you to follow me in each thing as I say it, that what is said may be done as it is said, God the Holy Spirit working by the Word!

In speaking about this singular question, I am going to show you, first, *what it did*, and secondly, *what it teaches*.

I. First, let us think of WHAT THIS SINGULAR QUESTION DID, “What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?”

Well, first, *it brought out the two personalities*. Listen to the question, “What wilt *thou* that *I* should do unto thee?” All the people round can see these two people, there is the ever-blessed Christ, and there is the blind beggar. These make the center of the group, and the Lord Jesus Christ, by His question, brings these two into prominence, “What wilt *thou* that *I* should do unto thee?”

I wish that I could fetch out of this great throng the sinner and the Savior. Dear friend, you are standing face to face with Him at this moment. Forget the crowd, never mind these thousands of people, you have nothing to do with them, but only with yourself and the Savior. Another day, you may think of other blind men, but just now, think only of one blind person, and that one yourself. Another day, you may think of other good men, but now think only of that one truly good man, Jesus Christ, the Lord from heaven, the Son of God, who became man that He might bless men.

The Son of man stands before you now. Isolate yourself from all else, and let the two personalities stand out clearly before your eye—yourself, a sinner, lost and ruined by your sin, and the Savior, who alone can help you, and who stands prepared at once to bless you on the spot where you now are. That is what the question did first, it brought out the two personalities.

Secondly, *it displayed Christ's boundless power*. Do you see that in it? He says, “What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?” It is not, “What can I do?” Not, “What power have I to do this or that?” But, “What is it that thou wilt? What is thy desire? What is thy request?” Christ speaks like one who is prepared to meet it, be it what it may. What, then, do you need, sinner? The Lord Jesus Christ can meet your need, though it were deep as hell, though it were greedy as famine, though it were dire as death.

You cannot be in such a state that He cannot meet you in that state. You can not have a need which He can not supply. You can not be under a disease which He cannot heal. You can not be in the power of a devil whom He cannot cast out of you. You stand in the presence of an almighty Savior, God over all, even though He died upon the cross. In weakness, He bled; in glory, He reigns; and He is “mighty to save.” Do you understand this great truth? If there be any limit, it will be in your prayer, not in His power, and He puts to you the question, “What wilt thou? What wilt thou? What is it thou really need?”

And, thirdly—and this seems very wonderful to me—this question *gave wondrous scope*. What trustfulness the Lord Jesus had towards this blind man! Just before this miracle was wrought, two young men, or their mother on their behalf, came to Jesus, and asked Him to do for them whatsoever they should desire. They were two fine young men—two of His own chosen apostles, James and John—highly honored men, and their mother was blessed among women to have such sons, she was the mother of Zebedee’s children, but when she came with the request that her sons should sit on His right and left hand in His kingdom, the Savior said that what she asked was not His to give.

He would not give *cart blanche* to the mother of James and John, or to her sons, but to the blind man He did, in effect, give *cart blanche*. He said, “What will you have? I will give you whatever you want, you have only to ask and have.” The Savior knew that the blind man’s ambition would go no further than to lead him to ask that his eyes might be opened, and when He comes to deal with you poor, troubled, guilty souls, He knows what you most want, so He says to you, “Ask what you like.” “Lord, I am the biggest sinner out of hell.” “I will save you.” “Lord, I want a new heart.” “I will give it thee.” “Lord, I need to be made a new man altogether, repairs and mendings are of no use. I am like an old gun, to make it of any service, lock, stock, and barrel must all be new.” “I will do it for you.” “But, Lord, it will need a great effort ever to take me to heaven.” “I will do it for you. Come, sinner, open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.”

Big black sinner, the Savior gives you *carte blanche*. He puts a signed check into your hand, and leaves you to fill it up with whatsoever you will because He knows that your desires all lean one way. Those desires are, “Lord, forgive me. Lord, renew me. Lord, save me,” and He is ready to give you anything of that kind. Your Master sets a-broach all the barrels in His cellar, they are full of the water of life, and He lets them flow in rivers at your feet as He says to you, poor thirsty one—

“Stoop down, and drink, and live.”

Come to your Master’s banquet, for the chosen and the fatlings are killed, and “all things are ready,” feed upon them all if you have appetite enough, for He says to you, concerning spiritual food, “Eat abundantly, O beloved!” There is no stint and no limit in the question. “What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?” gives you full scope, plenty of sea room, as the sailors say. O big sinner, ask some great thing of your great Savior, for it is clear from the text that you may do so!

I think also that by this question, the Savior *fixed the blind man’s mind on the blessing he wanted*. The Lord Jesus wished blind Bartimaeus to know what he really needed. I believe that there are many people who pray after a very poor fashion, for they really do not know for what they are praying. “I want to be saved,” says one. Do you know what being saved is? “Oh!” says the person, “I want to be converted.” But do you know what being converted means?

I believe that many people who go into the inquiry room to seek the Savior, if they knew what they were seeking, would run away sooner than get it, but they do not know what it is. “I want to be saved from going to hell,” says one. Now, mark you, that is not salvation. Every murderer wants to be saved from the gallows, every thief wants to avoid the policeman, and if that is all you want, I have little comfort to give you.

What Christ comes to do, is to save you from your sins, to save the drinkers from getting drunk, to save the liar from saying what is not true. He has come into the world to save the dishonest from being dishonest, to save the lazy from being lazy, to save the ungenerous from being selfish and grasping. He

has come to save the blasphemer from his blasphemy, and the Sabbath-breaker from his Sabbath-breaking, His name is called Jesus, “for he shall save His people from their sins.”

Jesus wanted this blind man to know what he really needed, and He wants you, sinner, to know what you really need, and therefore, He puts to you this question, “What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?” that you may settle distinctly in your mind what it is that you are seeking. May God the Holy Spirit enable you to do so!

II. Now I come to the second head of my discourse, which is, WHAT THIS QUESTION TEACHES US, “What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?”

It teaches us much more than I can tell you in a single sermon, but it does teach us, I think, very plainly, that *prayer should be personal*, “What wilt *thou* that I should do unto *thee*?” There was, just now, a host of us bowing our heads in the attitude of prayer, but how many of us were really praying? The prayer that is offered in the mass often has no prayer in it. He who would have eternal life must ask for it for himself, and by himself.

It is quite right to have family prayer, I bless God that I cannot remember a time when I was not one of those who gathered night and morning in my father’s house to pray. It is a very delightful thing to have been brought up to attend prayer meetings, and to join in public prayer with the people of God, but when a man is seeking Christ, he must pray alone. He will not need to be told that, he will be sure to do it. His difficulty will sometimes be to find a place where he can get alone.

I have known some seekers get down a saw-pit, or behind a haystack, or upstairs in a room where they could turn the key. Some have had to get into the street, and walk to and fro, that they might feel themselves alone with God. O sirs, to go to church, and say with a crowd, “Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners,” may bring no blessing to the troubled spirit, but to get quite alone, and cry, “O God, have mercy upon me, for Your dear Son’s sake, I am a miserable sinner, but O Lord, deal with me in mercy, I pray You, save me for Jesus Christ’s sake.”—that is the way to pray.

The Savior put it to Bartimaeus, “What wilt *thou* that I should do unto *thee*?” Oh, that the Holy Spirit would, at this moment, make each one of you conscious of your personal need, that He would put a pang into your heart which nobody else could bear for you, a hunger and a thirst which could not be allayed by anybody else’s eating and drinking, but which would require that you should personally feed upon the Lord Jesus, and personally drink of the water of life, or else you must die!

I think the Master, in that question to the blind beggar, brings out the personality of the seeker as well as His own personality—to come back to the point where I began. He would have us, individually, come to Him *as an individual*, and ask of Him just what we want, each one for himself, for we must be gathered to Him one by one, repenting one by one, believing one by one, and we must be born again one by one. Hence He asks of each one the question, “What wilt *thou* that I should do unto *thee*?”

Another thing that is taught us in this question is that *prayer should be a distinct act of the will*. “What *wilt* thou that I should do unto thee?” I will suppose that, guided by the Holy Spirit, I have picked out the right person, and that person is now thinking, “Yes, I long to find eternal life, and to obtain all that my soul needs at the hands of Christ.” Well now, in your seeking, do not depend merely upon the use of pious words, and think that when you have repeated certain sentences, you have prayed. Do not go and hunt up a church collect, or a form of prayer written by some eminent Dissenter, and fancy that you can pray by saying those words. No, you must *will* what you want, “What *wilt* thou that I should do unto thee?”

Suppose that you desire to be freed from a certain sin, if that is the most important petition you can present to God at this time, just will it before the Lord. Say, “O God, my heart is intently set upon mastering that sin and getting rid of it. I will that You would work this miracle within me, that You would break the neck of that habit, that You should deliver me from the iron heel of that strong temptation of mine!” May God help you to *will* that!

Or else, “Lord, I want at once to get peace through believing in Your Son Jesus Christ, but I hardly know what it means, or how it is to be obtained. If I did, I would get it, or if I found that I could not get

it, I would ask You to enable me to secure this priceless blessing!" Oh, that the blessed Spirit, the Holy Ghost, who is the Lord of the renewed will, would make you will to believe in Christ, and make you will to submit yourselves completely to Him, that He might be to you your sole and only Savior, your Lord and your God! That kind of willing is really praying, it is the will setting in motion the other powers of the mind.

You know that the will of man is a very crooked thing, and also a very powerful thing. John Bunyan, in his *Holy War*, makes, "my Lord Will-be-will" governor of the town of Mansoul, and a domineering fellow he was too, lording it over everybody! "My Lord Will-be-will" never yields to Christ if he can help it. "My Lord Will-be-will" is a sturdy defender of the rule of Diabolus, and he holds out against the Prince Emmanuel as long as he can, therefore the Savior attacks him and says, "What wilt thou? What dost thou will that I should do to thee?"

I can truly say, brethren, that my will towards the Savior is this, "Lord Jesus, do anything You please with me. Let me live, or let me die, only let Your will be done in me." My will towards the Lord Jesus is that He would deliver me from my sin, that He would be everything to me, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, and that He would abide in me, and make me to abide in Him henceforth and forever.

Is your will like that? If so, will away, will away with all your might. Say, "Lord, I will, I will, I will, I desire, I request, I entreat, I beg, that You should forgive me, that You should take me to be Your servant, that You should break off from me the fetters of my old habits, that You should make me like Yourself, Lord, that is what I will, and I will it with all the energy of my nature. My proud heart, the proudest, perhaps, that ever beat against You, now bows at Your feet, willingly and cheerfully asking that Your will may be done."

So, this question, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" teaches us that there must be personal prayer and the distinct willing of what we desire Christ to do for us.

But, dear friends, I think that the text also shows us that the prayer which wins its way with Christ should be *an act of the understanding*. "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" I have no fault to find with those who always preach, "Believe in Christ," except that I wish they would sometimes tell the people what is to be believed, and what believing really is.

Now, friend, you say, "I wish I could find the Savior tonight," but do you know who the Savior is? What do you want of Christ? There should be an intelligent apprehension in the mind of what is desired from Him. Bartimaeus, when he was asked what he needed, said, "Lord, I want my sight." Now, dear hearers, we desire that you know enough about your Bibles, and enough about yourselves, and enough about the Savior, to understand what is meant by being saved, what are the things that make up salvation, how men are saved, and what is requisite for their salvation.

This leads me to say to you, "Search the Scriptures, and try to understand God's Word." People who are converted without properly understanding the way of salvation may come to comprehend it by and by, and be genuine Christians, but there is a large number of supposed converts who have no right understanding. They generally go back very soon, they blunder in, and they blunder out again, for if the understanding is not converted as well as the affections, it is as though but half the man were converted.

I have read of an old Saxon king, who wanted to be a Christian, and yet desired to go where his ancestors went, so he said that he would stand with one leg in the baptismal font, and be half-baptized. That style of conversion will not do, we want you to come to Christ with your whole understanding. Know you not that you have sinned, that you have broken God's law? What you need is divine forgiveness. Know you not that your heart is ever inclined to sin? What you need is a complete change of nature, a new birth, a regeneration.

I beg those of you who have that sincere desire to be right to become diligent hearers of the Word, that you may know what it is to be right. What says the Lord to you? "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live." "Hearken diligently," says the Word of God. Many, I am afraid, think that they are to believe in Christ without knowing what to believe, they are to receive from Him

without knowing what it is they want, but the Savior works by means of light, and knowledge, and understanding. Seek to have the light of the Holy Spirit to illuminate your darkness, and then you can come before God with the right kind of prayer, when the intellect goes with the will, and the heart wills what the understanding knows that the soul requires.

Once more, *prayer, especially when you are seeking the Savior, should be definite*. What a lot of praying there is that prays for everything in general and nothing in particular! I was reading a very good illustration, given by an eminent minister, upon this point. He says, "Why was it that the Boers in South Africa were able to hold their own against the best-trained British troops on a certain lamentable occasion? Why, because the ordinary soldier fires at the enemy in the mass, and so, much of his ammunition is often lost, but the Boer, from his childhood, never wastes a shot. When he is out in the open, and he sees a lion, he aims so as to hit the animal's heart, and many of them are such shots that they are never known to miss the object at which they aim. Consequently, every time a Boer did shoot at our men, he killed somebody, and such soldiers as those are terrible adversaries on the field of battle."

There are some people who pray, as it were, like a man shooting at a whole regiment, they fire anyhow, at anything, but the man who wins his suit at the throne of grace is the man who prays distinctly for some one thing that he wills to have. He says, "That is what I want, and that is what I am going to have if it is to be had," and he prays for that one thing just as an archer aims at the center of the target, and then deliberately draws the bowstring, and lets the arrow fly so that it sticks in the gold. David said, "In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee"—like an arrow—"and will look up," to see which way it goes. A great deal of praying is like runaway knocks at a door, but the right sort of praying knocks at the door, and waits till it is opened.

Now, dear hearer, if you are seeking anything from Christ, try to know what you are seeking, then ask for it, and keep on asking till you get it. It may be that your great want is a broken heart, then pray for it. Or is it that you want to be delivered from a fierce temptation? Then, pray for it. Or is it that you want faith in Christ? Then pray distinctly for that. "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" This is the way of salvation—the Lord makes us see what it is we need, and sets us praying for it, He bids us believe in Jesus Christ, and Himself gives us the faith we lack, and so we are saved. This is a kind of education that is helpful to a man all his life.

"Oh, but!" says one, "I have been praying for mercy." Yes, so had blind Bartimaeus, he cried, "Have mercy on me." But, you see, our Lord's question proves that this is a loose way of talking, so now say what you really need, come to the point, pray definitely. Bartimaeus answered, "Lord, that I might receive my sight," come you to the point in like definite fashion.

"Well, sir," you say, "I asked the Lord to forgive my sin." Yes, did you say what sin? It would be a great mercy if you would confess it. I remember one who used to pray the Lord to have mercy upon him for his sin, but he never found peace till he said, "Lord, I have been an abominable drunkard, have mercy upon me, and deliver me from the drink." Then it was that God gave him what he asked. It may be that the sin which has laid hold of you is one that I hardly like to mention, and therefore you have never mentioned it to God, but out with it now! Out with it!

David was never restored to the favor of God till, in confessing his sin, he learned to call a spade a spade! He had robbed poor Uriah of his wife, and then he had so managed matters that Uriah had been killed in battle, and David used, no doubt, to say to others, "It was a very lamentable accident." But he never had any piece of mind while that guile, that cunning, that craft, was in his heart, it was only when he fell down upon his face before the Lord and cried, "Deliver me from *bloodguiltiness*, O God," that God could rightly deal with his sin.

There are some diseases that a physician cannot cure till he throws them out on the skin. You know how it was with the leprosy, if a Jew had it in his hand, or on his face, they examined him, and if they found the leprosy only here and there, they said, "This is a bad case," and they shut him up by himself, for he was a leper. But if a man came to the priest covered all over with white scales of leprosy, so that there was not a single part of him that was sound, and you could not put a pin's point anywhere upon a

portion of his body that was not affected, but if he was leprous all over from head to foot, then the priest said, "That man is clean." You see, the disease had at last come out on his skin, and it would go away.

So, when you are willing to fully confess your sin, and to throw it all out of the system by that confession—I do not mean by telling it to a priest, God grant that you may never be so foolish as to do that!—when you are willing to confess your sin to the Lord Himself, and say to Him, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight," then it is that you shall get the blessing. But you must be definite in the confession of your sin.

You must also be definite in pleading the promises of God. There is no prayer like that which a man presents when he gets a grip of a divine promise, for instance, this utterance of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Open your Bible at Matthew 12:31, put your finger on that passage and say, "Lord, this is Your Word, fulfill it to me." Plead definitely with God His own promise definitely, and say unto Him, "Do as thou hast said." This is the kind of praying that never yet met with a repulse, answers of peace shall surely come to those who have become thus definite in their prayers.

I trust, dear friends, that I have led many of you so far by God's Spirit. I have tried to be very practical with you, and to put the truth very plainly, but let me say to you that prayer, to be acceptable, must not only be personal, and an act of the will, and an act of the understanding, and also definite, but *it should be very bold*. This blind man says, "Lord, You ask me what I would have, and my answer is, 'Lord, that I might receive my sight.'"

I wonder what a pair of eyes would be worth? Said one, "I have a flower in my garden, and I know a person who would give ten thousand pounds to see one like it." "No, no," said his friend, "a person would never give ten thousand pounds to see a flower." Then he mentioned the name of a rich man who was blind, and the second speaker said, "Oh, yes! I see that what you said is true." What would a blind man give for a pair of good eyes? If I were to go into a shop, and say to the man in charge, "Will you give me a pair of spectacles?"—I daresay he would reply, "I do not see why I should give them to you," but I do not think I should ever go and ask a doctor to give me a pair of eyes. It was a bold request—was it not?—for this blind beggar to say, "Lord, give me a pair of eyes!"

If you would succeed in prayer, you must be bold, you must lay aside your modesty. If you had to ask of Christ only what you deserve, it would not take you long, for you deserve nothing but His wrath. Therefore, do not begin to ask on the ground of merit, and inasmuch as you deserve nothing, yet want everything, go in and be a bold beggar, and say, "Lord, save me tonight." Yes, put it, "tonight." "Lord, save me, perfectly." Yes, put it "perfectly." "Lord, give me a new heart and a right spirit." Do not ask the Lord to clean up the old one, pray for a new one right out. "Lord, make a saint of me." That is right, do not ask the Lord to make a whitewashed sinner of you. Pray, "Lord, make me thy child," do not even say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants," but say, "Take me into thy family, let me be thy child." Make a bold prayer of it.

I recollect that, when I was collecting the money for the building of this Tabernacle—not for myself, but for the building of this house of prayer—I said, "Dear friends, I feel very bold about this matter. If it were a little thing, I might feel a little timid, but inasmuch as it is a very great thing, and that I want to build a very large house for God's worship, I open my mouth wide, and ask for great things." Little things will not serve your turn, little mercy is no good for you, little forgiveness will not suit you. Then come to the foot of the great Savior and say, "Lord, I, the chief of sinners am, but take me as I am, and save me. Save me outright. Save me now." Why should He not? He delights to do it. Oh, that of His great mercy you might find it so at this very hour!

I feel upon me a conviction that there are some who will come and put their trust in Jesus now. Lie down at His feet, say, "I never will be gone except You bless me." This is God's own message, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." Some of you have been hearing me a very long time, I love to look at your faces, but when I see you, I always pray that you may be saved. I say to myself, "When will God bring that good man in? His wife and many friends pray for him. When will he be

decided?" I look upon another, and I say, "When will that elderly woman be converted? She has children who pray for her." I look elsewhere—no, I will not look exactly that way, but you know, my friend, whom I mean when I say, "When will that brother be brought in? He has a praying wife, yet he is not saved." I cannot make some of you husbands out.

I suppose that there are many more men than women in this congregation, there are often five men to three women in the congregation, yet when they come to join the church, the women are probably three times as many as the men. I am half afraid it is as much as that, certainly two to one of those who really give their hearts to Christ. How do you make this out? Some of you husbands come here as regularly as your wives come, yet you do not know the Savior, and they do. Are you going to be parted forever? Are you going to die in your sins? Oh, let it not be so! Lord God, convert them by Thy grace, convert them now! Let us pray that it may be so, for Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

LUKE 18:31-43, 19:1-10

Luke 18:31-33. *Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spit on: and they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ often talked to His disciples about His death. Before the time for it came, He foresaw it, He thought and spoke much of it, He even dwelt upon the terrible details of it very minutely, "He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spit on: and they shall scourge him, and put him to death." Ah! dear friends, when our Lord Jesus died for us, He knew what He was doing.

There are some men who, without a moment's consideration, could do a brave action, but they could not sit down and coolly calculate all the consequences of doing it. If they find themselves unexpectedly in the face of imminent danger, they see a person needing to be saved from peril, and they make a rush for it, and the daring deed is done. But here our Savior deliberately thinks and talks about His death, yet He never flinches, or looks back, but He prepares His heart for the solemn event, and sets His face like a flint to go through it all that He may save the souls of His people. We also ought to think and talk much of our Lord's death, since He thought and spoke so much of it.

34. *And they understood none of these things:*

They could not make out what He meant, it was plain enough, but they could not believe that it should be so.

34-36. *And this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken. And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: and hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.*

The blind man asked, as the familiar hymn puts it—

*"What means this eager, anxious throng,
Which moves with busy haste along?"*

37-38. *And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.*

If he could not see, he could hear. So, dear friends, like this blind man, use what senses you have. "Faith cometh by hearing," so it came to this man, and as soon as he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth who was passing by, he began to pray to Him. Oh, that some of you would also pray to Him as soon as

you hear that He is nigh! Deep down, from your very soul, let this cry go up, “Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.”

39. *And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace:*

I think I hear them saying, “Do not make such a disturbance. The Master is preaching, and we are losing His words through your noise. What is all that clamor about? Can you not have more respect to the Son of David than to cry in that fashion?”

39. *But he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.*

That is a good thing for you also to do, not only to keep on crying to the Lord Jesus, but to grow more importunate when others rebuke you. If you are seeking the Savior, do not be put back, if others would hinder you, be the more resolute, the more determined, to be heard by Him.

40. *And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him:*

Jesus had been walking along, the crowd making way for Him, but He was arrested by the cry of a blind beggar, “Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him”—

40-41. *And when he was come near, he asked him, saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.*

A plain question and a very distinct answer. What is it that you, dear friends, want of Jesus? Could you all tell if the question were put to you? What is it that you would have the Lord do for you? Do you know? This man did know, and when we know, as he did, what we want from Christ, we shall soon get it. The sad fact concerning many people is that though they are not blind with their natural eyes, they are so blind in heart that they cannot see their own needs.

42-43. *And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God:*

Christ has only to speak, and the great work is done at once. The salvation of a soul from the power of sin is not the work of weeks, it can be done in a single moment.

“Immediately he received his sight, and followed him.” That is beautiful, as soon as he could see, he looked for Christ, and then followed Him, “glorifying God.” He clapped his hands, and followed Jesus, shouting and crying, “Blessed be God, I have found my sight! The darkness is over, and the light has broken in upon my soul.”

43. *And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.*

Chapter 19. Verses 1-2. *And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.*

Jesus Christ had just blessed a blind man who was poor, so poor that he was a common wayside beggar, will He bless the rich man, too? Oh, yes! He knows no distinction of persons, He is ready to bless all classes, whether they be rich or poor is nothing to Him.

3. *And he sought to see Jesus who he was;*

Possibly he had not much respect, but he had great curiosity, he would like to see the man about whom everybody was talking, “He sought to see Jesus who he was.”

3. *And could not for the press, because he was little of stature.*

The crowd round about him was so thick that the little short man could not see over the heads of the tall people. Though he pushed, and tried to get in front, there was always some bigger body before him, so that he could not see the great Teacher.

4. *And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree—*

Do you not see the little short man running in front of the throng, and climbing up a tree that stood in the way? Rich men do not generally climb trees, but here was a man whose curiosity overcame his dignity, so he, “climbed up into a sycamore tree”—

4-5. *To see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him,—*

Cannot you imagine that you see the blessed Master stopping, and looking up at that tree? Somehow, He always made Himself one with those whom He meant to bless. When He spoke to the blind man, He stood as if He were Himself blind, and asked him, “What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?” And now He stops under this sycamore, and looks up at curious Zacchaeus as if He, too, were taken with a fit of curiosity, and asks, “Who is that up in this tree?” “He looked up and saw him”—spied him out—

5. *And said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.*

Oh, how astonished must the little Jew have been when he heard Christ’s words! Never was a man so taken with surprise before, but with the word there came a divine softness into the heart of the chief of the publicans, and he yielded to that singularly condescending invitation, that strangely unexpected command.

6. *And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.*

A great change had been suddenly wrought in him, the opening of the blind man’s eyes was not at all more remarkable than the renewing of the heart of Zaccheus, “He made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.”

7. *And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.*

I wonder where He could have gone and not been guest with a man that was a sinner, but Zacchaeus was thought to be a sinner beyond ordinary sinners. Our Lord still loves to be the guest of a man that is a sinner, He still wants a place where He can stay. O man, you who are a sinner, ask Him home with you! O woman, you who are in your very trade a sinner, ask Him home with you, and we will say again, not murmuringly, but joyfully, “He has gone to be guest with one who is a sinner.”

8. *And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor;*

That was a grand proof that the conversion of Zacchaeus was genuine, I should like to see the same kind of proof in many professors whom I know, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.” I remember one who was converted in this place, and he at once gave £50 to some good object, and I said to his brother, “I think your brother is converted.” He answered, “I hope he is, but he is a dreadful skin-flint.” “But,” I replied, “only yesterday, he gave £50 to such-and-such a work.” “Ah, then!” said the brother, “I am sure he is converted, for nothing but the grace of God would make him do such a thing as that.” Now Zacchaeus was, no doubt, a man of that kind, one who loved his money, and kept it to himself as long as ever he could, but now that he is converted, he says, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor”—

8. *And if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.*

He acts in charity and justice, for he is determined to do the right thing with his substance. You see, he was a rich man, so his money was a source of trouble. The blind beggar had no such difficulty, for he had not any money that he must distribute when he was converted, but this rich man—this camel, as our Savior called such men, went through the eye of a needle by the grace of God, and thus the Lord proved the reality of His conversion.

9. *And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.*

“He does not look like it, he has become a tax-gatherer for the Romans, he has oppressed his own countrymen. But he is a son of Abraham, and salvation has come to him.”

10. *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

If, at this time, we ask our Lord Jesus, “Whither goest thou, Divine Master?” His answer still is, “I am come to seek and to save that which was lost.” “Art thou come after those who think themselves good enough without thee?” He shakes His head and says, “I am a Physician, and the whole have no need of a Physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” The Gospel of the grace of God is for the guilty, if you are not guilty, there is no Gospel for you, but if you are guilty, and confess it, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—433, 499, 568

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