

# THE KING OF KINGS: A STUDY OF MATTHEW

## The King's Ministry: A Study of Matthew 14–20

### STUDY TWENTY-ONE

## Seeing Ourselves through Blind Eyes

*Matthew 20:29–34*

*Without Christ, you and I are capable of the most heinous of crimes. Without Christ, we have nothing worthwhile to bring to God. When will we ever acknowledge that? That's why I appreciate the blind men: "Just give us sight; we are blind!" Answering in the twenty-first century, "Just save my soul! I am dark and dead and lost without Christ."*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**C**LOSE your eyes and sit in the blackness for a moment. Think about every task you've done so far today—picking out your clothes, preparing your breakfast, taking a morning walk. Now imagine doing those things with your eyes closed. *Imagine being blind.*

Words can hardly describe the unending difficulties or the feelings of fear that may accompany blindness. Just as God made our physical eyes to engage this world, He also intended for us to have spiritual sight to engage with Him. Sin, however, has consigned all humanity to spiritual blindness.

Tragically, many with good physical eyesight live their entire lives not realizing they suffer from another kind of blindness. The spiritually blind refuse to believe that God exists, resist looking at their own brokenness, and reject Christ's sacrifice. Their spiritual sight remains veiled, so they need Jesus to come alongside them and open their eyes to see Him as their Savior and God.

In this *Searching the Scriptures* study, we'll discover an example of two men who, although suffering from physical blindness, had perfect spiritual vision. God chose to preserve their story to serve as a symbol of our plight and a promise of His power and grace for us today.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

## Seeing Ourselves through Blind Eyes

Matthew 20:29–34



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Spiritual blindness not only prevents someone from seeing God, but it also dims one's understanding of Scripture. Offer this prayer to God as you prepare to open His Word:

*Father, thank You for touching my heart and healing my spiritual blindness. As I open Your Word today, open my eyes to see the truth You've preserved for Your people. Help me receive what You want to teach me today. In Jesus' name, amen.*



### TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Jesus' early ministry was characterized by a few features: profound authoritative teaching, disputes with religious leaders, and countercultural care for the lowliest members of society. Jesus did all of these things from the moment He passed His test in the wilderness ([Matthew 4:17](#)) until He offered up His final breath upon the cross ([27:50](#)).

Toward the beginning of His ministry, Jesus encountered two blind men asking for mercy. He recognized their need and their faith, and He healed them ([9:27–31](#)). A few years later—with the cross in Jerusalem looming larger than ever—Jesus had an almost identical encounter with two *more* blind men. **What did He do that time around?**



### Observation: The Compassionate Jesus

Pastor Chuck Swindoll offers some encouraging words for those seeking to understand Scripture: “God’s Word was written for ordinary people—like you and me.”<sup>1</sup> To receive the blessings God offers us through His Word, we don’t have to hunt for any hidden, secret meaning. We simply approach it like we would other texts, beginning with a careful reading to see what it says.



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*Matthew 20:29–34*

Read *Matthew 20:29–34* three or four times, perhaps using a few different Bible versions. Each time you read, jot down a new detail that stands out to you.

Whom did the blind men address in *20:30*? Who responded to them in *20:31*, and what was the reaction to their request?

The condescending shouts from the crowd couldn't silence the voices of the blind men. And in *20:31*, they made the same request they did in *20:30*—this time with a little more *passion*. How did Jesus react in *20:34* to the blind men's request? How did Jesus' response contrast with that of the crowd?

*When these two blind men heard the name of Jesus, they heard hope. They could imagine what it would be like if He could just touch their eyes and give them what they cannot give themselves: sight. They're desperate. This is their only chance to connect with the one who can transform their physical condition. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



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*Matthew 20:29–34*

Of all the actions Jesus did in *Matthew 20:32–34*, which stands out to you most?

According to *20:34*, how long after Jesus touched the blind men's eyes did the miracle occur? How did the blind men respond to their miraculous healing?

These blind beggars couldn't see Jesus or the impressive crowd trailing behind Him. No, they only *heard* that He was drawing near to their corner of the street. But that was enough for them. They called out louder and louder until Jesus heard them and showed them mercy. ***What an example of great spiritual sight!***



### Interpretation: The Believing Blind Men

Although this brief account appears to be simple—especially compared to some of the other miracles Jesus performed—it is steeped with theological truths.

These blind men twice referred to Jesus as the “Son of David.” The title describes more than a mere branch of Israel's family tree. Rather, the title echoes a promise God made to King David hundreds of years earlier in *2 Samuel 7:8–16*.



## Seeing Ourselves through Blind Eyes

*Matthew 20:29–34*

Based on this context, what did the blind men show they believed about Jesus by acknowledging His relationship with David? See page 135 of Pastor Chuck's commentary *Insights on Matthew 16–28* for some additional helpful information, or check [Constable's Notes](http://netbible.org) at netbible.org.<sup>2</sup>

These blind men specifically requested *mercy* from Jesus. Not attention, not glory, not riches . . . just mercy. Now, *mercy* can be defined as “compassion that causes one to help the weak, the sick, or the poor” or even as “compassion or leniency shown to . . . an offender.”<sup>3</sup>

What kind of mercy did these blind beggars expect from Jesus? How did Jesus show them mercy? How does He show us this kind of mercy today?

*It is important for each one of us to realize our actual condition. I'm going to tell you the truth. You are, at the core of your being, a sinner—a sinner by birth, a sinner by choice, and a sinner by nature. You're as bad off as you can possibly be. Apart from Christ, your world is a world of spiritual darkness and death. It makes all the sense in the world that they would cry for mercy. That's your cry. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



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*Matthew 20:29–34*

What do the blind men's persistent requests in *Matthew 20:30–31, 33* reveal about their faith? How can their faith instruct us as Christ's followers today?

The crowd following Jesus had watched Him perform many miracles, but they missed His message and dismissed the needs of the blind men. Their faith was weak. These two beggars, although blind, had strong faith which allowed them to see Jesus as their merciful King who could meet their desperate needs.



### Correlation: Opening Spiritual Blind Eyes

Often, we have a hard time discerning our own spiritual condition. Thankfully, one of the many benefits of studying Scripture is that it acts like a freshly polished mirror reflecting our hearts on its pages.

In *Romans 3:10–18*, Paul hammered the gavel shouting, “Guilty!” The perpetrator? Everyone. Read these verses and briefly summarize the crimes humans have committed against God.



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Thankfully, Paul didn't end his letter with such a harsh refrain. He continued telling his readers of hope found in Christ alone. Read *Romans 3:21–26* and summarize how God provided forgiveness for these wicked crimes.

Reflecting on these convicting yet hopeful words from Paul helps us look at our hearts to examine their spiritual condition. But what would it look like for us to dig a little deeper beyond the surface?

### **Application: Do You See?**

Pastor Chuck encourages us not to see this simply as another nice Bible story. Instead, he encourages us to take this passage as an opportunity to do some difficult self-reflection. He asks one pointed applicational question:

*Are you aware of your actual condition?*

Take a few minutes to think—and think deeply—about that question, even if it makes you feel a little uncomfortable. What comes to mind as you consider your actual spiritual condition? Write down some reflections below.



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Our spiritual health is not measured by how many times we've attended church this year or how many Christian friends we have or how many hymns we can sing from memory. Rather God calls us to acknowledge our deep-seated sinfulness, to confess it to Him, and to walk by His Spirit in the newness of life.

How do you sense God calling you to respond to your audit of your spiritual state at this moment?

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.* These two blind men may as well have written the words of this beautiful hymn. By God's grace, Jesus Christ has removed the scales from our eyes as well so that we, too, can see our need for Him, call to Him, and receive mercy.



### A FINAL PRAYER

Offer to God a prayer of personal confession and thanksgiving in the space below.

### ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 107.
2. Other tools we recommend are a whole-Bible commentary, such as the two-volume *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament* and *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*. Pastor Chuck's favorite Bible dictionary is the *New Unger's Bible Dictionary*. A variety of versions of the Bible are available at [BibleGateway.com](http://BibleGateway.com), and an excellent online Bible commentary by Thomas L. Constable is at [netbible.org](http://netbible.org).
3. J. D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, rev. Moisés Silva (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 926.

