

YOUTH UNIT I: Jesus, the Heir of David
YOUTH GENERAL LESSON TITLE: The Merciful Son of David
YOUTH TOPIC: The Blind Man Who Sees

LESSON 5
DATE: December 29, 2024

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Luke 18:31-43
PRINT PASSAGE: Luke 18:35-43

KEEPIN' IT CURRENT! (5 Minutes)

“Being a Blind Teenager”– In 2013, Kody Keplinger wrote an essay about what it is like “being a blind teenager.” Have you ever thought about what it is like to be a blind teenager? You probably have not thought about what it is like to be a blind teenager unless you, a family member, or friend is blind.

Here is Kody’s experience as a blind teenager:

First, blindness is rarely total darkness. Ninety percent of those who are blind are legally blind, not totally blind. Legal blindness is vision of 20/200 or less in the better corrected eye. Kody falls into the category of those who are legally blind, not totally blind. As she wrote, “My depth perception is pretty bad, and I have tunnel vision.”

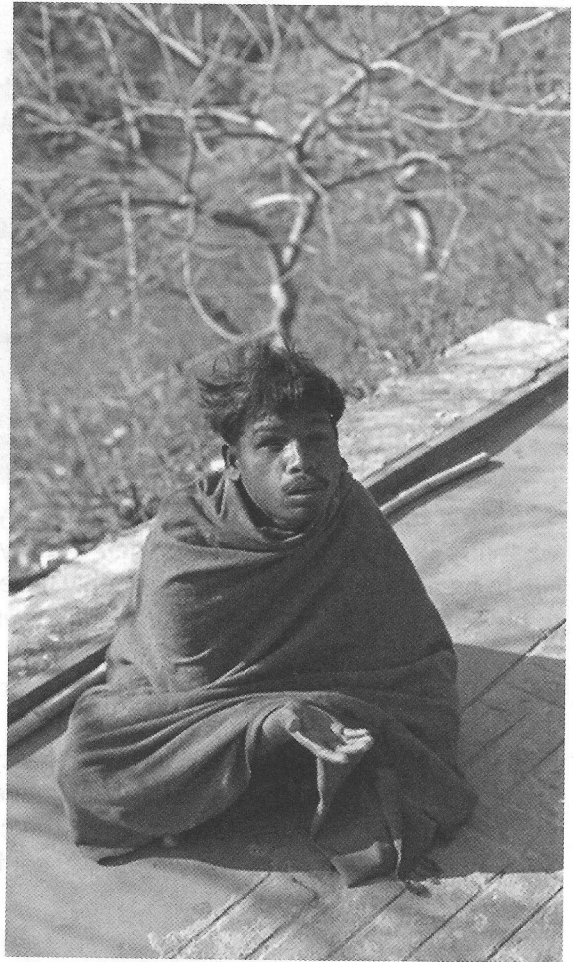
Also, many legally blind students are mainstreamed, which means that they do not go to a special school. Most of Kody’s classmates had gone to school with her for some time and were aware of her blindness. As Kody wrote, “for most people, it was old news.” In school, she was unable to see a whiteboard or use normal sized textbooks. Kody used special, large-print textbooks, which often came in multiple volumes due to the large font size used. She said her books were so big they would not fit in her locker; she’d have to store them in her teachers’ classrooms.

Kody’s public school, mainstreamed experience taught her how to advocate for herself, as well as to do so sometimes with the help of her parents. Some kids taunted her. Sometimes the administration did not give her the learning support to which she was entitled. Each roadblock provided an opportunity for Kody to demand those things to which she was entitled.

(Source: www.disabilityinkidlit.com/2013/07/08/kody-keplinger-being-a-blind-teenager/)

Can you imagine being visually impaired? Think of those things that you like to do. How would a visual impairment impact you, if at all. Those who are visually impaired are living in a time when there are any number of advancements that make it easier for those who are visually impaired to live independent lives.

Nonetheless, if you were visually impaired, do you think you would ask Jesus to heal you? Do you believe that God can heal those who are visually impaired? In her blog post, Kody never made mention of a desire to have her sight healed by God. Kody also did not make any mention of her relationship with God, if any.



Kody's experience, as a blind teenager, will help us better understand the blind beggar featured in today's bible story.

KEEPIN' IT REAL! (5 Minutes)

- What are some of the challenges that blind teenagers may face? Are there positives relating to being blind that visually impaired teenagers may experience? Discuss your answers to both questions.
- Do you believe that Jesus can heal disabilities? When Jesus does not heal disabilities, how do you understand Jesus not doing so? Does our faith play any role in people being healed by Jesus? If so, what role does faith play in a person's healing?

KEY VERSE: Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Luke 18:39.

³⁵ As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. ³⁶ When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. ³⁷ They told him, 'Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.' ³⁸ Then he shouted, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' ³⁹ Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' ⁴⁰ Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, ⁴¹ 'What do you want me to do for you?' He said, 'Lord, let me see again.' ⁴² Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight; your faith has saved you.' ⁴³ Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.

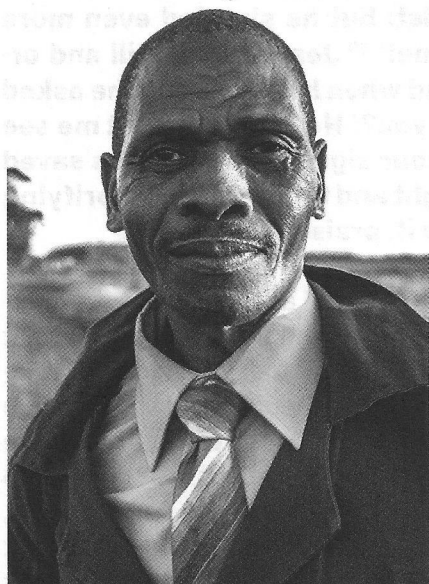
Today, we end Unit I, entitled "Jesus, the Heir of David," as we focus on the interaction between Jesus and a blind man. Being seen and being able to see is at the heart of today's scripture text. Luke's placement of today's bible story is intentional and strategic. Right before today's lesson about a blind man, in Luke 18:31-34, is a story about how the disciples knew Jesus best, yet they were blind to his real purpose on earth. People, including Christians, can be blind to spiritual things because spiritual things can only be seen using spiritual eyes, not natural eyes. Today's bible story, in Luke 18:35-43, isn't a story just about Jesus healing a blind man, but it is more about being seen and truly seeing, as well as about how we are saved (see Luke 18:26).

Imagine the circumstance of the blind man sitting by the side of the road. (Close your eyes for one minute. As you do this, imagine living life having to have an audio (ear) awareness of what is going on around you.) He was begging most likely because his blindness left him unable to work. He was dependent upon the kindness of others to survive. This blind man heard a crowd of people moving; he perceived that something was going on. Perhaps the blind man used his spiritual ears to perceive that a move of God was about to take place in his general vicinity. Do we spiritually perceive when God is moving?

When the blind man was told that Jesus was "passing by," he called out to him, referring to him as "Jesus, Son of David." Why did the blind man refer to Jesus by the name "Son of David?" By naming Jesus "Son of David," the blind man was placing himself under Jesus's authority, the heir to the throne of David. He

wanted Jesus, the heir to an eternal throne, to see him and have mercy on him. (v. 39) In the first century, blindness was considered a judgment from God for sins committed, so receiving his sight would have been the equivalent to being rescued from God's judgment.

This blind beggar was probably used to people not seeing him or looking past him. You know how we do when we see a person who has fallen on hard times. But the blind man was determined that Jesus would see him, even when faced with others wanting him to be quiet. (v. 39) The blind man's resolve resulted in Jesus calling for the man to be brought to him, where Jesus could ask



him this question: "What do you want me to do for you?" (v. 41a) If Jesus asked you that question, what would you ask for? The man's request should not be surprising. He said, "Lord, let me see again." (v. 41b) The man wanted his true need addressed, he wanted his place of helplessness and vulnerability seen and addressed.

Jesus saw the man, saw his condition, and healed him, saying, "Your faith has saved you." (v. 42) Jesus was saying that the blind man's belief in Jesus's ability to rescue him had resulted in the blind man being healed. Jesus was not saying that the blind man's faith that Jesus will do as the blind asked would result in the healing he

desired. Sometimes, Christians believe that God must do what we say, not what is within the will of God. Healing the man's sight was in the will of God, and the blind man had faith in God's desire and goodness to rescue/save him, which was a part of God's sovereign and divine plan for the blind man's life. Put another way, we have to know that God can do it, and we ask that God's will be done.

Seeing is at the center of today's bible lesson – a blind man being seen by God and not by others, a blind man seeing an opportunity for God's will to be done in his life, God seeing one of his children in need, and God seeing a person of faith in action.

KEEPIN' IT TOGETHER (5 Minutes)

Let's think about the lessons we can apply from today's bible story to the condition of spiritual blindness. Yes, in today's lesson, there is an obvious focus

on healing physical blindness. However, most of us, including Christians, can suffer from spiritual blindness, which is the condition of being unable to see the things of God through spiritual eyes, not natural eyes.

Have you ever found yourself sitting on the roadside of life begging? We are not talking about begging for money or food in a literal sense but begging for things in life because your spiritual sight needs to be healed. You are begging to be on the football team, when God's plan is for you to be on the debate team as he prepares you for your future career as a lawyer. Or you are begging to be friends with a group of mean girls or bullying boys, when God's plan is for you to be friends with that unknown or unpopular person who needs a good friend, and who will turn out to be a lifelong good friend.

Now is the time for you to call out to "Jesus, Son of David," and ask God to cure your spiritual blindness. Don't call out to Jesus doubting that he can open your spiritual eyes. Call out to Jesus believing that God has a plan for your life, a plan that God wants you to be able to fulfill as you look to Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith and the plan for our life.

God sees you. Do you see God? God sees the plan God has for your life. Can you see it? If not, perhaps you are suffering from spiritual blindness. Jesus is asking you, "What do you want me to do for you?" (Luke 18:41a.) All you need to say, in faith, is, "Lord, help me to see with spiritual eyes."

iTHINK! (5 Minutes)

- Read through today's bible lesson again. Imagine yourself in it. Where do you see yourself? Amongst the crowd? The disciples? Are you, perhaps, the blind man? What do Jesus's actions and reactions show you? Journal about it.
- The blind beggar paid attention to his surroundings and recognized the movement of God in the world. Write a series of affirmations/sayings that pledge that you will be better tuned into the movement of God around you.
- As a class, have a debate. One team will argue, I'd rather be physically blind, while the other team argues, I'd rather be spiritually blind. Make sure in your arguments you discuss your respective viewpoints about what it would mean to be healed from physical blindness versus spiritual blindness. (Note: If there are people in your class who are sight impaired, or have a family member who is sight impaired, please be sensitive to this fact.)