



## **Matthew 20:29–34**

29 As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. 30 Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!” 31 The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!” 32 Jesus stopped and

called them. “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. 33 “Lord,” they answered, “we want our sight.” 34 Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

## **Reflection**

(Today’s reflection is given by Craig Tubman)

Can you see the kingdom of God? Can you see it?

God’s promise is that he is at work in this world through his Word, his Spirit and his people. When someone truly forgives another because they believe that Jesus’

command for them to do so is trustworthy, God's kingdom is at work. When we not only feed the hungry in our city but sit alongside them, share our lives with them, and give them a prayer to pray, God's kingdom is at work. Like a mustard seed, like a hidden treasure or a pearl of great worth, God's kingdom is of ultimate value and is at work in this world in which you and live.

Can you see this kingdom?

Augustine wrote *The City of God* in the 5th Century as a way to alert us to the fact that we live in a world of two kingdoms. One is right in front of our faces, it is finite, it's in the hustle and bustle for significance, it's in the scramble for power, the greed for more and the confusion about what really matters. The other is kingdom is sub-

versive, it is eternal, it challenges false assumptions and is God's work in this world.

Can you see this kingdom?

Whether it was placed deliberately in this position by Matthew's editorial choice or it was divinely ordained, today's passage marks the end of Jesus' teaching and healing within the old borders of Israel. We have read over the past few weeks Jesus moving from the north in Caesarea Philippi, coming around Lake Galilee by Capernaum and then traveling south to Jericho. What's he been doing? Teaching about the upside down order of God's kingdom where the first are last and the last are first. He has been sharing God's commitment to go after the one lost sheep and he has commanded his followers to for-

give as God has forgiven them. Jesus has called us to come to God as little children, turned away the rich young ruler and declared the controversial generosity of God through the parable of the vineyard workers.

There is only one last thing to do at this point in his ministry, enter Jerusalem and complete his mission.

But on the eve of his entrance into Jerusalem we read that he gives sight to two men calling out for mercy on the roadside. This provides a poignant end to his public teaching outside of Jerusalem. But the subtext is this: Can you see the shape of God's kingdom through what he has taught? And will we have our eyes opened to see what he is about to do as he enters

# Jerusalem?

Matthew 20:29-34 is a hinge that calls us as readers to have our eyes wide open to God's kingdom – it's shape seen in what has been and it's entry point soon to be seen on the cross.

Interestingly here in Matthew 20, these two men would never have been healed if the crowds and followers of Jesus had had their way. They were trying to silence the two blind men, separate the riff-raff from the holy. In such an act we see that those around Jesus are still themselves blind to the shape of God's kingdom in which the first are last and the last are first.

But Jesus is constantly modelling to them what really matters. He stops, asks appar-

ent riff-raff the incredibly personal and respectful question, “What do you want me to do for you?” and gives them the sight they so desperately desire.

Can you see the kingdom of God? Can you see those moments in your day to day life that really matter? That have eternal significance?

We live in a world of two competing kingdoms. One is obvious. It self-promotes, it boasts, it demands your allegiance and in return promises financial benefits and workplace status. It urges us to put ourselves first, it hints that life is really survival of the fittest and it would only pause to help those two blind men on the roadside if there was some financial or PR capital to be gained from such an act.

The other kingdom is God's. It is more powerful and it's eternal. It is life giving, priority changing, seemingly back to front and makes promises that don't instantly gratify but sets a foundation for a life blessed by the joy and hope that come from God. Its king is Jesus and he stops to help the riff-raff, he cares for the last and he challenges the proud, self-made rulers of our age.

## **Think & Pray**

Take some time today to meditate upon how you see the world around you. Are you more focussed on the temporary kingdom of the present or can you see the kingdom of God at work?

What are your priorities for the remainder



of this year? How do they align themselves with Jesus and the kingdom he has ushered in? How might you be a light for this kingdom in your workplace, amongst your friends through your daily words and actions?

Can you see the kingdom of God? If so, praise God's goodness for giving you the eyes to see it and seek to live by it each and every day. Let it turn your life upside down and bring you into the kingdom of the Son he loves.

Why don't you pray to the God of this kingdom now and ask him to give you ever clearer sight into what really matters?