

# **“Compassion & Healing”**

**By Cathy Love**

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**Readings:**

**Matthew 20:29 – 34**

**Matthew 21:14**

**Matthew 26:50-56/Luke 22:51**

This morning, as many of you know, today is Palm Sunday, a day of celebration with palm branches waving and being put on the ground – thus the title of the day “Palm Sunday.” The day, taken from the Gospels, where a whole city threw a parade for Jesus. This day marked a time of celebration where Jesus was worshipped and praised. On Palm Sunday, we picture a celebration; we see cloaks on the road, we hear shouts of “*Hosanna!*”, we watch palm branches wave in the air because the King is arriving.

In preparing for this morning, I pondered the many themes in the timeline of Jesus journey until His death and resurrection; however, one of the themes that I felt was powerful was our reading this morning. Jesus, while heading to His crucifixion, stops to extend grace and mercy to two blind men.

Remember from the reading, there are two blind men sitting by the roadside as the parade passes them. They obviously could not see the waving palm branches, the people, or Jesus on a donkey, a symbol of humility and peace, but they could hear the commotion, and they knew He was coming. When they heard he was passing in front of them, they cried out in great faith, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

Despite the crowd’s desire to be closer to Jesus, to run the celebration their way, and their attempts to silence the two blind men and stop the two men from making a scene in their celebration, the two men continued to cry out.

And Jesus stopped on his way to fulfil a prophecy, on His way to enter the city, on His way to the cross. He stopped for two blind men.

Jesus hears our cries.

Jesus stopped not just to heal the blind but to teach His disciples that His kingdom does not happen through violence. Jesus Kingdom is coming through peace and love.

Jesus does not lecture or stop to chastise the people; instead, he shows grace and mercy in His teaching. He was on His way to His death, but he stopped to give sight to two people.

He did not stop doing His work despite the crowd dismissing the blind men. If we think about this another way, Jesus continued to show compassion to those who were considered lesser beings.

He could have “played to the crowd” and focused on those who were worshipping him and praising Him, but then these people are the same ones who would later cry the words “crucify Him.” He chose those who had nothing to give him but their faith in Him.

So to reiterate that so we get the message: The crowd saw a chance for a parade, a celebration; Jesus saw a chance to heal. The crowd shouts Hosana, which can be translated to “save us, we pray, or please deliver us.”

But they rebuked the blind men who were crying out for mercy as if they did not deserve to be saved or were not worthy of Jesus mercy.

When our lives have noise, timelines, expectations, and pressures, do we make time for Jesus? We can see by this experience that He is never too busy to hear mercy's cry. He hears the desperately whispered plea and the shouts for help. We have a King who listens.

### Faith in action

These two men, called out to Jesus, unable to see Him but having faith that Jesus would hear them over the noise of the crowd. When they were rebuked by people they could not see, they cried out louder. They were persistent. They trusted.

Jesus was on His way to the greatest act of love on the cross; He was not so turned inward and focused on His own suffering; He was not in such a hurry or lost in the adoration of the crowd; He was not so focused on the mission that He missed the individual.

I read a passage in my research that really touched me. "Their blindness did not prevent them from seeing who He truly was: "Son of David." They recognized the Messiah before many sighted people did. Sometimes those who lack physical sight possess the clearest spiritual vision."

And through this, these hands that touched the blind men, enabling them to see and live such a different life, would soon be nailed to a cross, changing all our lives.

It is easier to hold our faith here in Church, or in a crowd of like-minded people, but can we be as brave as the blind men who called to Jesus and continued to call Him and hold their faith even as they were taunted for it?

Well, here is the good news: Jesus will never leave or forsake us. He will stand by us in the midst of our good and bad, in the middle of strong faith and wavering faith.

Jesus is so forgiving. Remember, He knew Peter would betray Him and that Peter was one of the three disciples who fell asleep not once but three times, yet He continued to follow His Father's will and went towards the cross with Peter among His followers.

Blindness to the word of the Lord

I would like to draw attention to another earlier passage from Matthew chapter 9, verses 27-31.

As Jesus leaves a house, two blind men follow him, calling him “Son of David.” Jesus asks if they believe He can heal them, touches their eyes, and tells them it is done according to their faith.

Bishop Robert Barron talked about this passage. He stated that blindness in the Bible is often a symbol of spiritual blindness, the incapacity to see what truly matters. Focussed on the worldly goods of wealth, pleasure, power and honour, most people don’t see how blind they are to the truly important things; giving oneself to the grace of God and living a life of love.

If you have not surrendered to the grace of God, you are blind. How wonderful it is, then, that these men in the Gospel can cry out to Jesus in their need.

They are, of course, making a petition for physical healing, but it is much more than that for us. It’s asking for that one thing that finally matters, spiritual vision to know what my life is about, to know the big picture, to know where I’m going. You can have all the wealth, leisure, honour and power you want. You can have all the worldly goods you could desire. But if you don’t see spiritually, it will do you no good; it will probably destroy you.”

Other passages:

The other passage of Mathew chapter 21 verse 14 we looked at, shows more of Jesus healing when He arrived at the temple and healed the blind and the lame after he cleared the temple of those who made it a den of thieves

Later in the passages, when Peter cuts off the ear of the high priest's servant Malchus, one who was in the crowd to turn Jesus in, Jesus again stops to heal but this time it was Malchus' ear. Jesus doesn't pick and choose who He will heal. He shows grace and mercy to even those who are prepared to lead Him to the cross. (Luke 22:51)

Reverend Lucas shared this observation on the passage with the two blind men at the parade:

For us, this offers a profound lesson. We often assume that healing comes only when we turn inward and care for ourselves (and many times that is true and necessary). But not always. Sometimes our strength is renewed when, even in the midst of our own pain, we serve others.

Sometimes grace meets us not in withdrawal, but in compassion.

This also deepens the meaning of Palm Sunday. When the crowds cried “Hosanna,” they did not fully understand what kind of king Jesus was. Many were still imagining a conventional ruler, powerful in the ways of earthly kingdoms.

But the true King entering Jerusalem is the One who heals while walking toward His own death. He is the King who conquers not by force, but by surrender; not by taking life, but by giving His life. He dies to defeat death and to secure salvation.

Even while carrying His own pain and standing on the edge of the despair he would soon face, Jesus refuses to let His suffering become the center of the story. Instead, He makes room for compassion. He restores sight, he heals the blind and the lame, and he heals a cut-off ear. He liberates. He serves. In doing so, He seems to draw strength through healing others.

In conclusion, we can understand that peace and love are the way to His Kingdom.

His kingship is revealed not only in power, but in grace and mercy.

Where are you in this passage?

- Are you in the crowd, caught up in celebration but missing the suffering nearby?
- Are you one of the blind men, crying out for mercy?
- Or are you being invited to become more like Christ — willing to stop when compassion calls?
- Or do you see yourself in another role?

It is good news that we can come to Jesus. Even better news is that He comes to us.

May we have the faith to cry out, the humility to receive mercy, and the compassion to pause for others on our own road.

Palm Sunday reminds us that the road to the cross is lined with opportunities to love and to spread peace, mercy, and grace with this love. This is only the beginning of Jesus' triumphant ride, and we will hear about the rest of His journey in this week's services.

On Palm Sunday, we celebrate a King who listens.  
Amen.