



NO LONGER ALONE

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As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by."

He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Luke 18:35-38

In his book, *Love Walked Among Us*, author Paul E. Miller writes: "We instinctively know that love leads to commitment, so we look away when we see a beggar. We might have to pay if we look too closely and care too deeply. Loving means losing control of our schedule, our money, and our time. When we love we cease to be the master and become a servant."

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As a result of the world's attitude toward him the life of this blind beggar must have been a very lonely one. Passersby probably didn't talk much to him, afraid to get involved. Many in this world are in such a position, even if they're not beggars. Disorders, disease, or disabilities of all kinds cause many to be avoided. I'm sure some of you might be in that category and will be able to identify.

The story about this blind man is a familiar one. It appears in all four Gospels, relating how Jesus healed him and the joy that brought. I've been wondering how I would feel if I were him. And it occurred to me that there was much more cause for joy here than the physical healing itself. Much more than what appears on the surface.

Come with me as we try, in whatever way we can, to understand what this healing might have meant to the blind man . . . and what it could have meant to us if we had been him.

When He came near the man, Jesus drew close to him and asked him:

"What do you want me to do for you?"

"Lord, I want to see," he replied.

Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you."

Luke 18:41-42

If we were like the blind man, pretty well ignored by those around us, I expect we would have been surprised to have someone like Jesus, the great rabbi, pay attention to us. Most likely we would for years have been feeling we had less value than others. We were ill-thought of, though we had done no wrong—considered sinners.

To have someone bend over us and speak kindly, asking about our needs would be a source of joy in itself, even if there were no physical healing. Jesus made us feel that we mattered and that He cared. He treated us with compassion and love in a way we had never before experienced. Imagine what that must have felt like!

This story shows us the kind of person Jesus was for the blind man. It shows us the kind of person Jesus can be for us today.

We may not be blind, but everyone has tough times now and then due to illness and other problems. When that happens to us, we too have Jesus we can cry out to for help. We may feel as though the world is passing us by, ignoring us, not interested in our needs. But with love Jesus comes, bending over us as He bent over the blind man so many years ago. With compassion He reaches into our hearts where we most need healing.

He tells us He will be the friend we've longed for. We are valued. And we no longer need to be alone.

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