

## Biblical Reflection 6: "Lord, have mercy!"

March 22, 2021

One time, when Jesus was traveling through the land of Judah with his disciples, he passed through the popular city of Jericho on his way to Jerusalem, where he would soon be crucified. On this particular day, two blind men, who were sitting on the side of the road, started crying out to him, "Lord, have mercy on us!" Many people tried to stop them from calling out, but they just shouted more and more loudly, "Have mercy on us, Lord! Have mercy on us!" (Matt. 20:29-31)



Sometimes, our situation is so dire, hopeless, or overwhelming that we feel like these blind men, unable to do anything more to help ourselves. We have tried everything we know to do, but little is working. We have poured our concerns and needs to God. We asked for victory over our enemies. We have asked God for every kind of help we can imagine. But here we are, beaten down, discouraged, and afraid. And all that's left for us to do is to cry out, "Lord, have mercy on us."

But the good news of this story is that God is indeed merciful. This means that when we cry out for mercy, we do not need to try to persuade God to do something he does not want to do. God is not like the heartless, cruel bullies of the world, who cannot or will not show kindness to those with less power. Mercy is part of God's character, and loving kindness is one of his chief characteristics. And therein lies our hope—not in ourselves, but in the character of the Lord God, who proved his love through the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and who will one day deliver us from all evil.

Having to pray for mercy may seem like a dismal condition to find ourselves in, but when we're there, we have finally reached a place of openness to God that we seldom get to when we feel powerful or in control. We know that we are at the end of our rope, we have reached our limitations, and we have become aware of our utter dependence on God as, perhaps, never before.

And so, with the blind men along the side of the road, we reach a point where we can pray sincerely, "Lord Jesus, we are lost without you. Have mercy on us—not because we are worthy, but because you are a loving and merciful God."

I pray earnestly every day for God's merciful intervention for you and all the Burmese people. I am confident that God is at work in many unseen ways and will produce good things out of your hardships and struggle. But, in the meantime, no one knows what God will do specifically in response to our prayers. The blind men in the story were healed, but we all know that many are not spared, despite their pleas for help. Evil will not ultimately prevail, but no one knows how severe each one's suffering will be.

And so, I pray for Christ to give you an ability to stand firm in your faith in the midst of great danger, fear, and uncertainty, while you wait for God's will and working to be fully revealed. I pray continually that God will show and teach you through your sufferings what you could never learn otherwise. And I pray that you may never lose confidence in the lovingkindness and mercy of the Lord, your God.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit nourish and sustain you every day in every way.

With Christ's love, always,

Dr. Tim

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