

Mercy Sought, Mercy Found - radio

The scripture for our sermon today is found in Mark 10. “**46** *And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. **47** *And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, [thou] Son of David, have mercy on me. **48** *And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, [Thou] Son of David, have mercy on me. **49** And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; **He calleth thee**. **50** *And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. **51** And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. **52** *And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way”* (Mark 10:46-52).****

I’ve entitled this sermon, “Mercy Sought, Mercy Found.”

Overview

This scripture preaches the Gospel to sinners. The lesson in it is clear. God brings sinners in their need to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He causes them to know their need and cry to Him because of it. He leads them to His Son and leaves them with His Son, in the hand and at the mercy of God which is in Christ alone!

I would like to bring your attention to seven points in this message

1. A sinner needing mercy
2. Mercy sought by a sinner
3. Christ glorified for His compassion to a sinner
4. O sinner! What do you want Him to do for you?
5. The gracious gift of saving faith!
6. Following Christ by faith
7. Redemption applied

A sinner needing mercy

First, we see here a sinner **needing mercy**. Bartimaeus was a blind beggar. His need was apparent. He could not provide for himself. He had nothing to give. He had no money. He spent his time begging. He therefore describes our spiritual poverty by nature (Rev. 3:17). He had nothing to contribute to his salvation, nothing to bring to God. He was unclean. Bartimaeus means “son of the unclean.” Like him, we are unclean in sin. We are guilty before God because of our sins. *“What the law says, it says to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God”* (Rom. 3:19). As Bartimaeus was the “son of the unclean,” we became guilty before God in our father Adam. *“By one man’s disobedience, many were made sinners”* (Rom. 5:19). Not only are we guilty for our own sin and our sin in Adam, but the nature we received from our father Adam is nothing but sin. We were conceived in sin (Ps. 51:5; Job 14:4). We are spiritually blind from birth. *“There is none that understandeth”* (Rom. 3:11). We are alienated from the life of God because of the blindness of our heart (Eph. 4:18-19). We are guilty before God and corrupt in nature. We are sinners by practice and sinners at heart. Jesus said, *“From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts”* (Mark 7:21-23). Sin comes from within us! As physical blindness prevents us from seeing physical light, spiritual blindness prevents us from seeing the truth about ourselves and the truth about God. Though we are sinners, we are blind to it. *“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us”* (1 John 1:8). Moreover, we cannot understand spiritual things. *“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”* (1 Cor. 2:14). We do not know God, we do not know His Son, we do not know our blindness, and most especially, we do not know His salvation. We have nothing spiritually. We are in darkness. And we are helpless in a kingdom of darkness (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:13-14). **What we need is mercy!**

Mercy sought by a sinner

The second thing we see here is a needy sinner seeking mercy from Christ! In the large numbers of the passing crowd only the blind cried for mercy! In Ezekiel 36, God promises great spiritual blessings to His people in the everlasting covenant of His grace. In every promise, He binds Himself to fulfill all conditions. He puts no conditions on His people. He says, *“I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it”* (Ezek. 36:36). God gives to those who have nothing and can give nothing. He does all. He therefore gets all of the glory. His own sovereign prerogative promised what He would give and to whom He would give it. But in all of the sovereign unconditional promises of Ezek. 36, in the last verse, the LORD tells us the way in which He would receive the promised blessings. He says that He would work in us to cause us to seek Him for what He promised to give (Php. 2:12-13). *“Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them”* (Ezek. 36:37). Though God has unalterably given eternal blessings to His people in Christ (2 Tim. 1:9), He has also unalterably determined to bless them through the means of His own choosing. He will cause us to seek mercy from Christ out of the poverty and nakedness of our need, even in the face of our uncleanness! In our utter helplessness to bring the light of Christ into our own souls (2 Tim. 2:25), in this posture of needing mercy, He causes us to seek that mercy in Christ alone (Lk. 18:13). *“The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them from all their troubles”* (Ps. 34:17). When you don’t know if you know God, when you can’t produce peace and joy in your own soul, when you can’t even find words to pray, when you are in this bankrupt condition -- a spiritually blind beggar before God -- what do you do? If you are the Lord’s, you will cry to Him! You will say from your heart, “Lord, I am blinded by my ignorance and my unbelieving heart and I am full of sin! Do for me what you do for helpless sinners!” When you thus pray, the Lord hears. If the Lord hears, He will save. That is His promise. That is His work. He tells beforehand what He does to make us cry to Him in Christ, so that when we cry -- when mercy(!) from God in Christ is our only plea -- then we will know, that it is the Spirit of Christ bringing us to Himself. He tells us what to do: *“Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will*

deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me” (Ps. 50:15). Do you see the pattern? We recognize His work in us when we are at the bottom and see Christ as our only help and hope! **Call!** Call upon Christ the Lord! Call on Him in the trouble of your soul. He will save! He will glorify Himself. And we will glorify Him for His salvation! It will be to His glory only, and we will know it and say so (Ps. 107:2)! **Let Jesus Christ be glorified, for what He accomplished when He died!** Anything that causes me to cry out of the depths is a mercy (Ps. 130:1; 107:12-13)! There is comfort in knowing that it is God who uses all trouble without and within -- especially within -- to drive me to Christ (Gal. 3:23-24; John 6:44)! Do you find it so in your experience? I find great comfort in knowing that though my sin is great, that my sins are many, and that what I am by nature is full of sin, God has made this truth the truth I believe: Jesus Christ is all of my salvation! Isn't this truth given to us by the Spirit of Christ?! “*5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. 6 He only is my rock and my salvation*” (Ps. 62:5-6). All mercy from God, all salvation and all spiritual blessings, are found in the Lord Jesus Christ alone! We call on God in Christ alone. We come to God by Christ alone (Matt. 11:28; Heb. 10:19). “*I am THE Way, THE Truth and THE Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me*” (John 14:1,6-9). “*There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12)! My soul! Notice, Bartimaeus did not call upon Jesus as a man calls on another man for help: “Jesus, sir, please heal my blindness!” Nor did he call on Him as a servant call on his master: “Master, please help me!” **Bartimaeus called on Jesus as a sinner calls on God in his Mediator!** Do not think you can open your own eyes or wash yourself from the pollution of your mind or nature! Do not think you can take away even the smallest of your many and great sins! Come to God in Christ only!! Call upon Him! He will save (Isa. 25:9; 33:22; Zep. 3:17). He will glorify Himself by doing so (Ps. 21:5)! And from our heart and with our lips, we will ascribe all glory to Him!

Salvation is not you making yourself acceptable to God. It is coming to God in Christ as an unclean, helpless, needy sinner, and asking Him to do for you what you cannot do for yourself! It is looking to Him for all that God requires of you in spite of all that you are! It is looking to Christ and finding Him to be everything in

salvation (Col. 3:11; 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 1:30-31; Ex. 14:13)! **This blind man who needed mercy, is, by the merciful operation of the Spirit of Christ, made to seek that mercy in Christ alone!** That is the second lesson we learn here.

Christ glorified in His compassion to a sinner!

The third thing we see here is that when Bartimaeus cried, the Lord Jesus heard. And He stood still. He called him. He had compassion on him! Our crying to Christ alone, our seeking salvation from Him, is the work of the Spirit of Christ. Regarding His redeemed He says in Psalm 107: “*12 He brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help. 13 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. 14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. 15 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*” (Ps. 107:12-13). Remember, regarding every promise of God the LORD says, “*Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them*” (Ezek. 36:37). His grace produces our cry! “*The righteous cry!*” “*Call upon Me in the day of trouble*” (Ps. 50:15). When in our uncleanness and utter spiritual lack we find ourselves looking to Christ for mercy, we must recognize that is His work. If we are left with nothing but Christ (Ps. 62:1-6), that is the signature of the work of the Spirit of Christ in us! All men experience trouble. But hypocrites do not look to Christ alone for salvation in their trouble! “*Hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them*” (Job 36:13). “*They have not cried unto me with their heart*” (Hosea 7:14). It is a blessed thing to be poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3). It is God’s work to make us so. But we do not trust our poverty. We do not trust our crying! We thank God when we are enabled to look only to Christ, because true poverty of soul leaves us with nothing but Christ! The work of the Spirit of Christ did this in Paul. He was blind to his uncleanness when he trusted his own righteousness! But then his eyes were opened to see Christ as his only righteousness (Php. 3:3-9).

Now, at his first cry, the crowd rebuked Bartimaeus. Isn’t it ironic that in all of this large crowd of seeing people who followed Jesus, there was none who cried to

Him for mercy except this unclean, blind beggar? Why did none in the faceless crowd cry? Wasn't it because they did not see their blindness? Why did they not want to hear his cries? Was it not because they never knew his need? They did not fellowship in his sufferings. (Illus: sinking of the Outlaw.) When we find Christ to be our all, we have fellowship with all those rescued from the same sinking ship of unbelief, free-will works religion who have found Christ to be their only Rock and salvation (Ps. 62:2)! We ache for others to see their need, to cry to Christ and find Him to be their all! But the crowd were as those that knew nothing of need and nothing of their eyes opened out of darkness. With the Psalmist, Bartimaeus could say, *"I cried unto the LORD with my voice...I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul"* (Ps. 142:1-4). Though they scolded him to hold his peace, *"he cried the more a great deal"* (Mark 10:48)! O, see here the work of the Spirit of Christ in this needy sinner! *"16 As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me. 17 Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice"* (Ps. 55:16-17)! By God's grace, Bartimaeus could find no rest until Christ gave Him sight to rest in Him! The crowd rebuked him at his crying, but **Jesus stood still!**

See here the miracle of grace! The LORD said that when the sun and moon stood still at Joshua's command, there was never a day like it before or since that God hearkened to a man (Joshua 10:12-14). But here is a much greater miracle! It was not noble Joshua who here cried out! But an unclean, blind beggar! A sinner! He cries out of his emptiness! Jesus came to do the eternal will of God (Heb. 10:7). He now sets His face like a flint to keep that eternal appointment (Ps. 50:5-7). He would not be deterred or kept back. His chief business from eternity was to give Himself a ransom for many and bring them to God. And He was about to accomplish that work! But see here a great miracle of mercy! A sinner cries to the Sun of Righteousness out of the depths (Ps. 130:1)! And the Lord of glory hears and stands still!

Why did Jesus hear this man's cry and stand still? Why did He have compassion on him? The crowd shows him no mercy. Yet the One whom Bartimaeus had

offended by his sin now stops in compassion to grant him mercy! Why does the Lord Jesus show compassion to helpless sinners?! Because He is rich in mercy! Because of His great everlasting love to His people. “*But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened (made us alive) us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*” (Eph. 2:4-5)! Jesus hears the cry of His own Spirit in the cry of needy sinners. “*The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he (Christ) that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God*” (Rom. 8:26-27)! The mind of the Spirit is the will of God for the salvation His elect! “*This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day*” (John 6:40). And, the Lord Jesus had compassion on this blind man who cried for mercy out of his darkness, because the Lord Jesus Himself cried out of anguish of soul! He cried on the cross out of the darkness, “*My God, my God! Why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring*” (Ps. 22:2)! And in Lamentations 3:8, the Christ speaks in prophecy and says, “*When I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer*” (Lam. 3:8)! Did not the Lord Jesus show compassion to this sinner because, as our Substitute, He felt the full burden of our sins in His own body and soul (1 Pet. 2:24)?! He who is all compassion was denied compassion that He might have compassion on His beloved Bride who were guilty sinners (Isa. 53:3-12)! When He was made sin and bore the curse of God in His body and soul on the cross, the sun in the sky did not shine on Him! For salvation’s light to shine on us, the the Light of the world bore the darkness of the loss of God’s presence in His own soul! “*O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent*” (Ps. 22:2)!

Is this not His glory? That He hears and shows mercy to sinners? He had come and passed through, and was now leaving Jericho, that cursed city. Before He went there, He said He came to give His life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28). He paid the ransom of Himself that God demanded to redeem cursed sinners from the curse

of His law. *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us”* (Gal. 3:13). But now the Lord Jesus pauses on His mission at the urgent cry of a desperate sinner! It was all determined before. What a blessing of God’s providence to blind this man, that he might know his need, and find himself on the wayside as Christ is passing with the crowd, and then to find Christ alone as his all! Redemption’s work was finished on the cross! But it must be applied to the redeemed! (Illus: king pardon prisoner with immediate freedom from punishment, but no peace and joy until that news is delivered to him.) The ransomed must be released! *“Through this man is preached the forgiveness of sins. And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses”* (Acts 13:38-39). Christ and His redemption is preached because the release He earned by His ransom must be preached to the redeemed! And when it is, God’s Spirit gives them faith to see and know that liberty! Jesus came and passed through, and was now leaving the cursed city. Yet He is here granting to His redeemed the liberty His ransom purchased! Forgiveness of all my sins with perfect righteousness, and faith to see it all in Him (Eph. 1:7)! This is the Gospel: *“By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us...(and because He obtained eternal redemption) the blood of Christ (shall)...purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God”* (Heb. 9:12,14). From enslavement to sin, to freedom in our conscient that we might serve God with a pure conscience! Redemption purchased is now redemption applied. That’s why Jesus came to Jericho to open the eyes of this blind man! And that is why the Spirit of Christ moved him to cry: to apply the redemption Christ would purchase by the offering of Himself to God (Acts 20:28). *“For this I will be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them!”* As Jesus restored his sight, He gives His people faith to see their Redeemer in Christ and the redemption that He obtained for them by His own blood!

Thou hast given commandment to save me (Ps. 71:3)

Now, Jesus commanded the blind man to be called. King David commanded Mephibosheth to be fetched (2 Sam. 9:5). Here, David's son and David's Lord fetches this sinner to Himself. Every believing sinners is rightly named *“The called*

of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:6). And they are also “*the called according to [His] purpose*” (Rom. 8:28).

The crowd now carries the good news from the Lord Jesus Christ. “*Be of good comfort, rise; He calleth thee!*” **Christ speaks comfort to all who are brought to Him.** “*Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*” (John 6:37; 7:37; Rev. 22:17). His call accomplishes His will! “*Thou hast given commandment to save me*” (Ps. 71:3). And the LORD says, “*When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee in thy blood, Live*” (Ezek. 16:6)!

Cast away his garment

Bartimaeus cast away his garment. That smelly, foul thing that he once clutched close he now flings away. All that he formerly held close became of no value when His Redeemer called him to Himself! Even so, all of the possessions of this world, all of the approval and praise, and most especially, all that I once trusted is now disgusting, nauseating, revolting! Paul says, “*God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*” (Gal. 6:14). In my blindness I thought something that could be called mine -- even the rags of a beggar -- had some value to God! But seeing that God finds all value in Christ for me, and hearing His call, I gladly relinquish all to have Him alone! The fullness of the Godhead dwells in the body of Christ. Every believer is complete in Him (Col. 2:9-10)!

What do you want Me to do for you?!

Fourthly, Jesus asked Bartimaeus, “*What do you want me to do for you?*” What do you want?! What do you need?! The LORD of glory (Col. 2:9; 1 Cor. 2:8) stands before you in His human nature (Heb. 2:14). The Creator and Upholder of all things (Heb. 1:2-3; Col. 1:16-17) who asked king Solomon, “*Ask what I shall give thee*” (1 King 3:5), now asks this unclean, blind beggar, “*What do you desire I do to you*” (Mark 10:51)?! O, dear sinner! What do you want from the Lord of glory?! Consider carefully! Consider Who you are asking! “*He is able to do exceeding*

abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20)! “You are coming to a King,” John Newton said, “large petitions you should bring!” Examine your great need in light of the Gospel! In light of your eternal debt of sin, consider that the Lord Jesus **He is rich in mercy** (Ps. 25:11; Dan. 9:16; Ps. 85:1-10). There is help in no other! **But all help is in Him!** Let His compassion open the spring of your need to bubble up in supplication **for what only the sacrifice of the Son of God could procur!** Ask what He purchased by His own sacrifice! Can anything be of greater value than that which required the blood of Christ to purchase?! Full, free, perfect redemption! Forgiveness of sins! Ask for your soul’s cleansing! Ask from Him that in which God Himself delights and holds up to this onlooking universe: His perfect justifying righteousness! I will ask God that I “*found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*” (Php. 3:9)! I will ask Him to dwell in my now by His Spirit of grace that He might be precious to my soul! That I might know Him by this precious faith as He reveals Himself in the Gospel! I will ask Him for the saving, keeping, glorifying “*grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Acts 15:11; Php. 4:23)! With the Psalmist and the thief on the cross, I will ask Him, “*Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance* (Ps. 106:4-5)! I will ask Him to “*Take away all iniquity, and receive me graciously*” (Hosea 14:2). And with king David, on hearing the prophet tell out the everlasting covenant in Christ, I will ask, Lord, “*Do all that is in Your heart; Do as you have said*” (2 Sam. 7:25; 1 Chr. 17:23; Ezek. 36:37; John 3:33)! And I will ask what the Lord Jesus asked for all His people as He suffered as their Surety, “Say unto my soul, ‘I AM thy SALVATION’” (Ps. 35:3; Isa. 12:1-3; Ps. 27:1; Luke 2:30; Matt. 1:21; 1 Tim. 1:15; Rom. 3:24-25; 4:5; 5:6-10; Heb. 7:25; Heb. 1:3; 9:24-26; 10:1-19)! Lord, give me this faith in Christ that is more precious than gold (1 Pet. 1:7). That is what is meant by Bartimaeus’ answer to Jesus’s question, “What do you want me to do to you?” “**Lord, that I might receive my sight**” (Mark 10:51)!!

Thy faith hath saved (G4982) thee

The fifth thing we see in this account is the gracious gift of saving faith. “*Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole*” (Mark 10:52). In the margin of my Bible the word translated “whole” is “saved.” It is translated “saved” (93x) in the NT and (9x) as “whole.” Jesus opened the physical eyes of Bartimaeus. But in the Gospel, Jesus says, “*Go thy way, thy faith has saved thee!*”

What did Bartimaeus believe? He believed Jesus to be Lord and Christ (1 Cor. 12:3)! He believed only Christ could save him! He therefore cried only to Christ the Lord! He was only quieted when the Lord Jesus called him and told him he was a saved man! He believed Christ was his only salvation. And that is what He received! **Do you believe God only receives you in His Son who having perfectly finished the work of redemption?** Believers believe Christ. They believe He is everything in their salvation. “*He only is my rock and my salvation*” (Ps. 62:6)! All who see Christ as their only salvation have already been given what they believe: everlasting salvation in the Lord (Isa. 45:17)!

He received his sight and followed Jesus in the way

Sixth, we see in this account that saving faith follows Christ. Jesus told Bartimaeus “*Go thy way, thy faith hath saved thee.*” But God-given faith finds Christ crucified as my only way to God. Every believing sinner goes this way. Bartimaeus’ way was now Christ alone (John 14:6; Gal. 2:20; 6:14). Saving faith lives on Christ. Jesus said, “*Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life*” (John 6:53). We eat and drink Christ when we worship God to Christ, trusting that we have no other righteousness but the perfect obedience of Christ alone! By God’s grace we find all of our sustenance in Christ crucified! Paul said, “*I live by the faith of the Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me*” (Gal. 2:20). Faith in Christ is not a one-time act. If ever you believe Christ, you will continue to believe Him (Col. 1:23; Job 17:9). “*Brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed*

in vain” (1 Cor. 15:1-2). If you believe Christ only once, then you have never believed Him at all! “*My sheep hear His voice, and they follow Me, and they shall never perish*” (Col. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:7)! They continue believing Christ because they have no other Savior, no other Lord (1 Cor. 12:3)!

Purchased redemption applied by the Redeemer to the redeemed

Finally, we can see here the glorious work of Christ our Redeemer! On His way to the cross, to pay the ransom of Himself to God for His people, Jesus hears the cry of His own Spirit from the heart and lips of this poor, unclean blind man. He cried to have what Christ’s ransom would soon obtain for all of His elect! The Lord of glory stands still. He calls him. He opens his eyes to see that his salvation, full and free, is Christ alone! The blind man goes on living in this Christ-given faith (Heb. 12:2; Acts 3:16). The redemption Christ purchased is continually applied to him! The Redeemer and His ransom become the life and sight and joy and peace of this believing sinner (Rom. 15:13)! And this is how he lives. As every disciple, he follows Christ who alone has the words of eternal life to his soul (John 6:68-69)! The redemption Christ purchased by His blood, is now applied to His redeemed!