

Message #38**Mark 10:46-52**

Last time we saw that Jesus took time to carefully explain to His disciples what would happen to Him when He got into Jerusalem. He came to pay the price so sinners could be saved; He came “to give His life a ransom for many.”

He had laid out the fact that He would be delivered over to religious leaders and Gentile leaders and they would condemn Him to death. He would be mocked, scourged, spit on and killed and then three days later He would rise again. He was doing all of this to save sinners.

The response of the disciples to this sacred news was that they wanted to know which one of them would be the greatest. They wanted to know which of them could be highly honored in His kingdom. In other words, they were thinking about themselves.

We come now to the last healing miracle in the gospel of Mark. In fact, this almost appears to be completely out of place because most of the healing miracles occurred in the first part of the book. But I think we will be able to see a somewhat sad contextual connection.

But this healing of a blind man was significant as Jesus was moving toward Jerusalem.

First, it clearly identifies publicly who He is.

Second, it shows that He had the miraculous power not only to give physical sight to one physically blind man, but also spiritual sight to all spiritually blind people.

Third, it demonstrates that God offers grace to those who are outcasts.

Fourth, it shows that Jesus has the power to completely restore all of creation.

Fifth, it shows that most people are more interested in the physical than they are the spiritual.

A critical point to learn from this text is this:

AS JESUS APPROACHED JERUSALEM, HE PHYSICALLY HEALED A BLIND MAN BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT THE BLIND MAN ASKED HIM TO DO.

Verse 46 opens by saying, “they came to Jericho.” Now Jericho is located about 17 miles NE of Jerusalem and 10 miles north of the Dead Sea. It is one of the oldest cities in the world. Now the old city Jericho was originally conquered by Joshua when Israel went into the Promised Land (Josh. 5). The old city was in ruins. This city of Jericho was a new city located about a mile south of the old city. This city “had been built by the Hasmonians and expanded by Herod the Great” (Mark Strauss, *Mark*, p. 467).

This is why Mark and Matthew both say this happened when Jesus was “leaving” Jericho and Luke says this happened when Jesus was “approaching” Jericho (Luke 18:35). What was happening is that Jesus was leaving the old part of the city and approaching the new part of the city, which was highly populated. He was leaving to make the 17 mile trip into Jerusalem.

To get to Jerusalem there was a long and winding main road from Jericho, which was the same road of Luke's "good Samaritan" story (Luke 10:30ff).

Well Jesus was leaving the old part of Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd was also following Him. Jesus had gained tremendous popularity with the people and as He was walking, he walked right by a blind beggar, who was sitting by the road. He was probably sitting by the gate into the new part of the city. This was a place of high traffic.

Back in this time there were no social welfare systems or programs to help blind people and so most were beggars. They would often sit by high populated areas on the roads hoping that someone would come along and give them a little something or make some sort of contribution to their welfare. In fact, Matthew brings out that there were two blind men there (Matt. 20:30), but it is clear that Mark wants to zero in on one of them.

It was normal for them to wear some type of coat, which probably was not a great coat. In fact, Kent Hughes said it was probably a shabby, torn, greasy garment that was old and worn (*Mark*, p. 256). But this is spring and it is cool and his old raggedy coat was all this beggar had to keep him warm. So there he sat by the road that one very special day when Jesus would walk by.

The name of this blind man was Bartimaeus, who was the son of Timaeus. We must assume that when Mark wrote this, the readers knew who this man was. He obviously was a man who was well-known by name. It is possible that the church even knew who he was.

Now for Bartimaeus this day started like any other day. He woke up and made his way to the area he always went, hoping someone would give him some food or money. As he sat there in his blind condition, he obviously could not see anything, but he could hear sounds.

It probably started off like a normal sounding day to him. He is sitting by a road so he would hear the sounds of the road. He would have heard all kinds of people walking and talking. Men and women and children coming into and out of Jericho. Probably he heard the clump of the feet of a donkey walk by, perhaps pulling some sort of cart or a horse. It was just a typical day in his life. Except this day would not be a typical day. **This would be the day he would meet Jesus.**

According to **verse 47**, Bartimaeus heard a lot of commotion and he heard from the crowd that Jesus the Nazarene was passing by on the very road he is sitting. Now there were other people named Jesus back at this time, but when he heard it was the Jesus from Nazareth, he knew exactly who this Jesus was. His reputation was wide spread.

According to **verse 47**, he began to cry out. That verb means he began screaming in the loudest voice he had (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, pp. 257-258). He was screaming at the top of his lungs. What he was specifically screaming was this: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me" (**v. 47, 48**).

Now the things that this blind man is screaming show that he sees more clearly than almost anyone else in the crowd, who actually has sight. This blind man knows who Jesus is and He knows what He is capable of doing.

Helen Keller was once asked, “Isn’t it terrible to be blind?” To that she responded, “Better to be blind and see with your heart, than to have two good eyes and see nothing” (Cited from Kent Hughes, p. 258).

By using the proper noun “Jesus” he is identifying Christ as the Savior. By using the title “Son of David” he is identifying Jesus not only as Savior, but as the Messianic King, who will one day rule the world.

All of Israel knew of the promise of a God/King who was promised to come through the line of David (II Sam. 7:11-16; Psalm 89). A real key to the Promised Messiah is that, according to the prophets, He would have Davidic ancestry (Is. 9:1-5; 11:1-10; Jer. 23:5-6; Ezek. 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Mic. 5:1-5). **This blind man truly knew and believed who He was.**

Now this blind man knows that this is the One who can grant God’s “mercy” to people. He does not presume He will, but he knows He can. That noun “mercy” is one that refers to the mercy and the pity and the compassion that God has for one who is in a helpless and hopeless condition (*Ibid.*, p. 145).

This is a key attribute of God and it is specifically connected to God choosing to be merciful to helpless and hopeless sinners in saving them (Rom. 9:15-18; Eph. 2:4). It is God’s mercy and He is the One who decides whether He will grant it or not.

Now as the blind man was screaming this about and to Jesus, **verse 48** says many were sternly telling him to be quiet. Those words “sternly telling him” means they were rebuking him and trying to censure him. They were trying to stop him by forbidding him to scream out to Jesus (*Ibid.*, p. 176). They were trying to get him to shut his mouth.

But as **verse 48** says, the more they kept rebuking him the more he kept crying out for the Son of David to have mercy on him. He is identifying Jesus as the Savior and as the Divine Messiah and he keeps screaming it.

We must admire the “passionate persistence” of Bartimaeus. Everyone is against him and everyone is telling him to quiet down, but they could not silence him. He wanted the mercy of God and he is crying out to the One Person who could give it. He sensed the urgency of the moment. He knew this was a once in a lifetime opportunity, Jesus was near him.

Listen; don’t let anyone ever stop you from crying out to Jesus Christ for His grace and mercy. Don’t let anyone ever tell you that you are too bad or too sinful to cry out for salvation. No matter what anyone else says, you cry out to the Lord and He will have mercy on you. It doesn’t matter if you are young or old. It does not matter if you are here in church or on your death bed.

You cry out to Jesus Christ to save you and He will. In fact, crying out with persistence is a critical evidence of faith.

As Bartimaeus was crying out, **verse 49** says that Jesus stopped walking and said, “you call him.” The verb “call him” is an imperative, which means Jesus is giving them a command. Now Jesus could have done this Himself. He often did. But Jesus is about to die and He wanted His people to know that your job is to invite people to go to Jesus Christ. That is our job.

Now you will notice that three times in this one verse the verb “call” appears. The word means Jesus is telling them to use their voice to call this man or invite this man to come to Him (*Ibid.*, p.476). Often this word is used in addressing someone by name. So Jesus commands that those traveling with Him do the inviting. They needed to invite this man to come to Christ.

So Jesus changes everything. Instead of them rebuking the man from crying out to Jesus, they are now calling the man to come to Jesus. Isn't that interesting? The same people who were “obstacles” are now “advocates.”

We need to clearly see what is here. Our tendency can be to condemn sinners, when we should be inviting them to come to Christ.

Now the same people who had said stop crying out to Jesus now communicated three messages:

Message #1 - Take Courage. 10:49a

Why would you need courage? The answer is because you are about to personally go into the presence of God.

Message #2 - Stand up. 10:49b

Message #3 - Jesus is calling you. 10:49c

Now when the people gave him those messages, he responded three ways:

(Response #1) - He threw aside his coat. 10:50a

Now this is an important moment for a blind man. To throw away your coat means you believe you will be able to go back to where you were and find it. A coat was a critical part of survival. So when this blind man throws aside his coat, he truly believes he will be able to see it and retrieve it.

(Response #2) - He jumped up. 10:50b

He didn't just stand up; like the people said, he jumped up. He is jumping for joy.

(Response #3) - He came to Jesus. **10:50c**

What a special moment this is. It is the moment one comes to Jesus. It is a thrilling moment.

According to **verse 51**, when the man got before Jesus, Jesus asked: “What do you want Me to do for you?” Now this may seem like an odd question, but it is not odd. Now we may remember that Jesus had basically asked this very same question to His disciples (**v. 36**). Their response was let us have great honor when you set up your kingdom (**v. 37**).

Now just think about this, you are standing before Jesus Christ, the God/Savior/Messiah/King and He asks what you would like Him to do for you. You will never have this moment again. You get one shot at an answer.

Now by Jesus asking this man this question, he is forced to realize that if I want God to do things for me, I need to ask Him. It is true He knows me and my needs, but He wants me to ask Him. When we pray, God already knows what we need or want, but He wants us asking Him and making our requests known to Him.

Jesus Christ, the God/Savior/Messiah/King has just asked you what you wish Me to do. So this is no fairytale story of some Genie granting you a wish. This is real. This is very real. God is about to grant a wish.

Now we may notice in **verse 51** that the blind man uses another term for Jesus; he calls Him “rabboni.” According to G. Abbott Smith, this is a term that means “my master” (*Ibid.*, p. 395). So he has identified Jesus as Savior, as Messiah and now as his Master.

So this man believes Jesus is the Savior; He is the Christ; He is the Davidic King and He is the Master of all. His answer to Jesus’ question is this: **“I want to regain my sight.”**

Now I certainly don’t blame this man for saying, “I want to regain my sight.” But there is another request that comes to my mind. If you believe that Jesus is who you just identified Him to be, I would be saying—well first and foremost would you save me from all my sins so I can go to heaven? That would be high on my list. Then I am sure the sight request would come into play.

What Jesus says is “Go; your faith has made you well.” The verb “made well” is the word “saved.” **Your faith has saved you.** Most Bible scholars believe that this man was physically and spiritually saved that day.

Now here is the way I understand this. Jesus is saying your faith as to who I am is what has saved you from your sins and because of your faith in Me and because of your request you will regain your sight.

Now probably one reason why Jesus did not do a dramatic miracle here is because if He starts performing a series of miracles for this crowd, He will never get to Jerusalem. We are moving away from the miracle phase of His ministry, although He will still do a couple more.

According to **verse 52**, as Bartimaeus started moving he regained his sight. He starts walking and his sight returns. There are no bandages, there are no surgeries, there are no eye drops; he had perfect sight.

He saw for the first time and one of the first things he saw was the “face of Jesus.”

Fanny Crosby was a blind believer who wrote more than 8000 hymns. One time a minister felt sorry for her and said he thought it was a shame that the Lord had not given her sight. Fanny Crosby said if the Lord would have given her the opportunity at birth to make one request, she would request that she be born blind. The minister was shocked and asked why. She said because when I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior.”

Think of all the unholy, ungodly, horrible and evil things we have seen with our eyes. Then think of her. The first sight is that of seeing Jesus Christ.

That is what basically happened here to this man. When the man received his sight, one of the first things he would have seen was Jesus Christ and **verse 52** says he started following Christ. The verb tense means he was continually following Him. Jesus never asked him to do that; he just did it.

I do not know how desperate a situation you are in right now, but I do know this; if you will ask Jesus Christ to save you and help you, He will do it. Call out to Him and He will save you.