

Gospel of Mark Chapter 10D

Hymn: *“The First Thing I will See”* Teri Gibbs (Blind song writer and performer)

I have never seen a flower or a tree or sky alive so blue on a summer’s afternoon.

I’ve never seen a sunrise or ocean waves at midnight.

But one day, I’ll have my sight in a place where there’s no night.

And, the first thing I’ll see will be Jesus.

The first thing I see will be my Lord.

He’ll look at me, and then say, “Well done my faithful friend.”

The first thing I see will be Jesus.

The Final Miracle recorded by Mark is the healing of Blind Bartimaeus.

As we read the narrative this morning, I would like you to consider what his healing teaches us about being a Disciple of Christ.

- A Disciple is a Follower, a Student, one who is devoted to Jesus Christ and to his teaching.
- I trust that MANY of you this morning would consider yourselves Disciples of Christ.

Here is our outline for this morning: You may want to jot down these points

1. Purposeful Crowd
2. Persistent Cry
3. Providential Call
4. Present (Gift) of Faith

1 Purposeful Crowd

When last we left the Disciples of Christ they were traveling with the crowd of pilgrims who were headed toward Jerusalem for the Passover Feast.

- Luke told us that Jesus had resolutely set his face toward Jerusalem. (Face like a flint)
- Mark told us that the Disciples were AMAZED and AFRAID at the obvious determination of Jesus. He was literally walking ahead of them, like a man on a mission.
- Today we find the disciples in the city of Jericho.

Mark 10: 46 **And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.**

- The New Testament city of Jericho was literally an Oasis in the desert.
 - It was a desirable place for the rich and famous of that day to vacation.
 - Average temps in the 80’s and a gushing spring brought forth 30,000 cubic feet of water every day and that made this a lush and glorious place to live.
 - Jericho was called “the city of Palms.”
 - It was constructed by Herod the Great to be his winter palace.
- As you can see from the map, Jericho was not far from the town of Bethany, where Jesus had JUST RECENTLY (within the past week or two) raised Lazarus from the dead
- Even without broadcast coverage, the news of Lazarus’ resurrection spread throughout the region and the crowd traveling with Jesus continued to grow.
- No doubt, every town that Jesus passed through more and more people came out to see him so there would literally be a small army of people entering the city of Jerusalem with Jesus on that first Palm Sunday.

This is the crowd that passed by as Blind Bartimaeus sat by the road begging alms.

- Blind beggars in Israel were considered to be among the lowest on the social ladder, slightly above those despised tax collectors.

When you stop and think about it the LAST 3 individuals to respond to Jesus' ministry before his death were Zacchaeus, a hated tax collector, Bartimaeus a blind beggar who sat by the side of the road and a thief who was crucified alongside of him.

- Those whom Jesus chose to reveal his redeeming grace were the outcasts of society, the broken the despised, the forgotten, and the criminal.

In the parable of the marriage feast the faithful servant was commanded by his master to: Luke 14:21b 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.'

- So that we would know that no one is beyond the reach of God's redeeming grace Jesus heals the broken and saves the outcast embraces the prisoner.

TAKE NOTE: Here at the beginning of the story, Bartimaeus is found sitting along the side of the road; sidelined by his infirmity, marginalized by society, a bystander, dwelling OUTSIDE of the joyful entourage of the followers of Christ.

- Interestingly enough, at the end of the Story Mark describes Bartimaeus as following the Lord Jesus "Along the Road" a participant in the fellowship of the redeemed.
- So in this narrative Bartimaeus moves from outside to inside, from a bystander to a joyful participant, from the sidelines into the fellowship of the faithful.

QUESTION: Are YOU a participant in the joyful entourage of the King, a worshipper following the Lord TO THE New Jerusalem, a Devoted Disciple who sits at his feet? OR are you a blind bystander, a beggar languishing along the side of the road?

- Do you sense that you are separated from God? Do you feel like life is passing you by? Has your conscience nailed you like the thief along side of Jesus?
- Is today the day when God graciously opens your eyes? The day your heart cries out to Jesus for mercy?

2. The Persistent Cry

Mark 10: 47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 48 And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

- What Bartimaeus lacks in eyesight, he more than makes up for with insight.
- He may not be able to see what the average person sees, but his perception of the Lord Jesus reveals a spiritual understanding that is evidence of divine intervention.

God has opened the Spiritual Eyes of this blind man, and before he receives physical sight Bartimaeus is enabled to see a spiritual truth about Jesus Christ.

- How has that happened? How does that work?

- The Testimony of Jesus has reached the ears of Bartimaeus; he probably heard about the resurrection of Lazarus; the healing of the lame, the recovery of sight, the freedom for those who were in spiritual prison.
- Whatever it was, God the Holy Spirit provided some level of spiritual understanding to Bartimaeus and in that understanding He “CRIED OUT:”

“Jesus Son of David, have mercy on me.” Why did he call him the Son of David?

- From the promise of God recorded in 2 Samuel 7 the Jews rightly believed that the Messiah would be a descendant, a Son of David.
- SO when Bartimaeus called Jesus the “Son of David” he was expressing faith in Jesus as the Christ, the long awaited Messiah, the Savior of Israel.
- And what was his CRY?

He did not ask Jesus for money, He was not seeking justice; his cry was a cry for MERCY.

- Mercy is that ministry of love and kindness that seeks relief for those who suffer.
- Mercy is one of the manifestations of God’s glory, one of the characteristics of his divine nature.
- We saw that in the book of Exodus:

Exodus 34:6 The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,

- Bartimaeus is convinced that Jesus has the power to deliver him from his pitiful condition. SO he cries out for mercy and he KEEPS on CRYING out even when the people around him try their best to silence him.

Mark 10:48 And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

- The verb tense that is used here tells us that Bartimaeus kept on crying, continually, verbally, boldly cried out, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”
- Even though the crowd was formidable, even though Jesus was steadfastly headed for Jerusalem, even though he was days away from his own suffering and death, He stopped.
 - Imagine that! He stopped for a blind beggar.
- Bartimaeus is a great example of one who persists in prayer, one who continues in spite of opposition to cry out repeatedly, even incessantly to the Lord.

Luke 11: 9 And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

- How sad it is when our desperation quickly turns to frustration and we prematurely give up.
- We pray for revival in the church, we intercede for our lost family members, but we are quickly overwhelmed with the cares of this world and our own afflictions and we cease our intercession.

3 Providential Call

Mark 10: 49 And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.” 50 And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.

- Jesus stopped and he called Bartimaeus to himself. *Disciples are CALLED by God.*
- The crowd around this blind man changes their tune, from pushing him down, telling him to be quiet to encouraging him to get up and go to Jesus.
- Mark tells us that Bartimaeus cast off his cloak; this would be the same cloak in which he was gathering the coins from generous passers. But now that cloak became a hindrance.

When Jesus calls us we too can cast off the beggars cloak, lay aside spirit of heaviness and put on the garments of praise. All who respond, with repentance and faith to the call of the Lord Jesus will receive a new robe, a robe of righteousness, the crown of life....

The working out of our salvation like Bartimaeus involves a divine CALL. A holy summons to come out of the darkness into the light. Listen to the words of Peter from his first epistle:

1 Peter 2: 9 **But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.**

- The call of God to salvation comes to us through the proclamation of the Gospel.
- Like Bartimaeus this holy call brings those who believe out of darkness into His marvelous light, from the blindness of sin to the clarity of the Kingdom.
- Two things you should know about this call:

The Call of God (*for his chosen people*) is Effective:

Jesus called Phillip, Peter, James and John and they dropped their nets by the Sea of Galilee and followed him. He called Levi and he left the tax booth and followed him.

The Call of God is powerful

When Jesus called out saying, "**Lazarus come forth.**" Even death could not hold Lazarus back from answering the call.

1 Corinthians 1:9 the call of God is a call into the fellowship of His Son.

1 Thessalonians 2:12, it is a call into Christ's own kingdom and glory.

Romans 1:6 it is a call to "Belong to Jesus Christ."

Have you heard God's providential call to come out of darkness and into his glorious light?

- Have you responded by faith to His call? Bartimaeus did:

4 Present (Gift) of Faith

Mark 10: 51 **And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight."** 52 **And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.**

First: Let's look at the question that the Lord puts forth, "**What do you want me to do for you?"**

- Does that sound familiar? Where have we heard this before?
- Just a mere 15 verses earlier Jesus said those same words to James and John.

Mark 10: 36 **And he said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?”** 37 **And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”**

- Remember, James and John actually brought their mother with them to the Lord Jesus in a foolish attempt to gain position and privilege over the others in the Kingdom.
- BUT no one stood with Bartimaeus. He brought nothing but his need to the Lord.
- Although he was a beggar he did not ask for money. In an attitude of humble submission he said: (Rabboni - Lord, Master, Teacher) **“Rabbi, let me recover my sight.”**

52 **And Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.”**

We must consider Jesus’ words in light of the fact that faith itself a gift from God:

Ephesians 2: 8 **For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,**

- Here in Mark 10 as in other places the Lord Jesus praises the recipient of the gift for exercising it.
- The exercising of the gift of faith began with the continual crying out of Bartimaeus and came to a crescendo in his humble request. **Rabbi, let me recover my sight**

your faith has made you well.

- The word that both Mark and Luke translate **“made you well”** is the Greek word SOZO. It is the word for salvation. So it could read, **“Your faith has saved you.”**
- The word **“SOZO”** speaks of delivering a person from physical danger or suffering and it is also used in a spiritual sense to speak of deliverance from the wrath of God.
- When we look at the final image of Bartimaeus we see much more than a blind man who was healed, we see a sighted man joyfully following the Lord Jesus on the road to Calvary.

And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

Most blind people, **HAVING** gained their sight, would immediately run through the city expressing the great joy of their healing. Most would want to see the faces of loved ones (*that they have never seen*) and share the good news with those closest to them.

- Not Bartimaeus, as soon as he receives his sight he departs, joining the band of disciples following the Lord Jesus.
- He becomes a Disciple!

This is a fitting end to this portion of Mark which has been dedicated to the subject of **DISCIPLESHIP**.

This section on discipleship is actually bracketed by the healing of **TWO** blind men.

The first in Ch 8 and this one in Ch 10.

- Remember in Ch 8, Jesus needed to lay his hands on the blind man 2 times.
- From what we have read in these chapters there were times when the disciples lived like that first blind man who struggled to see clearly.

The recovery of physical sight gives us a paradigm, an example a pattern of Christian discipleship that we can apply to our own lives.

Bartimaeus, the “would be disciple” is originally found sitting in the dust, begging for daily provision by the side of the road. In his blindness he is separated from God and from the people of God.

- We were once BLIND outcasts, languishing in sin by the side of the road.
- BUT in the sovereign care of a Loving God, in the midst of his misery the testimony of Jesus comes to Bartimaeus and that Word ignites a flicker of hope.
- God has promised a Savior, the seed of a woman, a descendant of David, one who would rule and reign in justice and righteousness forever. The promises of God’s Word become Bartimaeus’ meditation and fill his heart with hope.
 - THEN: The sovereign hand of a loving God leads Bartimaeus out to the street on the day when Jesus has drawn near.
 - The visitation of Christ combine with the testimony of God’s Word turns his flicker of hope into a consuming fire.
 - At that moment, when Christ is near, there is a holy boldness that casts off the pressures and constraints of society causing him to shout! to declare his faith and cry out for mercy.
 - Then Jesus CALLS him. He hears his voice beckoning, calling his name.
 - With Exceeding JOY he cast off the shroud of his past life and follows the voice of His Savior.
 - This is the Good Shepherd, **He calls his sheep by name, he knows them and they know him.**

By grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Bartimaeus, like every other disciple that has ever followed Jesus Christ is healed, delivered and saved.

- Saved to FOLLOW Jesus all the way to the cross. Saved to live a completely NEW LIFE!

2 Corinthians 5: 17 **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.** 18 **All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;**

2Corinthians 6:2 ... **behold, now is the day of salvation.** (Jesus is near)

Hebrews 4: 7 **“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”**