



Christ Reformed Community Church

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“Blind Bartimaeus” Mark 10:46–52

Well, let’s take our Bibles this morning and turn with me to Mark chapter 10, Mark chapter 10. I want you to stand in honor of the reading of God’s Word. I want to read verses 46 through 52. The title of the message this morning: “Blind Bartimaeus.” Mark chapter 10. We now come to the conclusion of Mark chapter 10, beginning in verse 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. 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!” And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.” And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 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.” 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.

Thus ends the reading of God’s Holy Word. Please be seated as we ask the Lord for help.

Father, this is a glorious account of another one of our Lord’s healings, and so often, Lord, we are guilty of taking these healings, because there are so many of them recorded in Scripture, taking them for granted. Help us, Lord, not to do that today. Help us to understand that what we have displayed before us is nothing less than the power and the glory of Your Son and our Savior on full display, the power of Christ not only to heal physically blind eyes, but Father, to give sight to blind souls. May Christ be exalted. May the gospel be uplifted. May Your truth penetrate our hearts so that we might clearly see Your glory and give You worship for it. We pray these things in the blessed and holy name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

As we have gone verse-by-verse through the Gospel of Mark, we now come to the portion of Mark’s Gospel where the steps of our Lord are closer and closer to the cross. In fact, if you skip back with me to verse 32 it says, “*They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem.*” This is Jesus with many of His followers, specifically His twelve apostles, but also the outside band of disciples and other citizens, likely of Perea and Galilee and perhaps other regions, following Jesus in a pilgrim caravan to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Of course, Jesus has made at this point three predictions of His suffering. He has told those that are following Him that He’s going to go up to Jerusalem and suffer a cruel death. He will be the Passover Lamb, the fulfillment of all those sacrifices of the Old Testament. He stops here in Jericho on the way where the Scriptures tell us

when we look at all the gospel accounts that He heals two blind men, one by the name of Bartimaeus.

Now, this account stands in stark contrast to the last account that we saw last week. There is that same question, if you skip up to verse 36. Jesus says to James and John, “*What do you want me to do for you?*” That same question is repeated in verse 51 to blind Bartimaeus: “*What do you want me to do for you?*” The same question, but two different answers. As you remember last week, James and John requesting, along with their mother, that they might sit one on the right hand of Jesus and the other on the left hand of Jesus in the coming glory of His kingdom, but the type of answer that blind Bartimaeus gave was not of that sort. His answer, as we look at this account, reveals that, though blind, he saw better than James and John the glory and the power of Jesus. All this man wanted to see was Jesus, the glory of Jesus. He had an eye to Christ, though he was blind, yet he saw Christ. He didn’t see himself. The disciples heard and saw Jesus. They knew Jesus. They walked with Jesus, talked with Jesus. Blind Bartimaeus only heard of Jesus. He couldn’t see Jesus upon first meeting Him, and yet Bartimaeus viewed His existence rightly, an existence centered on the glory of Christ. We see at the end of this episode, he even followed Christ all the way to the cross in Jerusalem.

Additionally, there is another contrast and that is a contrast between Jesus himself and James and John. We see Jesus here living out His own words. Back in verse 43, Jesus said, “*But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,*” verse 44, “*and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.*” We see Jesus living out His own words as He became a slave, a servant, to this lowly blind beggar; certainly, a man who would have been on the lowest rung on society’s ladder. A blind, helpless, destitute beggar that everyone else was telling to shut up, Jesus had time for and served, all with the looming reality of the cross, the stress of suffering not only for the sins of the world but having the furious wrath of Almighty God poured upon Him. Knowing that was going to occur, He took time to serve this lowly man. And as a result, this episode, the last by the way recorded healing in Mark’s entire gospel, is a picture of what Jesus does for all hopeless, believing, penitent, humble sinners. Jesus always has time for believing, humble, penitent sinners. Indeed, for this man, his great disability was blindness, and that fits well with Scripture’s prophecies, right? Because the Old Testament said that the light of Christ’s salvation when His kingdom came into the world would be a light that would give sight to the physically blind as well as the spiritually blind.

For example, Psalm 146:8: “*The LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down.*” But it wasn’t just the psalmist. The prophet Isaiah spoke about this. We read a little bit about that in Isaiah chapter 9, but in Isaiah 29:18, we also read, “*In that day,*” the day of Christ, “*the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.*” Or Isaiah 35:5: “*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped.*” Isaiah constantly pointed to the reality that when the Messiah came, He would give healing to blind eyes of the body and blind eyes of the soul. Again, chapter 42 and verse 18, “*Hear, you deaf, and look, you blind, that you may see! Who is blind but my servant, or deaf as my messenger whom I send? Who is blind as my dedicated one, or blind as the servant of the LORD?*” Certainly, this man was a servant of the Lord in his blindness wanting to follow our Lord, trusting in faith, in a healing—all of this indirectly prophesied by Isaiah. Jesus would have healed many blind people, not just this blind man, all as a means to point to the symbolism of what the gospel

does. It opens blind eyes. It opens blind souls to see the glory of Christ’s Lordship, the glory of His kingdom, the glory of His salvation.

Again, Isaiah 59:9: *“Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us; we hope for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom. We grope for the wall like the blind; we grope like those who have no eyes; we stumble at noon as in the twilight, among those in full vigor we are like dead men.”* Blind Bartimaeus understood that was him. He would have been familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures, and he would have understood that the prophecies in the Old Testament pointed to the reality that the Messiah would heal the eyes of the blind. But he understood that he was not merely physically blind but also spiritually blind.

Now, before we look at this account, I want to point out the fact that Matthew also speaks about this incident, but in Matthew’s account, he points out that there were not just one but two blind men. Not only that, but Mark is the only one who gives us the name of one of the blind men. Interestingly, if you study the Synoptic Gospels, this is the only incident of any healing that Jesus ever performed recorded in the Synoptic Gospels where the name of the one healed is mentioned: Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus. Many people believe that’s because this man not only became a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, but he became some sort of leader and servant in the early church, and Mark’s gentile readership would have heard of him. They would have known, “Oh, it’s that guy that was healed by Jesus and miraculously saved,” no doubt also reminding us and Mark’s original readers of what his mentor, Peter, had said on one occasion, 1 Peter 5:6: *“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”* This man was full of a life of anxiety, and he understood that the mighty hand of God could exalt him and heal him.

So, as the darkness of the cross’s shadow looms, this passage reminds us of the powerful salvation light for sinners, and I want you to understand this morning that what was true for blind Bartimaeus is true of you. Apart from Christ, you are blind. Apart from Christ, you will not see His glory. Apart from Christ opening your eyes, you will not repent of your sins, you will not place faith in Jesus. But if you are a true believer this morning, not only have you seen Jesus, not only have you beheld Jesus, but you will become a follower of Jesus that follows Jesus all the way to the cross. You will pick up the cross of your own life and be a disciple yielded to Him with only Christ in your view, the things of this world passing away and going away. Blind Bartimaeus was the last recorded convert of Jesus until the dark hours of the cross when that lowly criminal crucified next to our Lord, as well as the centurion who was working for the wrong kingdom, also saw the light of Christ’s glory and were rescued from their darkness. Who would think that two at the event of the cross in the hour of that darkness could be rescued? But that’s the power of the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. So, this glorious account of gospel light invading the darkness of our world to rescue lowly sinners unfolds to us in four illuminating scenes.

First of all, we see the pitiful condition; secondly the persistent cry; third the providential call; and fourth, the proving commitment. This is a story not just about blind Bartimaeus and the recovering of his sight, this is a story of all true followers of Christ and what occurs when the hand of God touches us. Notice with me, first of all, the pitiful condition, verse 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.”* Now, when it says there in verse 46 that “they

came to Jericho” that includes this larger caravan of pilgrims, those who were following Jesus, people from the area of Perea where Jesus is just leaving, people obviously from Galilee, people from other areas as well. This entourage included Jesus leading the way. We already saw He was leading the way of the Twelve last week. He’s leading this great crowd, and they come to Jericho.

Now, when you see the word *Jericho* in your Bibles, you’re automatically going to think of the Old Testament Jericho that was laid low by God. That was the first city that was conquered by the Israelites when they entered the Promised Land, but that is not the Jericho that is spoken about here. This is the new Jericho, the new city that was built, lying roughly fifteen to eighteen miles from Jerusalem to the north, about five miles west of the Jordan. Jesus is moving with this great crowd south from Galilee. He has gone through Perea which would have been the customary route because all Jews wanted to avoid Samaria, and they are traveling now to Jericho, the last stop—we could say a rest stop—on the way to Jerusalem because from Jericho to Jerusalem would be a six-hour journey uphill. In fact, if you read Psalm 120 to Psalm 134, you will have there chronicled by the psalmist what we call the Songs of Ascent. That is a depiction and really a description in detail of the spiritually exciting, yet arduously dangerous journey that such a trek was from Jericho to Jerusalem. In fact, Jesus’ story of the Good Samaritan tells of a man who fell among robbers from Jericho to Jerusalem on his way. That is why Jews, when they celebrated the Passover, traveled in a caravan to protect themselves from potential robbers. It was here in this new Jericho, which was referred to as an oasis in the desert, that Jesus encounters this blind man.

A little bit of information about Jericho. It was the territory of Herod, in fact, refurbished by Herod, made a winter palace for the Herodian kings. It was referred to as the “City of Roses” known to be the “Eden of Palestine.” Josephus refers to it as a “little paradise.” It was an oasis in the middle of the desert. The times would have been happy. The scenes would have been beautiful with Jews singing in the streets in this pilgrim caravan as they traveled. Alfred Edersheim, in his popular work entitled *The Life and Times of Jesus*, speaks about the aqueducts of Jericho that provided unsurpassed fertility to the rich soil of the plain of Jericho where the balsam plantations flourished, which were actually an imperial gift from Antony to Cleopatra, who then sold it to Herod, and Herod had taken over this city. He had planted beautiful palm trees, sycamore trees, as I said balsam plants, which yielded a precious oil for revenue for the Herodians. This was the last stop along the way for pilgrims going to Jerusalem, a commercial and military center of activity. And on this day, it would have been probably March of the last year of our Lord’s life, but it would have felt more like summer because of the weather in Jericho. The day Jesus arrived, the sun would have been shining. Flanked by four forts, a theatre, and amphitheater, a perfect place for the Herodians to relax, a perfect place for a vacation. Jesus was just passing through on His way to Jerusalem to be crucified.

As He entered the city with the purple-like coloring of the mountains of Moab in the background, all you could hear was singing and shouting—people of all walks of life, pilgrims, priests, merchants, traders from all around, no doubt robbers, soldiers, politicians, but there were also beggars asking for alms from this mighty throng of people of diverse means. And here we see in verse 46, one of them was Bartimaeus. The Bible calls him a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus who was sitting by the roadside.

Now, you don't need to turn there, but in Matthew's account, as I said earlier, Matthew speaks of two blind beggars, not just one in Matthew chapter 20. But, not only that, while Matthew and Mark say the miracle occurred as Jesus was leaving Jericho, in Luke's account, he says it's as Jesus drew near to Jericho that He encountered this blind man. It's important to understand that there's not any contradictions in Scripture. Mark nor Luke deny there was another man. They just simply don't record anything about him. In fact, Mark received this account from Peter, his mentor, and Mark chose to highlight the more well-known beggar because he was well-known in the church. We often fail to remember that the gospel writers never intended to give every detail of every episode in the life of our Lord. And on top of that, it's likely that Mark actually condensed two parts to the account, so that really what is happening here is that blind Bartimaeus is sitting by the roadside as Jesus enters Jericho from the East. This blind Bartimaeus probably with the other man who is not mentioned here in Mark, follows Jesus until Jesus reaches the leaving point of the city before He finally turns to cure him. Now, that's an important detail to point out. It's important to understand that this man would not give up. He kept calling out to Jesus as He walked through the city.

In fact, Mark also leaves out another incident that occurred. You're familiar with this. It's recorded in Luke chapter 19, Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus. And as the story unfolds, you get the distinct impression that blind Bartimaeus' persistent cries to Jesus had the whole city annoyed. He kept begging and calling out to Jesus for one full day as Jesus walked through the city. Then Jesus has the encounter with Zacchaeus, goes and stays with Zacchaeus for the night, wakes up the next morning, and there is blind Bartimaeus again calling out to Jesus, calling Him the "*Son of David.*" However these events played out, they all occurred just as Scripture reports, although Scripture doesn't report all the details, and what you need to see from verse 46 to set up this whole episode is the absolute desperation of this man, the pitiful condition really of any blind person in this culture. Blindness was extraordinarily prevalent due to the dust and the wind of the desert. This man not only had a disability in his blindness, but he was marked by destitution, hopelessness. He wouldn't have been able to hold down a job because he couldn't see. He was a blind beggar, hopeless, and pitiful, ignored by most of the crowd. As we see later in the account, told to shut up by most of the crowd, and yet we see Jesus take note of him.

I'll maybe just pause for a moment to say this; that God can save the vilest, most hopeless, most destitute sinners. Jesus stoops the lowest to save the lowest. He will not lose one of His elect children, and if this story doesn't teach you anything other than that, understand that God is supremely sovereign in salvation. There is not one of His elect people that He will overlook. Even in the mass of a crowd, Jesus hears the pleas of this man. But though this man couldn't see, he could feel his need, couldn't he? He knew his need. Though he couldn't see with the eyes of his body, he could see with the eyes of his heart. It reminds me of in history Helen Keller, who was once asked, "Isn't it terrible to be blind?" to which she responded, "It's better to be blind and see with your heart than to have two good eyes and see nothing." Here's blind Bartimaeus. He's able to see Jesus.

We move from his pitiful condition, number two, to the persistent cry, verses 47 and 48, and we'll begin in verse 37: "*And when he heard,*" that is, blind Bartimaeus, "*that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'*" Now, I want you to notice a couple of things. Number one, it says "*when he heard that it was Jesus*" passing through, "*he*

heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth,” Jesus who came from Nazareth. But when he cried out to Him, he didn’t cry out to Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” He cried to Him, “*Jesus, Son of David.*” That is significant. As this man sat by the road, his ears trained because his other sense, his eyes, were completely not working; his ears perked up as word passes through the crowd that a great entourage is coming. He hears the steps. He hears the footsteps of the animals and the people. He hears that it is Jesus. His heart begins to pound. Jesus was very popular at this point, obviously evidenced by the large caravan following Him. This man, no doubt, had heard of Jesus’ exploits, possibly even about the healing of many blind people. Perhaps he was even familiar with the healing of the blind man in Bethsaida that we studied about in Mark chapter 8. Maybe he even heard about one of the sermons that Jesus preached when Jesus said, for example, in John 8:12, “*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life,*” realizing that was this Jesus, this great Healer, and realizing this might be his only chance to ever encounter Jesus, it says there in verse 47 that “*He began to cry out.*” The Greek word is *krazō*. It literally means “to cry aloud, to vociferate.” It’s used in the Greek to speak of the cries of a raven, and these are persistent cries. The tense is present. The mood is active. This is a continual crying out. Remember what I said? I believe this man first saw Jesus as He entered the city and followed Him all the way through the city until the next morning when He left, and during this whole time, he is persistently and continually crying out to Jesus, *krazō*, “to cry aloud.” By the way, the same Greek word used in Matthew 14 to describe the words of Peter when he’s sinking in the water, and he cried out to the Lord, “*Lord, save me.*” This man is crying out, but it’s what he cried out that’s most important.

Notice, as I said earlier, he refers to him as Jesus not of Nazareth, but Jesus, verse 47, the “*Son of David.*” The people had told him it was Jesus of Nazareth, but he recognized him as Jesus, the son of David, Jesus, of course, being His name, but son of David being His title, son of David being the title that defined His very mission. And I want to say the significance of this man recognizing Jesus and calling Jesus the “son of David” instead of just “Jesus of Nazareth” cannot be overstressed. In fact, Matthew only records two incidents in the life of our Lord where Jesus was ever referred to as the son of David. This is in the only place in Mark’s entire gospel where anybody refers to Jesus as the son of David, except Jesus Himself in Mark chapter 12, who refers to Himself as that. This title, son of David, carried great weight, revealing—mark it—the well-informed and deep faith of this man. The title is taken from 2 Samuel 7. If you take your Bibles and turn back with me to 2 Samuel 7, you’re familiar with God’s covenant that He made with David. We read about some of the words of this covenant, verse 12: “*When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers,*” God tells David, “*I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*” Isaiah also spoke about that kingdom in Isaiah 9:7, “*Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.*”

Apparently, this man, though blind, was familiar with his Old Testament. He was familiar with the son of David, the promised, long-awaited deliverer of Israel, the greater son of David, the one who would come from the line of David, the one who would be the heir to the throne, the final King, the fulfillment of all the promises that God made to Abraham and then later that He made here to David in 2 Samuel chapter 7. This was Jesus of Nazareth; he thought, really Jesus the deliverer,

Jesus the son of David, Jesus the King, Jesus the one who has come to set up His kingdom, Jesus the Messiah. Both Jesus’ earthly father Joseph and earthly mother Mary were from the line of David. And the psalmist predicted that the Messiah would be the son of David and that at the same time, David’s Lord. Psalm 110:1: *“The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’”* This man’s cry, therefore, was one of faith, and it was one of faith informed by the facts of Scripture, one informed by the prophecies of Scripture. This man had listened to the priests. This man had listened to the prophets. This man had listened to all of the stories that were said about Jesus and all the messages that people said Jesus was giving. This man was listening with his ears. Though he couldn’t see, he heard the Word of God, and he took it to heart. He recognized Jesus as the son of David.

But notice in verse 47, we need to take note not only of how he called out to Jesus—a persistent and loud cry—and what he referred to Him as, “the Son of David,” but notice also why. What was his specific request? The end of verse 47 says he said to Jesus, the son of David, please *“have mercy on me!”* This is personal faith: *“Have mercy on me!”* He wanted a personal interaction with Jesus, and he had a precise faith. In the middle of the first century BC, the pseudepigraphal writing of the *Psalms of Solomon* spoke about the son of David. In fact, that’s the first time the title son of David is used outside of the Old Testament, but in that work, the Messiah is not defined as merciful. He’s defined as a warrior, a warrior King that is to be feared because He has come to destroy His enemies. And yet in contrast, blind Bartimaeus sees another side of Jesus, not just the warrior King who will come and judge His enemies and crush His enemies, although blind Bartimaeus would have understood the Old Testament spoke about that, but blind Bartimaeus saw another side of Jesus; a merciful side of Jesus, one upon whom the Spirit of the Lord rested, one who would give sight to the blind. Now, where would he come up with the idea that the son of David would not just crush His enemies but would also be merciful to His people? Well, no doubt he had heard of that famous sermon that Jesus preached in the synagogue from the scroll of Isaiah. We read about it in Luke 4:18 where Jesus says, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind.”*

This man couldn’t listen to podcasts, but he heard by word of mouth the message of Jesus. This son of David was not just a Judge; this son of David was a merciful, saving, forgiving, healing, Son of God. And you contrast this with the desire of most of Israel who didn’t think they needed mercy, most of Israel led by the religious leaders, who were hungering and thirsting for their enemies to be obliterated; you think of the disciples who were yearning for positions at Jesus’ right hand and left hand in the kingdom where they would wield powerful authority and lord it over the people as the gentiles do, and then you contrast that with this man. He didn’t want any of that. He wanted mercy, didn’t he? He wanted grace, not power. He wanted mercy, not position. He wanted forgiveness, not prestige. And verse 48 reveals that most did not have the deep and wide faith of this man, informed as he was by the prophetic Scriptures because, notice your Bibles, as he is crying out, *“Son of David, have mercy on me,”* verse 48 says, *“And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent.”* Now, if I’m right that this man followed Jesus all through the first day that Jesus entered the city, all the way to that episode with Zacchaeus, and then he woke up the next morning when Jesus arose to leave Jericho, as Luke says, then there were a lot of people that were very annoyed by this man. His cries could be heard constantly all through the day, and then the next morning all through the morning. People of all walks of life were annoyed—merchants trying to

do business, other beggars trying to be heard for their cries for alms, pilgrims trying to enjoy the celebratory mood complete with singing, as they got their last-minute supplies to make their last little journey to Jerusalem, and most of all, I believe that the disciples were annoyed. They were included in this group that rebuked him, telling him to be silent.

You remember episode after episode after episode people are vying for Jesus’ attention, and the disciples shoo them away. They shooed the parents away who brought the children. They shooed other people away, and now they’re stressed out about the looming reality of Jesus’ crucifixion, which He has predicted three times. The whole stability of the kingdom in their hearts and minds is in jeopardy because they don’t have the eyes to see the reality of Christ’s kingdom, that it requires Jesus go low before He goes high, that He be crucified before He is resurrected and ascended. Maybe perhaps there were also local priests that were telling this man to shut up and rebuking him, that this Jesus was a great teacher, but He wasn’t the son of David. He wasn’t the deliverer. Or maybe there were other priests who knew that they were on Herod’s turf in Jericho, and if word got back to Rome that they were crying out of loud that this was the son of David, it could cause some sort of persecution. They’re telling him to be quiet. They’re rebuking him. But the more they tried to silence him—notice your Bibles—the louder and more persistent his cries became. Verse 48 says, *“But he cried out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’”* He just wouldn’t give up. The persistent, humble cries of the desperate.

Dearly beloved, I hope you understand today that in all of your prayers to Jesus as a child of God, He hears you. In all of your desperation, in all of your persistence, do not give up. Even when it appears Jesus doesn’t hear, even when it appears maybe Jesus is ignoring you, He always hears the persistent prayers of His children. I find it very interesting that in Luke’s account of the healing of blind Bartimaeus, it occurs in the same chapter, Luke chapter 18, as the story Jesus told of the persistent widow. Do you remember that story? Turn with me to Luke chapter 18, and we’ll look at it quickly. It’s a short account, a beautiful story of the persistence of prayer which is what Jesus is teaching. Luke 18:1: *“He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not, ”* what does it say? *“lose heart.”*

He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’ And the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God [implication: the righteous Judge] give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?’”

Jesus says in verse 8: *“I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”* And then what do we read later in Luke chapter 18 but a man who cried day and night, the blind beggar, a man who cried day and night for healing, a man when the Son of Man came, the son of David came, had faith when it appeared everyone else around him had lost their faith. This man, like the persistent widow, understood Jesus is a righteous Judge. He has come to destroy His enemies—that is one half of His kingdom. And if you’re here today and you think that God is just all about love, and there is no justice and there is no holy wrath, then you are not a Bible-believing Christian. You may be a Christian, but you’re not a Bible-

believing Christian. Part and parcel of God’s kingdom is His wrath and His fury and the war that He will make not only against Satan but against all sinners that reject His salvation. But this man understands He’s not just a righteous judging Judge, but He is a merciful, merciful Savior who hears pleas of mercy.

In actual fact, I hope you recognize so far this morning that this man’s blindness was his greatest blessing. It wasn’t a cursing. His blindness helped him to see his need. When everyone else around were blind to the identity of Jesus, this man saw. When the Word was spoken, he listened. When stories of Jesus’ exploits and identity were told to him, he took it all in with his ears that were trained to hear because he couldn’t see. They entered his heart, the heart of his dark world, and illuminated his mind and his soul; and in his blindness, he could spiritually see better than most people around him. Jesus still calls out through the gospel to dark hearts, and when He does, ears are open, hearts are enlightened, eyes are open, sinners are saved. He always hears the persistent faith cries of His elect children, and He always hears the persistent prayers of His children praying for healing, praying for mercy, praying for peace. Jesus has not turned a deaf ear, even though it appears so far in the episode Jesus has no clue that He is being called out to.

But that takes us now to the third illuminating scene. We not only see the pitiful condition, the persistent cry, but number three, the providential call, verse 49 and 50. Notice verse 49, and now we see the glory and grace of our Lord: *“And Jesus stopped,”* and I imagine everyone else stopped. Jesus is leading this entourage. When He stopped, everyone else stopped. The commotion from the traders stopped. Eyes are fixed. *“Jesus stopped”* and He said two words: *“Call him.” “Call him.”* And verse 49 says, *“And they called [him],”* that is, *“the blind man, saying to him,”* notice how it changes, *“Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.”* I find that almost humorous, but I also find it powerful that when the Savior commands everyone jumps to action. This is the sovereign King of Kings, and when He gives a command, His followers listen. And His followers repent from the direction they were going. They change their words; they change their walk. Notice how quickly everyone changes their tone and their words, but also notice how Jesus changes here. He is the same today, yesterday and forever, but Jesus stops. This man, this blind beggar stops Jesus in His tracks. Is that not a beautiful picture of exactly what happens when a truly penitent sinner repents of their sin and calls out in faith to Jesus? Jesus stops everything that He’s doing. Jesus is not too distracted. Jesus is not too busy to hear the prayers and the penitence of His children. In the Old Testament, Joshua conquered the Amorites. We read about this in Joshua chapter 10, The Amorites, the Bible says, were given *“over to the sons of Israel”* on the day the sun stood still.

Well, here in Mark chapter 10 on this day, the heart of Bartimaeus was conquered, given over to Christ, when Jesus the Son of God stood still. He stopped dead in His tracks. He looked at the man, and He ordered for the people to bring the man to him. God stops to save all of His elect, but Bartimaeus couldn’t get to Jesus until Jesus called out to Him. Did you notice that? All day, calling out to Jesus; he can’t get to Him until Jesus calls for him, and then he can come. And note how the character and words of the crowd take on the character and words of Jesus. Have you seen these words before? *“Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.” “Take heart”*—that’s the words of Jesus. In fact, those are the exact words that Jesus told Peter when he walked out on the water to meet Him, and he started to sink, and Jesus said, *“Take heart. Do not be afraid.”* These are the words of the Savior, and now the followers of Jesus are mimicking Jesus. Isn’t that always true of the true children of God? They mimic Jesus. They walk like Jesus, talk like Jesus. They have the

character of Jesus. At first, they had said, “Shut up.” Now they are saying, “Get up.” “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you,” the tender words of, I believe, the disciples leading the way.

And I want to stop just for a moment and ask you a question. How do you reach out to the sinners around you? Do you reach out to them in harshness, or do you reach out to them in tenderness? Do you have the character and the words of Jesus? Well, verse 50 beautifully and clearly teaches us what we might call, irresistible grace. Verse 50: “*And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.*” Notice, there’s no hesitation whatsoever. He’s got legs for springs. And remember, he still can’t see at this point. So, either on the one hand, he is being guided there by the disciples, or he’s feeling his way there, but mark it, he is going, and he is going quickly. He is going joyfully, and he is going with no restraints. In fact, he throws the restraints off. Verse 50 says that he threw off his cloak. This would have been the outer robe. This would allow him to move more freely. You wouldn’t trip up over the bagginess of the robe. He casts away any hinderance. He sets it aside. He runs with faith to Jesus to see Jesus face-to-face. He has faith that he’s going to see the one he has called out to, removing his outer robe. He had faith that Jesus would heal him. In fact, his cloak would have probably been his only possession. He was a beggar. He didn’t have a job. He leaves aside his only possession.

Jesus taught about this, didn’t He? You need to be willing to give up everything to follow Christ. It will come with a great cost. This man leaves it all. No longer would he be a beggar. Once he could see, he would get a job. So, if the cloak was gone when he returned, the man thought to himself, “It will be worth it. I need to get to Jesus. This is my last chance.” Can you just imagine the pounding of his heart? Can you imagine the heavy streams of tears coming down his face as he hollered out for Jesus, the son of David, now turning to light streams, light tears, in anticipation that Jesus had actually heard his plea? And these would be his last steps of darkness before the first person he would see with his new eyes was the one he wanted to behold most, the Lord Jesus Christ. As he walked there, he knew that his blindness would give way to sight. He knew that darkness would give way to light. He knew that his dark past would be a thing of the past, and that all he would have ahead of him was a bright future. This man was not just a man seeking a healing; this was a man of faith, and I can prove it to you in the last point.

This glorious account of darkness being invaded by the light of the gospel to rescue sinners has provided several illuminating scenes: number one, the pitiful condition; two, the persistent cry; three, the providential call; and number four, the proving commitment, verses 51 and 52. Once blind Bartimaeus gained his requested hearing with Jesus, he then gained his seeing. Verse 51 says, “*And Jesus said to him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’*” Again, as I pointed out in my introduction back in verse 36, the same exact question that Jesus asked James and John: “*What do you want me to do for you?*” but an entirely different response. This man is not asking for power, prestige or a position. He’s just asking that he might recover his sight. “*And the blind man said to him,*” verse 51, “*Rabbi, let me recover my sight.*”

Now, we need to pause for a moment because you’re thinking exactly what every Christian thinks when he reads this. Jesus knew his need. Jesus knew he was blind. The man knew his need. The man knew he was blind. So, why does Jesus ask him, “*What do you want me to do for you?*” Jesus oftentimes asked questions, didn’t He? He asked James and John that question, not because He didn’t know what was in their hearts and what they wanted—glory in the kingdom—and He asked

this man “What do you want from me?” not because He didn’t know the answer, but first of all, because He wanted the man to truly express himself, to truly express his need because, listen beloved, God is glorified when we ask Him for what we need. Do you realize that? God wants you to ask for what your needs are. In fact, that’s exactly what Jesus commands us to do in the Lord’s Prayer. We are to ask for our daily bread. We are not to assume He’s going to give it because asking reveals our dependence. It reveals our humility, and it glorifies God.

Secondly, I think that Jesus asked this question perhaps as a mild rebuke to the disciples who had asked a question, and Jesus asked the same question to them. He wants the disciples to think about the response this man has in contrast to the wrong response James and John had. Third, I think Jesus asked this question for the watching crowd. The watching crowd could see the humility of this man. The watching crowd could then see the full demonstration of God’s power to heal through Jesus. Fourth, I think Jesus asked this question to reveal the man’s motives. He doesn’t ask for alms. He’s not asking for a free handout. It is assumed he wants to recover his sight so he can get a job and work. He wanted to see in order to work, to hold down a job, to live a peaceful God-honoring life, and as we’re going to see, to be a follower of Jesus and to do Jesus’ bidding. Fifth, I think that Jesus asked this question, “*What do you want me to do for you?*” in order to teach us something about prayer, and that goes along with what I said a few moments ago, and that is that though God is well-aware of our needs, He desires us to express our needs down to the last detail because God delights in answering your request to the last detail because He receives glory. And you receive joy when you see the answers to your prayers because God wants us to open our mouths wide that He may fill them. That’s exactly what Psalm 81:10 says: “*I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.*” God is a giving God. God is a gracious God. So, go to Him, go to Him often. Ask of Him, ask Him in detail and see Him answer in detail. And finally, I think Jesus asked this question, “*What do you want me to do for you?*” because He is taking time out of His busy and very stressful schedule to have an intimate, personal, one-on-one, face-to-face interaction with this man. Jesus’ healings time and time again, as we’ve read in Mark’s Gospel, are not devoid of sincerity. They are full of compassion and intimacy where Jesus touches eyes, touches ears, touches the heads of children. He blesses, He prays. This is intimacy.

But this man’s response, notice it in verse 51, “*And the blind man said to him, “Rabbi.”* Literally, it’s translated *Rabboni*, and if you’re using a New American Standard, I believe that’s the way that it’s translated. “*Rabboni, let me recover my sight.*” *Rabboni* is a different word than *Rabbi*, so *Rabbi* is not really the most accurate translation. *Rabboni* is a more elevated title. *Rabbi* simply means “teacher.” *Rabboni* means, listen to this: “my master, my Lord.” In fact, one commentator by the last name of Edwards—not Jonathan Edwards, but a modern-day commentator—says that in Jewish literature *Rabboni* is rarely used in reference to humanity, and never, never is used as a title to address someone unless one is addressing God in prayer. This man’s plea was equivalent to prayer. He recognizes Jesus as the son of David, his Lord, his *Rabboni*, his Master. And given that Jesus had just taught the disciples the importance of servanthood—right?—the importance of being a slave, the importance of being a servant, in verses 43 and 44, here is this man placing himself under the yoke of Christ, recognizing Jesus as his Master. You can’t be a servant unless you have a master. You can’t be a slave unless you have a master. This man is not asking for power or prestige or position. He wants his sight, but he doesn’t want his sight merely to be used for

himself. He wants and he intends, as we are going to see, to use his sight for his Master, for his *Rabboni*. “Please help me recover my sight.”

So, Jesus responds, doesn't He? Verse 52: “*And Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your faith has made you well.’*” And Mark says, “*And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.*” I kind of love this because I imagine, and I don't know if it's true or not, that Jesus sort of tongue-in-cheek says, “*Go on your way,*” as if it was a test. “Are you going to go your way or are you going to go My way? You referred to Me as *Rabboni*. You say that I'm your Master and your Lord. I've given you your sight, now are you going to live for Me or are you going to live for yourself?” “*Go your way.*” But he doesn't go his own way; he goes the way of Jesus. It says, “*And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him [Jesus] on the way.*” It says he recovered his sight. You know what that tells me? That tells me that this man used to be able to see, and he had lost his sight, and now once again, he could see.

He's in the midst of beautiful Jericho with all the palm trees, all of the roses, all of the vibrant colors, but all this man wants to behold is Jesus. Do you see that? Jesus says, “*Go [on] your way.*” This man says, “No, I'm going to go your way,” and he follows Jesus on the way. He follows Jesus all the way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, and such is true of anyone that God gives eyes to see and ears to hear. They will be followers of Christ. This man proves his commitment, doesn't he? He follows him on the way, all the way to Jerusalem, all the way, I believe, to the cross. He is using his new eyes to take the road of discipleship. He did not just receive new eyes; he received a new heart. Notice, Jesus says, “*Your faith has made you well.*” And I want to point out this detail because we pointed it out before if you've been with us through the study of Mark's Gospel. The phrase translated “*has made you well*” is actually one Greek word, and it's the Greek word *sōzō*, and you can guess what *sōzō* means. It means “to be saved.” Jesus is literally saying, “Go your way. Your faith has saved you.” This is not merely physical wholeness; this is spiritual wholeness. A. T. Robertson, the great Greek scholar, says that *sōzō* has a double meaning. This man was not just physically healed, he was spiritually made whole. Psalm 50:15: “*And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.*” By the way, that's exactly what happened.

If you turn over with me to Luke's account in Luke chapter 18, he gives one little final detail that I just can't resist but to point out, verse 43. After the man recovered his sight, Luke says, “*And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him.*” And notice what it says, he followed him, “*glorifying God.*” That's a saved man. He's glorifying God as he follows Jesus, “*And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.*” I mean, it was a domino effect. Can you imagine all the singing just got louder? All the joy for the salvation of this man. He left glorifying God. He left a saved man. He once was blind, but now he could see, and he follows Jesus on the way. This man may have persistently called out to Christ, but it wasn't until Christ called out to him and healed him that he could see. That's true salvation. We aren't saved by our good works. We aren't saved by walking an aisle. We're not saved by saying a prayer. We're not saved by baptism. We are not saved based upon anything that we do. It's the call of the Savior, and this man had faith. Jesus draws out his faith by asking him that question, “*What do you want me to do for you?*” giving this man an opportunity to express the faith in his heart, and that's true of all believers. They express their faith, confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord.

And what did this man see with his new eyes? Think about this. The first things that he saw were the four most important events in the history of the world, beginning with Palm Sunday, the triumphal entry, Mark chapter 11. What else did he see as he followed Jesus on the way? He saw the crucifixion. He saw the resurrection. He saw the resurrected Lord. He was among that number, no doubt. He saw the ascension. He became a servant of the church, perhaps a leader in the church, Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus. And really, he is an example of what God does to those who are servants, those who are lowly. They are lifted up. They are lifted up. Jesus still hears and calls out to His elect. He is the same compassionate Lord as He was in this account, both to physical and spiritual needs. He hears the pleas of mercy from His children. Not only that, but Jesus is not too busy for the cries of each one of His children as I said earlier, and the flip side of that is that Jesus is not too busy for the world at large.

Jesus did not merely come to heal. He came to seek and to save the lost, but the healing of bodies marked a prominent work of His kingdom, and I believe that part of our Christian duty is pray for God to raise up Christian doctors, to raise up Christian men and women in the medical field. The medical field is a very corrupt business in our world today. I'm grateful for godly Christian men. My uncle has been a researcher at St. Jude's Hospital in Tampa, St. Pete, for a number of years, and been given many awards. He's a Christian man. He's done much for children with cancer. The church that we pastored—or that I pastored—Corie didn't pastor it with me, sorry, that slipped. The church I pastored in Kentucky on the border of West Virginia had a medical doctor. He was our family doctor, a wonderful Christian man, but there are a lot of corrupt people in that business. It is a godly thing to go into medicine. It is a godly thing, and it is a kingdom work to seek the healing of human bodies. We understand that's not the most important thing because we need our souls saved, but Jesus took the time to heal people physically.

As the church, we are to be tender and compassionate to those that are suffering, both within the church and outside of the church. Jesus teaches us that here. This account also teaches us that true saving faith has eyes for Jesus above all else. We don't go our own way; we go Jesus' way. We walk where He walked. We follow Him, even if that means the footsteps to a bloody cross. We do not hold to ancient Gnosticism. We believe that we are body, soul, and mind; and when our eyes behold Jesus, our feet follow Him. It changes our lives. It changes the way we think. It changes our whole outlook. It changes the way we go to work on Monday morning. It changes the way that we parent. It changes the way we educate our children. It changes the way we view sinners in the world. We become those who are preoccupied with kingdom work. That begins with proclaiming the gospel and then that is followed by a life lived to the glory of God, just like this man. He followed Jesus on the way, and he glorified God. Do others see your life as a life that glorifies God? That's the life of a true believer. That is the life of someone who has truly seen the light, someone who truly sees the kingdom, who truly sees Christ in all He is and all of His glory, that we praise Him for His grace and His mercy because if it wasn't for His sovereignty, we would all still be in blindness, hopeless, destitute, in darkness, and on our way to hell. But because of Christ, He paves the way to heaven through His blood. May we look to Him, rest in Him, and above all, glory in Him and His rich salvation. Let us pray.

Father, we do thank You for Your Word. Your Word is truth, and Your Word captures our hearts. It captures our gaze. We confess to You that we were once blind, but now we see. We see the glory of Christ. We want to follow Him. We want to be yielded to Him. We want to follow Him wherever

He may take us. We want to do whatever kingdom work He may call us to do. Father, we recognize in a room this size, there must be someone, maybe a young person, who You will call into the ministry, and we'll rejoice in that. Maybe there will be others that You call into the medical field or that You call to be a lawyer, or You call to do something great for Your kingdom as a representative of Your kingdom because we believe the light of Your kingdom has invaded this dark world. We await that day in which there will no more be darkness. We await that day for Your gospel to penetrate in an amazing way, the darkness that surrounds us. Would You do that work and would You do it in a way that we can see it? Give us eyes of faith to see it. Bless our church. Bless those who have gathered here. As we sing this hymn of response, may we sing it just as the Israelites sang on their ascent to Jerusalem. May we sing with joy in our hearts, praise on our lips, for the King has come. His kingdom has come, and we are His citizens. We pray and ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.