

“Blind Bartimaeus”
Mark 10:46-52
(Preached at Trinity, June 27, 2013)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. The remaining verses of **Mark 10** cover the healing of a certain blind beggar by the name of Bartimaeus. He stands as an important example of one whose eyes were opened, not only physically, but more importantly, spiritually.
2. As we saw in the previous verses Jesus and His disciples are on the journey to Jerusalem. They arrived at Jericho and this account occurs as they are leaving. Mark records that a large crowd was now with the group. It is not surprising to see the presence of a large multitude of people since the time of the Passover was approaching.
3. These verses have been troublesome for Bible students seeking to harmonize the Gospels. See Matthew 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43
 - A. Mark records that they met the blind man as were leaving Jericho
Luke records that it occurred while they were arriving.
 - B. Mark and Luke both tell us that there was only one blind man. Matthew reports that there were two.
Matthew 20:30 NAS - "And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"
 - C. Only Mark identifies him by name Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus
 - D. Only Mark and Luke describe the blind man as a beggar.
 - E. Only Mark and Luke connect the blind man's healing to his faith.
4. These things are really not problems unless one is determined to approach Scripture in unbelief. Neither Mark nor Luke tell us that Jesus restored sight to only one blind man. We do not know why Mark and Luke chose to mention only one of the blind man while not mentioning the other. Mark chose only to focus on this one blind man, Bartimaeus. As to whether this took place as they were arriving or as they were leaving there is no clear answer, only that this is the Word of God and it is absolute in truth. If an explanation is not fully known we trust the answer to God.
5. This is the second man we’ve met seeking Christ in this chapter. The first was a wealthy man; rich and influential who went away unchanged. While he maintained his worldly wealth he remained in spiritual poverty.
Mark 8:36 NAU - "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?"
The second is a blind beggar who becomes a follower of Christ.
6. Although Matthew records that there were two blind men we will focus on only one — blind Bartimaeus. I want us to look at this man as an example of a man coming to Christ.

I. His wretched condition

A. He was blind

1. This was a physical infirmity. He lived in a world of darkness
2. Far worse, he was born into spiritual darkness. He shared the infirmity of all men—spiritual blindness.
3. We are blind to the glories of our Creator and the purpose of our creation. We are blind to our lost condition and our terrible need of a Redeemer. We are blind to the excellence of a life restored to God. And we are blind to the promises of the Gospel—the way of salvation.
4. The Gospel comes to blind sinners and God's transforming grace gives them sight
 - a. Isaiah prophesied
Isaiah 9:2 NAU - "The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them."
 - b. Paul spoke of this
Acts 26:18 NAU - "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."

B. He was poor, a beggar

1. Like the Rich Young Ruler, the rich man is content in his earthly condition. His idols blind his mind into a stupor—a sense of satisfaction. He sees himself as being above the poor. They have the mind that considers themselves worthy of every blessing.
 - a. Ultimately, few rich people will see themselves as wretched before Christ.
Mark 10:23 NAU - "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"
Mark 10:25 NAU - "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."
 - b. This is precisely the problem of most Americans
 - c. On the Day of Judgment they will cry out that they are being treated unfairly.
Matthew 25:44 NAU - "Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?'"
Matthew 7:22 NAU - "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'"

2. A person coming to Christ must come empty and bankrupt
Matthew 5:3 NAU - "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
 - a. His self-righteousness is turned to self-abasement
 - b. In his poverty he throws himself at the foot of the cross and cries out for God's mercy.
Mark 10:47-48 NAU - "When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸ Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

II. Notice his high view of Christ

- A. People have different opinions of Jesus
 1. Most simply dismiss Him. They ignore the Gospel as being irrelevant
 2. Others pretend to follow Him but deny His claim upon their lives. They prove by their lives that their highest love is reserved for their idols.
 3. They may see Jesus as an excellent figurehead for the church but He is not Lord of all.
 4. This has always been the case
- B. Those who come to Christ see Him as He is
 1. He referred to Jesus as "Son of David"
 - a. This was a Messianic expression
 - b. We shouldn't miss the significance here. Few recognized this about Christ. This is the first time "Son of David" is used in Mark. Remember the question Jesus asked in **Chapter 8**
Mark 8:27-30 NAU - "He questioned His disciples, saying to them, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸ They told Him, saying, "John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets." ²⁹ And He *continued* by questioning them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ." ³⁰ And He warned them to tell no one about Him."
 At this point Jesus banned them from speaking this. But Peter knew. How?
Matthew 16:16-17 NAU - "Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven."
 - b. Now Bartimaeus recognized that Jesus was the promised Seed, the fulfillment of the Covenant of Grace and of the Abrahamic Covenant.
 - c. He didn't have the full understanding we have but he recognized Him as the anointed one and he trusted Him.

- d. Perhaps all he knew was words he had heard in the synagogue regarding the Messiah
Isaiah 35:5 NAU - "Then the eyes of the blind will be opened
 And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped."
Psalms 146:7-8 NAU - "Who executes justice for the oppressed; Who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free. ⁸ The LORD opens *the eyes of the blind*; The LORD raises up those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous;"
 - e. We should note that by the time Jesus enters into Jerusalem everyone is shouting this name
Matthew 21:9 NAU - "The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!"
2. He also referred to Him as "Rabboni" – This was an Aramaic expression meaning “teacher” but implying a personal relationship. Literally it would be translated “My teacher.”
 - a. Others saw Jesus as an excellent teacher. Bartimaeus saw Jesus as *his* teacher.
 - b. Many today see Jesus as a great teacher but not *their* teacher. This is evidenced by the lack of time they spend in the Scriptures. They don’t equate Sunday School or preaching with being taught of Christ. And they find it easy to disregard the words of Christ.
 - c. To receive Christ is to receive His Word and obey it.
John 14:23-24 NAU - "Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. ²⁴ "He who does not love Me does not keep My words"
 3. Let me also draw from the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew records that he called Him Lord
Matthew 20:30 NAS - "And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"
 - a. Words of submission
 - b. Those who come to Christ must receive Him as Lord

III. Notice his commendable persistence

- A. For most people coming to Christ is not a high priority
 1. They may join a church as long as it doesn’t make demands
 2. Their service to Christ will always be half-hearted
- B. Those who truly come to Christ make Him their highest priority
 1. Notice the persistence of Bartimaeus
Mark 10:48 NAU - "Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"
 - a. The Greek expresses great force in his crying out. His cry was to the greatest degree. He cried out with all that was in him.

- b. He was not to be denied
- 2. This is the nature of those entering His Kingdom
Thomas Watson – “Though heaven be given to us freely, yet we must contend for it. . . The Christian is resolved, come what will, he will have heaven.”
- 3. Not reading too much into the text, Bartimaeus cast aside his cloak
There is an interesting contrast. The rich young ruler clung tightly to his possessions. Bartimaeus freely cast his aside. It was a hindrance.
- 4. This must serve as an admonishment to those who have not trusted Christ
 - a. Shall you squander your opportunity to receive Christ?
Hebrews 3:7-8 NAS - "Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "Today if you hear His voice, ⁸ Do not harden your hearts "
 - b. Only in this life will you be offered mercy
 - c. Shall you squander the Gospel that you have heard?
 - d. Had Bartimaeus squandered this opportunity he would have continued in his blindness.

IV. The blessing bestowed

- A. Jesus was moved with compassion
 - 1. In **Verses 32-33** we found Jesus resolute in His journey to Jerusalem. The disciples were amazed. The crowds feared
 - 2. The entire crowd is moving ahead like a great wave.
But now Jesus suddenly stops in His tracks and the crowd stops
At one moment they are rebuking him and then suddenly by the authority of Christ they are calling him.
Mark 10:49 NAU - "And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him *here*."
So they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you."
 - 3. Jesus hears those who cry out to Him
- B. Bartimaeus cried out for mercy and he found mercy
 - 1. He was healed of his physical blindness
 - 2. More important, he was healed of his spiritual blindness
Mark 10:52 NAU - "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and *began* following Him on the road."
 - 3. Immediately he received his sight and immediately he became a follower of Jesus
When Jesus opens a man's eyes He draws his heart. He gladly follows Jesus.

Are you a follower of Christ?

Jesus asked blind Bartimaeus: "What do you want Me to do for you?"

What would you have Jesus to do for you? Simply cry out, "Have mercy on me a sinner."