

Sermon outline and notes:

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## Mark 10:46-52      “Blind Bartimaeus”

Intro. Jesus & His disciples were on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover. They had traveled from Galilee, through Perea, & down the Jordan valley down to Jericho. From there they would go up the mountain road to Jerusalem. At that time of the year there would be large crowds of pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem as well, so we are not surprised that a “great multitude” was following Jesus. Popular enthusiasm was surging around Him.

On the way out of the city of Jericho something significant happened. Just over a week before His death on the cross, Jesus performed another great miracle. A man named Bartimaeus was healed of his blindness. According to Matthew 20:30, there were actually two blind beggars sitting by the road that day, one of whom was named Bartimaeus. Mark does not mention the other blind man, because he had a reason to focus on Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus was probably the chief spokesman. Perhaps he was known to Mark’s readers as a Christian. Also, the fact that Mark identified him as “the son of Timaeus”<sup>1</sup> may indicate that both father & son were known to the Christian community.

Even though this is a great story of Jesus’ power to heal, there are also some important spiritual lessons from this story that I do not want you to miss. Now the first lesson is this:

### I. YOU SHOULD RECOGNIZE YOUR NEED

Before Jesus Christ can help you, you need to recognize that you have a need. Here was a man who certainly had a need. We read in v.46, “As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.” Here we see two facts about Bartimaeus. First:

A. He Was Blind – I’m sure he was totally blind through disease or injury, and not just legally blind by today’s definition.

B. He Was a Beggar - Not only was he blind, but he was also a beggar, two circumstances that often went hand in hand. There was nothing unfamiliar about this sight in that day. For many people with serious impairments, that was the only means of making a living. After all, they did not have disability benefits in those days. Unless a wealthy family could support him, someone like Bartimaeus had to depend on the pity and generosity of the people. So he was sitting by the busy roadside which led up to Jerusalem, begging. With so many pilgrims passing by for the Passover, it was an opportune time to beg for money.

So here was a man who had a great need. What kind of need do you have today? What problem are you facing? If you are not yet a Christian, the Bible says it is because you are spiritually blind (2 Cor. 4:4). You need the Lord to show you your guilt. To the present day you are blind to the seriousness of your sinful condition. Otherwise, you would have already called out to Christ, who died for your sins. Jesus said to the professing Christians of Laodicea that you “do not

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<sup>1</sup> Bartimaeus means “son of Timaeus.”

know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind..." (Rev. 3:17). Too many have a very superficial form of Christianity because they fail to recognize the depth of their need. People must be brought under conviction of sin before they will seek forgiveness in Jesus. The reason we have so many false professions in our churches is that people are talked into "accepting Christ" without first being made aware of their lostness.

If you are already saved you have other needs. Do you need healing today? Do you need reconciliation of an important relationship? Do you have a financial need? Do you need to renew your walk with Christ? Well the first step is to recognize & acknowledge your need.

Next we see from our text that you should:

## II. CRY OUT TO JESUS IN PRAYER

That's what Bartimaeus did. In v.47 we read, "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!'" Although Bartimaeus could not see Jesus; he could hear the bustle of the crowd. It must have been an unusually large crowd passing by at that particular time. Luke's account records that when the blind man heard the crowd passing by, he inquired what this meant. They said, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by" (Luke 18:36, 37). He must have heard about Jesus before, how He had healed other blind people. So when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he immediately cried out to Him, for he knew he had a need.

We today cannot see Jesus either. Yet I'm going to show you that we should cry out to Jesus in prayer when we have a need. And there are several truths about prayer that we see illustrated here. For example:

A. Our Prayer Should Express Faith - Bartimaeus was blind in body, but not in soul. Notice the evidences of the fact that he cried out to Jesus in faith. Others in the crowd just called Him "Jesus of Nazareth," but he called Him "son of David," a reference to the Messiah of whom prophets had prophesied long ago. He saw things which the leaders of Israel refused to see. While they would soon accuse Him of being a blasphemer & deceiver, Bartimaeus called Jesus "the Son of David." Furthermore, down in last of v.51, notice how he addressed Jesus. "Rabboni" is to be interpreted as a title which, in such cases, is equivalent to Matthew's and Luke's "Lord". Why did he call Him Messiah & Lord? No doubt he had heard the report of our Lord's mighty works and, hearing, had believed. He had a distinct insight into Christ's dignity, power, and will, to which seeing multitudes were blind. Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." The fact that Bartimaeus believed in Jesus was confirmed by Jesus Himself in v.52.

Here we see an example of the kind of faith we must have today. Bartimaeus had never seen Jesus perform a miracle, and yet He believed that He had. Even so, we have never seen Jesus perform a miracle. Yet most or all of us believe that He did! We have also heard of His saving grace. We have exceeding great promises from His own lips, written down for our encouragement. Don't you believe His promises? If so, you have the kind of faith that the apostle Peter talked about, "whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory" (I Peter 1:8).

Do you have faith in Jesus? That is absolutely essential for answered prayer. Do you believe He died on the cross for your sins, and that He can forgive you?

B. Our Prayer Should Acknowledge God's Mercy – In the last of v.47 he asked Jesus to “have mercy on me!” Bartimaeus was not one to say that his blindness was unfair and unjust. Instead of asking for justice, he asked for mercy. He knew he was not worthy to ask anything of Jesus. His petition was based on His mercy.

Would to God that we had more crying out to God like that! Multitudes of souls are lost & on the road to a devil's hell, and yet they are careless when it comes to their soul. They should be saying with Bartimaeus, “Have mercy on me!”

C. Our Prayer Should Be Persistent – We see this from what happened. In v.48 we read, “Then many warned him to be quiet...” Just why the crowd did this we do not know. Perhaps since beggars were a common sight in those days, they just considered him to be an annoyance. Or perhaps his cries for help were considered too undignified. Christian people of all churches, and of some stiff churches especially, have had a great deal more care for Christ's dignity than He has, and have felt that their formal worship was rudely disturbed when some earnest voice forced its way through it with the cry of need and desire. He was too bold and unrelenting and shameless, as the shallow critics thought, in his crying.

But though the crowd rebuked him, he was not be deterred. So the last of v.48 says, “he cried out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’” Why was he so persistent? He had a sense of need and urgency, which was stronger than any desire to be at peace with the multitude. He was blind, & he knew it. He could hardly support himself and was reduced to being a beggar. Desperate people do not permit the crowd to keep them from Jesus. Furthermore, he realized that if help was going to come from any source, it would have to come from the Son of David, the Messiah. Jesus was passing by, and he knew this could be his only opportunity for healing. It was now or never!

Even so, we must not care what others think and say of us when we seek the healing of our souls. There will never be any lack of people telling us that it is “too soon” or “too late,” that we are going “too fast” or “too far,” that we need not pray so much or read our Bibles so much. We must pay no attention to such people. If you sense your need for Jesus Christ today, don't let the presence of this crowd, or their desire to get out a few minutes sooner, keep you from coming to Jesus at the invitation time!

Of course, there is also a lesson here about being persistent in prayer. If you do not receive the answer to your prayer the first time you ask, keep praying. Keep asking. Jesus said in Matthew 7:7, “Keep on asking, and it will be given to you; Keep on seeking, and you will find; Keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you.” Persistence is an indication of faith, and God is more pleased with much prayer than little prayer.

So you need to recognize your need, and call out to Jesus in prayer. Let me show you why:

### III. JESUS IS CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR PRAYER

I'm glad to report that when you have a need, and when you call upon Jesus, He cares for you! 1 Peter 5:7 says, “casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” Notice what happened here that indicates the concern of Jesus. In v.49 we see that:

A. He Stood Still - Keep in mind that Jesus had been traveling a long distance from Galilee, through Jericho, & was on His way to Jerusalem. He would not rest until He had accomplished His mission of dying there on the cross for our sins. And though an indescribably heavy burden was

resting upon His own heart, He has not lost His sympathy with the needs of others. We see Jesus Christ, God's suffering Servant, on His way to the cross, and yet He stops & takes time to serve two blind beggars! What love, what mercy, what grace! He stops to give them opportunity to catch up to Him.

The living Christ has as quick an ear and is as ready to help today, as He was when outside the gate of Jericho; and every one of us may lift our voice, and it will go straight up to the throne, and not be lost in the clamor of the hallelujahs that echo around His seat. Jesus Christ will listen to your cry for help.

So after Jesus stood still:

B. He Called for the Blind Man – Notice in v.49 that He “commanded him to be called.” Jesus orders the people to call the man away from the roadside where he was sitting. He was to be led to His side. Then, in the last of v.49 we read, “Then they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.’”

How it should bring joy to a heart to know that Jesus is interested in you! And even today, in such circumstances of life, Jesus is calling us to His side, for He is a wonderful Savior. Right now, through this gospel sermon, He is calling someone to be saved. Is that someone you? Or He may be calling upon you to renew your walk with Him, to get right with Him. Is that someone you? Or out of love & compassion He sees a heart that is breaking because of some trial you are going through, & He is calling out to you in order to comfort, to cheer, and as in this case, to heal, to restore. Jesus is concerned about your soul & well-being.

Notice the response of Bartimaeus in v.50, “And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.” Here was the opportunity of a lifetime. His heart leaps with joy as he came to Jesus. Then we see that:

C. He Invites Petition – In v.51 Jesus asked him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” Bartimaeus had already expressed his need in general, when he cried out, “Have mercy on me.” But now Jesus wants Bartimaeus to express specifically what he wanted Him to do. And notice how tenderly Jesus asks this question. It was the implicit pledge that whatever he desired, he should receive. To be sure, Jesus already knew what Bartimaeus wanted, but He wants him to ask for it. He knew that the thing this man wanted was the thing that He delighted to give. Jesus wanted to give the man opportunity to express himself and give evidence of his own faith. What did he really believe Jesus could do for him?

So what did the man say? He had no doubt what he wanted most. To anyone else he would have said, “Alms for the poor.” But standing before Lord Jesus, He said in the last of v.51, “Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.” He wanted to see, perhaps for the first time. He knew that Jesus could perform a miracle in his life.

You have needs, and Jesus is ready & willing to meet your needs. But He is waiting on you to look to Him in faith, and ask. This reinforces my second main point. We should cry out to Jesus in prayer, & ask for help. James 4:2 says, “you do not have because you do not ask.” So what should you ask of Jesus today? Suppose Jesus Christ stood where I stand, and spoke to you: “What do you want Me to do for you?” If you are not yet a Christian, your answer should come as swiftly as the beggar's, “Lord! Heal me of my blindness, and take away my sin, and give me Your salvation.” There is no doubt about what it is that every one of us needs most. You may have a financial need. But if you have not trusted Christ as Savior, your greatest need is not cash, but

Christ! And remember what Jesus said to His disciples shortly after this incident, “And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive” (Mt. 21:22).

So do you recognize your greatest need today? Have your sins been forgiven? Many in this world are too blind to see what you really need!

Next, we see in our story:

#### IV. JESUS CAN ANSWER YOUR PRAYER

Christ certainly did in our story today. Matthew reports that “Jesus touched [his] eyes” (Mt. 20:34). He often touched people as He healed them. Then, in the last of v.52, notice what happened, “immediately he received his sight.” What a happy day! Jesus did what no one else could do. He once again gave sight to a blind man!

Here we see the truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He cares for you. Friend, you may indeed have a need or a problem that seems overwhelming. But Jesus has the power and resources to meet your need, no matter what it is.

Furthermore, notice that the cure took place “immediately.” It was as immediate as the movement of Christ’s heart in answer. In just a moment the blind man was brought from darkness to light!

I am here to proclaim the possibility of an immediate passage from darkness to light for any soul who looks to Christ. Sudden conversions are perfectly reasonable, as many can testify. Any man who hears this gospel message can be lost at the beginning of the message, but saved by the end of the message.

#### V. WE SHOULD RESPOND TO ANSWERED PRAYER

Notice how Bartimaeus responded to the miracle Jesus did for him. In the last of v.52 we see that he “followed Jesus on the road.” Surely Jesus was one of the first persons He saw, and he wanted to follow Him, & be in the company of Jesus. He had already believed in Jesus. Now he became a follower of Jesus.

Even so when God saves your soul, and when He answers prayers, you should respond to His grace by following Jesus faithfully. Has Christ saved your soul? Then you ought to give yourself freely and willingly to Christ’s service. Have you followed Jesus in baptism? Does your church attendance reflect that you follow Christ? Does your lifestyle show that you follow Christ? Does your Christian service show that you follow Christ?

Conclusion: Once again, imagine the scene that we began with. Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. Knowing this, Bartimaeus took advantage of the opportunity & he called out to Jesus. Then Christ called out to him. In just a few moments the blind man received his sight.

Likewise, Christ is calling us all, and my business now is to say to each of you what the crowd said to the beggar, “Rise, He is calling you.” And v.50 says of Bartimaeus, “And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.” If you will acknowledge that you need His salvation, rise up from your seat in just a moment, and come forward to receive Christ as your Savior. Or if you have some other need, rise up and come forward to seek Him in prayer at this prayer altar. I urge you to do it now! Jesus Christ is passing by. He was never to be in Jericho again. If Bartimaeus did not get His sight then, he would likely have been blind all his days. Christ and His salvation are offered to you, my brother, now. This could be your only opportunity. Perhaps if you

let Him pass, you will never hear Him call again, and may abide in the darkness forever. Do not run the risk of such a fate. Come to Jesus today!

Sources: Stephen Felker, *Devotional & Explanatory Notes on the Entire Bible* (Col. Hghts, VA: Published by Author), 2010; William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975); Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture*, Vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977 reprint); John Phillips, *Exploring The Gospel of Matthew: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [CD-ROM] (Ontario: Timnathserah Inc., 1996); J.C. Ryle (1816-1900), *Mark: Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993); Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Diligent: Mark* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1987). Other sources listed in the footnotes. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982). McGee read, but not used., compare sources for Mt. 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43.

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