

## 62 Mark 10:46-52

### Oh What the Blind See!

#### Text

*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. 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!" 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. 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.*

#### Introduction (Review of the Journey)

(8) If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. **35** For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. **36** For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? **37** For what can a man give in return for his soul? **38** For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

(9) If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." **36** And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, **37** "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."

[T]he one who is not against us is for us. **41** For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

(10) Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. **15** Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.

Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, **30** who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. **31** But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

“You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. **43** But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, **44** and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. **45** For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

## The Story's Historical Echo

*46 And they came to Jericho.*

In verse 1 of Chapter 10 we see Jesus in the region Perea. Now, in order to get to Jericho, Jesus must cross the Jordan river. This was the barrier to the people of Israel in the OT to entering the promised land. Crossing that river is what they had failed to do 40 years earlier for fear of the people in the land. But Joshua, one of the two spies who had faith in God, now had charge of the people, and they were going to cross the Jordan. There would be battle. There would be bloodshed. But through it all, God would be faithful and would secure the place of His people.

Jericho is the first city that Joshua had to conquer after crossing the Jordan.

*The Jericho of New Testament times which Jesus now entered (46) had been built by Herod the Great and his son Archelaus (Mt. 2:22), and stood somewhat to the south of the OT city of that name, and to the west of the present one.*

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Jericho was where Joshua came upon crossing the Jordan into the promised land. On the eve of their siege of Jericho, Joshua meets the commander of the army of the Lord - and he falls down and worships him. They capture Jericho, but Jerusalem remains unconquered. It will not be until David that Jerusalem becomes decidedly Israel's.

Jesus (Greek for Joshua) now crosses the same river into Jericho to conquer the kingdom of darkness in Jerusalem. Jesus, the Son of David will, next week, march into the city of David, to make his final assault.

As we proceed through our text this morning, I want to highlight 4 things that this blind man sees. Specifically, he sees his need, he sees that Christ is able to supply all his needs. He sees the rebuke of the world as empty and in no position to command his silence. Finally he sees that the call of Christ will logically entail a life of committed discipleship to him for he sees Christ as Lord.

## Sees His Need

*And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd,*

Jesus has been "on the way" since Peter's confession. The destination is Jerusalem. Even with three exceedingly clear predictions of suffering, betrayal and death, Jesus marches on. So quick is his pace and so purposeful is his stride that his disciples were amazed and his followers were afraid. The crowds that normally followed Jesus are possibly getting even larger as people are

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1. Stephen S. Short, "Mark" in New International Commentary, ed. F.F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House)

making their pilgrimage into Jerusalem for the Passover.

Although Jerusalem is only twenty-some miles away, it is a 3000 foot rise in elevation. They set out from Jericho ready for the journey ahead. But there is an entirely unexpected interruption in the procession.

*Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.*

*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!"*

To be blind in the ancient world was one of the worst things that could happen to a person. Being deaf was a challenge, but one could still farm or work. Similar challenges and opportunities existed with being mute. Being crippled one could still sit at a booth and collect taxes, or be a scribe or other less physical tasks. But being blind reduced a person to a certain life of begging. Without sight there was very little a person could do. Braille not having been invented yet, a blind man could neither read nor learn the alphabet to write. He is reduced to poverty and begging.

This poor man lives in a world of perpetual night. He has never seen the brilliant color of a sunset nor the striking blue of a flash of lightning. He has never seen the soft haze of a morning fog or the crystal clear stars on a moonless night. His world is a sunless one. Somehow he manages to make his way each morning to the roadside where he will beg for gifts. There he sits day after day. In the heat of the summer and the cold of the winter. There he sits tasting the dust of the road as the travelers or the wind stirs it.

His contact with the world comes mostly through his ears. Thus he has likely trained them well. He hears much. Most of the time he probably wishes he didn't as passer-byers openly mock him or whisper about him thinking he will not hear. But so also, he hears stories as the travelers converse with one another. Here, no doubt he has heard of one Jesus of Nazareth.

He may have heard stories of Jesus' confrontations with the religious leaders. He may have heard of Jesus' casting out of demons, or of his healing the leper, or his making the lame to walk. He may have even heard of Jesus giving sight to a blind man. And now he hears that Jesus is passing by! Jesus of Nazareth is on his road! This is his chance.

## Sees Jesus' Supply

And so he began to call out "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*"

Son of David is a messianic title. This section of Mark opens with a confession that Jesus is the messiah and the healing of a blind man, and it closes with a confession of Jesus as the messiah and the healing of a blind man.

**isa 11:1-3**; There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. 2 And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. 3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear,

**jer 23:5-6** "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6 In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell

securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.' **eze 34:23-24** And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24 And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the Lord; I have spoken.

**Isa 42:1, 6-7** Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations....6"I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, 7 to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

This man, no doubt, though blind, would find or be led to the synagogue each Sabbath and would have heard these passages read. No doubt when he heard the passage about the blind receiving sight it would have rung a chord with him. Having heard of the works that Jesus was doing this man seems to have connected that passage with the person of Jesus. And now that Jesus is near, he will by no means let him simply pass. "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Every word would tell—every syllable would suggest an argument—there would be the very strength and might and blood and sinew of that man's life cast into it. He would be like Jacob wrestling with the angel and every word would be a hand to grasp him that he might not go. - Spurgeon

## Sees the World's Rebuke as Empty

*48 And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

They have all just begun what will be a difficult 20-some mile trip climbing 3000+ feet, and right at the start this fellow wants the whole procession to stop. The crowd has just begun this trek to Jerusalem for the passover and Jesus is leading it all. Perhaps the crowd believes that all his yelling is inappropriate behavior in the presence of a someone of the dignity of Christ. This kingly procession must not be interrupted by someone of such low repute. They urge him to silence. They rebuke him. Some may even had laid hands on him, but he would not stay his tongue.

In desperation he keeps crying out "Son of David, have mercy on me!" The tenses indicate an ongoing cry. He just keeps repeating, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

*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."*

Though he was heading toward Jerusalem at a brisk pace, ahead of the pack, yet when he hears a cry for mercy, he stops in his tracks! Jesus is marching with purpose toward Jerusalem, so steadfastly and rapidly that his disciples were amazed and his followers were afraid. And yet at the cry for mercy he stops short.

He calls for him and the crowds now have a complete change of mind. They now bid Bartimaeus to come. Rather than discouraging him they encourage him. Rather than push him aside, they readily receive him through their midst.

When Jesus calls, nothing will hinder. When God sovereignly draws you to himself, all that previously served to forbid you now beckons you onward. Everything in this universe answers to Christ and is his servant. Even if unwilling, the evil are used for his good purposes. Whether they

intend it or not, no one can hinder you, and indeed are used for your advantage, when the call of God is heard in your soul.

Do not fear the world. Do not fear he who can destroy the body. Do not conform to this world. What can flesh do to you? Do you not know that the world is passing away along with its desires? Let "those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away." "the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.<sup>11</sup> Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup> waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God."

## Sees Christ as Lord

*50 And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.*

His cloak may serve different purposes. It is possible that he kept it wrapped around him to protect him for the morning chill or from the heat of high noon. It is also possible that this cloak was spread out before him to receive the coins for which he daily begs. No matter what function it served at the time, he tosses it all aside and, though blind, runs to Jesus! Whether he abandons all his earnings for that day or simply casts aside the cloak that would hinder his run, either way it is now a thing of the past as he only focus is to get to Jesus. At this point in time, there is no greater joy than for him to stand before the Son of David.

*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.*

J.C. Ryle comments:

What is the reason that men are so half-hearted in seeking Christ? Why are they so soon deterred, and checked, and discouraged in drawing near to God? The answer is short and simple. They do not feel sufficiently their own sins. They are not thoroughly convinced of the plague of their own hearts, and the disease of their own souls. Once let a man see his own guilt, as it really is, and he will never rest until he has found pardon and peace in Christ. It is they who, like Bartimaeus, really know their own deplorable condition, who persevere, like Bartimaeus, and are finally healed.

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Freely pardoned, he ought to give himself freely and willingly to Christ's service. Bought at so mighty a price as the blood of Christ, he ought to devote himself heartily and thoroughly to Him who redeemed him. Grace really experienced will make a man feel daily, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits." (J.C. Ryle, Mark).

This how each real Christian should respond to the call of Christ on his life.