

Was Blind but Now I See

Mark 10: 46 - 52

Proposition: The Lord Jesus is eager to answer our cry of faith.

Application: Lay aside anything that hinders you from coming to the Lord Jesus.

Do you find sometimes it is hard to “*get hold*” of people? You dial a number and a pleasant voice answers and says, “*Hello, thank you for calling Amazon. If you’re calling to check on your account, press 1. If you have questions about your order, press 2. If you would like to hear about our new products, press 3. If you know your party’s extension key that in now.*” You key in and after 3 or 4 rings you hear “*Hi, this is Joe. I’m away from my desk right now. Please leave a message, at the tone. If you prefer to wait, stay on line and someone will be right with you.*” The tone beeps, and another voice chimes in: “*I’m sorry we can’t take your call right now, but if you hold, your call will be answered by the next available associate.*” Getting hold of the right person is not always easy. In life’s crises, we don’t have time to wait for the next available associate. Sometimes it appears to be that way with the Lord. It seems He delays to answer our prayer for help.

The Lord Jesus is eager to answer our cry of faith. Healing the blind man is a picture of what happens in our soul when the Lord answers our prayer of faith.

I. His Pitiful Condition (10:46, 47)

Here Jesus is Leaving Jericho (10:46): This account is also found in Matthew and Luke. Each Gospel writer adds his own nuance to the event. Matthew tells us Jesus was moved with compassion (Matt 20:34). Mark mentions the blind man’s faith (10:52). Luke adds that the people praised God because of the miracle (Luke 18:43b). Matthew and Mark wrote that the miracle happened as they were leaving Jericho (Matt 20:29; Mark 10:46). Luke mentioned the miracle happened as they were moving toward Jericho (Luke 18:35). There are two ways to explain this seeming conflict. The first view is that the blind man began calling on Jesus as Jesus entered Jericho. While he tagged along with the crowd through the city, He kept on calling out to Jesus. Jesus then healed the blind man as He left Jericho (Acts 16:16 - 19). The second view is that there were two Jericho’s in Jesus’ day. The ancient city of Jericho, the city Joshua conquered. About 1.5 km to the south there was a new and thriving Jericho which Herod the Great rebuilt. Rebuilt Jericho was the home of Zaccheus. The healing occurred after the crowd left Old Jericho and before they entered New Jericho.

This event took place about six days before Passover. Passover is a pilgrim feast. Jews from all over gathered in crowds and journeyed to Jerusalem. The roads to Jerusalem would be full of pilgrims (Ps 42:4).

Mark and Luke mention only one blind man. Matthew states Jesus healed two blind men. Mark gives us the name of one of the men - Bartimaeus. Likely he was singled out because by the time Mark wrote his Gospel, Bartimaeus was well-known in the early Jerusalem church. Mark may have known him in person.

This man was sidelined and relied on the mercy of others. The large crowd might have given him hope for a huge windfall. But when Bartimaeus heard Jesus was in the crowd his focus turned from begging for money to begging for mercy.

Hearing that Jesus was in the Crowd (10:47): No doubt Bartimaeus heard that Jesus healed the sick. And he had faith that Jesus could heal his blindness. In the past, Jesus asked His disciples *who do people say that I am?* Bartimaeus gave the right answer. He believed Jesus was the Messiah. *Son of David* is a messianic title. *Son of David* and *Messiah* mean the same thing (2 Sam 7:12 - 16). Solomon partially fulfilled this promise. But Jesus, the greater Solomon, did fulfill this promise. Bartimaeus could not have used a better title for Jesus. One of the roles of the Messiah was to give sight to the blind (Luke 7:19 - 23).

With respect to His deity Jesus is the Son of God. He is God in the flesh. With respect to His humanity, Jesus is also the Son of Man. He is the Saviour of all who come to Him in faith. What is more, Jesus in His humanity is the Son of David, because the Messiah is from the seed of David. Jesus was the Son of David at His first coming. He is the resurrected Son of David in glory. And one day, He will return as the Son of David to set up His kingdom on earth. Bartimaeus could not have used a better title for Jesus.

Asking the Lord Jesus to *have mercy* was to confess that he was helpless to solve his problem. He was humble enough to admit his need for mercy. God gives grace to the humble, so Bartimaeus called out to the One who in mercy could cure his disease.

II. His Persistent Cry (10:48 - 50)

Have Mercy (10:48): This was likely the first time so many people took notice of him. And yet they were unmoved by his plight. Because of his loud and constant shouting Bartimaeus may have been a nuisance. They may have believed that such an undignified person should not be allowed to trouble Jesus. The common belief at the time was that blindness was the result of sin (John 9:2). Perhaps the crowd was not prepared to hear a blind beggar proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. And so they implored him to be quiet. The more they tried to silence him, the more he cried out. The crowd of bullies did not deter his faith. His faith was persistent - he kept on calling out to the Lord. His faith was active - he rose up and ran to the Lord. It will be the same for us. When we seek to go to the Lord Jesus for help, we will face roadblocks of some kind. Will our faith persist?

The Lord did not silence his cry, He answered it! The Lord Jesus is eager to respond to our cry of faith.

Hurry Up (10:49, 50): Joshua made the sun stand still, but the cry of poor Bartimaeus made the Son of David stand still. Even though Jesus was resolved to get to Jerusalem; even though He had weighty things on His mind, when He heard the persistent cry of this helpless man, He stopped to meet his need (Ps 34:6). Jesus often calls us when we are in deep trouble. Jesus called Mary when she was in deep trouble (John 11:28, 29). He calls to comfort us. He calls to cheer us up. He calls to cure our spiritual blindness. “*He is calling you*” is shorthand for the Great Commission. Our mission is to call the spiritually blind to come to the Lord Jesus in repentance and faith (Isa 6:9, 10). Not everyone is ready to answer Jesus’ call. But this man was ready! Notice how Bartimaeus responded. He cast aside his outer garment, stood up and went to Jesus. He threw off his garment so he would not get tripped up and be delayed as he rushed to the Lord. His garment is a picture of something that hinders us from coming to the Lord. What garment do we need to cast aside? What are we holding on to that may be getting in the way of the Lord’s call on our life? Bartimaeus’ garment was a good thing. He used it to keep himself warm. He may have even used it to store his money. Even good things can keep us from responding to the Lord’s call. Sometimes we must cast off the good things that hinder (Heb 12:1). For sure, we must cast off the garment on sin (Zech 3:3, 4). Picture a hog farmer cleaning out a hog barn. His clothes reek of pig manure. The hog farmer checks his watch and realizes he is running late for a vital business meeting. He jumps into his truck, goes straight to the meeting without changing his clothes. How would his colleagues feel? Some would likely ask him to go home, change, and come back. It is the same with us, to come to the Lord Jesus we must lay aside our filthy garments.

III. His Powerful Cure (10:51, 52a)

Healed (10:51, 52a): Likely this man went from one doctor to another hoping to find a cure. He was denied every time. Yet Bartimaeus knew Jesus was the Messiah and the Messiah can heal the blind. Jesus knew what Bartimaeus needed. But He wanted the blind man to express his need. We need to be specific when calling on the Lord. It is a sign of faith to tell Jesus exactly what our need is. When I go to a doctor, I tell him or her what ails me I believe the doctor can do something about my sickness. If I did not believe the doctor could treat my illness, I would not divulge my symptoms. In the same way when we express our specific need to the Lord it is because we believe He can meet our need. In a sense Jesus asked Bartimaeus *what do you believe I can do for you?* Bartimaeus answered *I believe you can restore my sight.* Bartimaeus did not want money he wanted a miracle.

The term *rabboni* means *my rabbi - my teacher*. What Bartimaeus said was *Jesus, You are my Rabbi*. If Jesus was his Teacher, than Bartimaeus was Jesus’ student - His disciple.

In the twinkling of an eye Bartimaeus regained 20/20 vision - without surgery - without ointment - because the Great Physician was at work. Faith was not the cause of his healing, faith was the means through which the healing was achieved. The object of faith is crucial. The phrase, “*just believe,*” is a non-sense statement. There must be an object to faith. When the Lord Jesus is the object of faith - when our faith is centered on the Person of Christ Jesus - saving grace flows into

our hearts. Faith is the channel; grace is the stream. Grace is the divine hands that extends the healing. Faith is the human hand that reaches out and receives.

IV. His Personal Commitment (10:52b)

He Followed Jesus (10:52b): What happened to Bartimaeus in his body is a picture of what happened in his soul. He was healed physically, and he was saved spiritually. We know he was saved spiritually because he went on to follow Jesus. The phrase *he began to follow Him* means he became a lifelong disciple of the Lord. Some early church traditions say Bartimaeus was a major figure in the church in Jerusalem. This may explain why he was singled out by name in Mark's gospel. Bartimaeus is a picture of discipleship. He recognized his need. He trusted in the Lord Jesus to meet his need. Then he followed the Lord in lifelong obedience.

Some are content to go to Jesus just for the miracle. They have no desire to be a lifelong disciple of the Lord. Let us not be guilty of accepting the gift yet refuse to follow the Giver. How blessed are those who by faith receive His benefits and then follow in His steps. The Lord Jesus will "stop" for any person who calls on Him in faith. Do you have a need? Do you believe Jesus, the Son of David, can meet your need? If so, be of good cheer He is calling you to come to Him. Lay aside whatever is keeping you from going to Jesus.

If sin is keeping you from the Lord lay it aside. Admit you are a sinner in need of a Saviour. Believe Jesus He died for your sin and rose again on the third day. Come to Him and be saved.