

Mark 10:46-52 — The Blind Man That Could See

January 5, 2020

For the month of December, we took a little break from our studies in the Gospel of Mark to look at the birth of Jesus from the book of Hebrews. We learned why we celebrate Christmas. We celebrate the birth of Jesus because what God did for us through Jesus is so great. There is nothing greater in history that God has done than what he did for us in Jesus. What God did for us in Jesus is so great, there is nothing greater that God can do for us in the future other than what he has already done for us through Jesus. That is why we celebrate Jesus' birth. Jesus is that big of a deal.

Today, we move past the good news of Christmas and return to our studies in the Gospel of Mark.

Turn in your Bible to Mark 10:46 where we will pick up our study. While you are turning, let me take a moment to refresh your memory about this Gospel.

If you were with us at the beginning of our study in Mark, you will remember the Gospel of Mark breaks into two pieces. The first 10 chapters of the book are about Jesus revealing himself to be the rightful king of the universe, the very Son of God. The first 10 chapters are about Jesus revealing he is more than just a man. He is the man who is God.

How did he do this? He did this by his teaching. He also did this by his miracles. While on the Sea of Galilee in a raging storm with waves crashing over the boat, he instantly turned the entire lake dead calm by just a soft word from his lips because creation obeys his voice. He also did this with miracles of healing. With just a soft quiet word or a gentle touch, Jesus transformed disfigured bodies

of lepers that were missing fingers, noses, and ears. He instantly healed them. Their missing body parts reappeared at the command of his word. Their skin that was as rough as coarse sandpaper turned baby smooth.

In one miracle, where the person was deaf and mute, Jesus didn't just heal the man's ears so he could see and loosen his tongue so he could speak. Jesus even miraculously implanted the ability to comprehend language the man had never heard in his brain. Jesus also implanted in the man's brain the ability to speak language he had never heard or spoken in his life with perfect fluency. Every healing miracle of Jesus, he did fully, perfectly and completely. These are the kinds of miracles only God can do. The first 10 chapters of this Gospel are all about us seeing Jesus as not just another man. He is the king of the universe. Jesus is God because he does what only God can do.

The second half of the Gospel of Mark, chapters 11-16, move from revealing the truth of who Jesus is to showing us the great work Jesus came to accomplish. He came to die on the cross for our sin and rise from the grave to give us new life. The second part of this Gospel is about the cross.

This is why we called this series in the Gospel of Mark, the King and the Cross. The first 10 chapters are about Jesus revealing himself as the king of the universe. The last six chapters are about the great work Jesus came to do on the cross — to die and defeat Satan, conquer death, and offer us new life.

Where are we at on our journey through this Gospel? As we return to our studies, we are on the seam between the two great halves of the book. Today, we look at Jesus' last miracle that reveals him as the king of creation. Next week

begins Jesus' triumphal entry where he made his way into Jerusalem to die on the cross. Follow along with me in your copy of God's Word as we read Mark 10:46-52 and look at the last of Jesus' healing miracles.

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. Mark 10:46–52 (ESV)

If you were with us in November, when we studied the passage immediately before this one, you will remember in that passage James and John brought their mother to Jesus. They were trying to manipulate Jesus into promising them that they would sit at his right and left hand in his coming kingdom. They still thought Jesus was going into Jerusalem to set up a military kingdom and overthrow the Romans, even though Jesus told them many times he was going into Jerusalem to die on the cross and rise from the dead after three days.

Like stubborn children, the disciples refused to believe that Jesus came to die, not to be a conquering king. Like bratty children, James and John went behind the backs of the other disciples and tried to use their mother to try and manipulate Jesus into promising them the places of greatest honor in what they thought would be the beginning of Jesus' earthly kingdom in Jerusalem.

When they came to Jesus to ask him for the right to sit on his right and left in what they thought would be his earthly kingdom, you may remember what Jesus asked them. He said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?” In short, they wanted Jesus to make them powerful and famous. “Jesus, we want you to make us amazingly popular in life.” Their answer to Jesus’ question revealed their huge egos.

When Bartimaeus came to Jesus, Jesus asked him the same question, “What do you want me to do for you?” Bartimaeus had a very different answer than the one that James and John gave. He just wanted mercy from Jesus. He wanted to see.

These are called the two “What do you want me to do for you?” stories. They are quite a contrast. James and John wanted Jesus to make them famous and powerful to build their egos. Jesus didn’t grant their request. Bartimaeus simply asked for mercy from Jesus so he could see. Jesus did grant that request.

I think one of the reasons Mark put these two “What do you want me to do for you?” stories together is to give a contrast and show us the kind of requests Jesus does answer in the affirmative. Does Jesus usually grant our requests to be made powerful and famous so we can build our egos? Jesus is much more likely to grant our requests for mercy and help in times of desperate need. These stories taken together show us Jesus responds to our requests for mercy much more favorably than he does to our requests for power and greatness. That is something we can all apply to our lives, and it should shape our prayers.

This is the last miracle of Jesus. The only other miracle after this will be the cursing of the fig tree, but that isn't a positive miracle. Of course there is the greatest miracle of all at the end of the story, which is Jesus rising from the dead. This is the last of Jesus' regular healing miracles.

From here on out there are also no more conversion stories until we get to the very end of Jesus' life. At the end of Jesus' life, the thief on the cross next to Jesus was converted and the Roman centurion in charge of his execution was converted. From here until those final moments, nobody else will place their faith in Jesus during his final week in Jerusalem.

Today, we will also see this is the last major city Jesus passes through on his way to Jerusalem. It is the city of Jericho. There are actually two salvation stories that take place in Jericho. One is the story of the blind man that we are about to study. The other is the story of Zacchaeus, the tax collector. He also encountered Jesus in Jericho at this time and came to faith in Jesus. Zacchaeus' story is written about in Luke 19. Mark doesn't tell us Zacchaeus' story. He only tells us Bartimaeus' story. It is important we know both of these stories because they inform one another and help us understand what was happening.

The story of Bartimaeus receiving his sight and coming to faith is not just in Mark. It is also told in two other Gospels. It is told in Matthew 20:29-34 and Luke 18:35-43. We will reference those parallel accounts to help us get a better understanding how things unfolded.

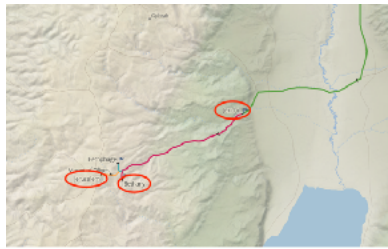
The way this story breaks apart is under two headings. First, we meet Bartimaeus who was a blind man desperate for mercy. Second, we meet Jesus who is a great savior that loves to give mercy to those who seek it.

Bartimaeus was a blind man desperate for mercy.



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. Mark 10:46 (ESV)

When we left Jesus, he was ministering in the region east of the Jordan called Perea. He was traveling to Jerusalem. He would have crossed the Jordan river just north of the Dead Sea. The first town he would have run across of any significance would be Jericho. From Jericho, it was a straight climb up to the city of Jerusalem.



From Jericho it was only 17 miles southwest to the city of Jerusalem, a little less distance than from Spirit Lake to the outskirts of Spencer. The problem is that Jericho is 825 feet below sea level. Jerusalem is 2,500 feet above sea level. This is a climb of approximately 3,200 feet in only 17 miles! It was only a six-hour walk between the two cities, but it was a grueling six hours if you were heading to Jerusalem. It was straight up!

The road from Jericho to Jerusalem was well traveled. It was the common route used by people traveling to Jerusalem for Passover. While it was a well-traveled route, it was also a notoriously treacherous route. Outlaws and bandits often attacked and robbed people on this



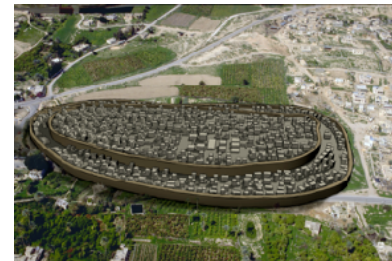
road. It was a small road filled with twists and turns through hills and valleys. It provided plenty of places for thugs to hide and few places for travelers to escape when attacked. Travelers to Jerusalem were carrying money for the holiday so thugs knew everyone they knocked off would have money. Jesus even spoke about the bad reputation of this road for thugs and criminals in his parable of the Good Samaritan. That story took place on the road between Jericho to Jerusalem.

Let me help you picture the city of Jericho. Here is a picture of the ancient



city of Jericho today. Right now, it is nothing but rubble. Here is a computer rendition of what it might have looked like in the days of Jesus. At that time, it was known as a beautiful city. It was called the City of

Palms. The city had numerous springs making it a virtual oasis in the desert. In the time of Jesus, it also had additional water piped into it for irrigation.



The city was a literal garden in the desert with palm trees providing shade and swaying in the wind. It had fruit trees of every kind. It was home to a bush called the balsam bush whose juice was used for a medicine in the ancient world. This city was the only place in the world that bush grew. Since the city was so far below sea level, it was always warm. Josephus said, "Linen clothes could be worn in Jericho when there was snow in Jerusalem." You needed a winter coat in Jerusalem because of the snow, but only 17 miles away you could be wearing shorts and flip flops in Jericho. That is

how warm and comfortable the city was for those who lived there. Almonds were also grown in the city. Roses and flowers were grown in the city. It was a beautiful place filled with fruit, flowers and lush vegetation. King Herod liked it so much he built a fort there so he could visit it often and enjoy the warmth when Jerusalem was cold.

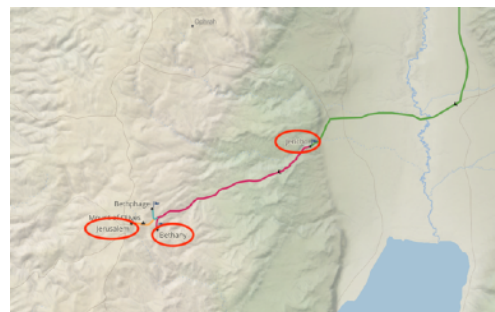
Jericho is also one of the oldest cities in the world. Some of you may remember this city from the Old Testament. This is the first town the Israelites conquered when they entered the Promised Land in Joshua 6. They marched around the city and God eventually knocked the walls down. Of course, the walls had been rebuild since those Old Testament days but this is the same ancient city.

The Gospel of Mark says Jesus' interaction with blind Bartimaeus happened while Jesus was leaving Jericho. Matthew also says it happened when they were leaving Jericho. Luke says the opposite. He wrote Jesus met Bartimaeus when they were approaching Jericho. What is going on here? At least one of the Gospels appears to be wrong. The best way to understand this is to realize that Jesus' healing of Bartimaeus took place while Jesus was in the vicinity of Jericho. I think Jesus hadn't originally planned to stay in Jericho long but we know he spent at least an evening and a night there while he was in the house of Zacchaeus, the tax collector. So Jesus was going in and out of the walls of this city and Jesus' healing of Bartimaeus took place while he was on one of those trips in and out of the city.

We also know the crowd following Jesus in Jericho was huge. Jesus was mobbed by people. He was extremely popular. Everybody in the city wanted to see Jesus, and the pilgrims passing through the city heading to Jerusalem also wanted to see Jesus.

How popular was Jesus? How many people mobbed Jesus in the streets? Remember Zacchaeus, the tax collector that looked like Danny DeVito? The crowds were so big that it was impossible for Zacchaeus to see Jesus so he climbed one of the city's luscious fruit trees so he could see Jesus from the air. It was a sycamore fig tree. Zacchaeus was attempting to get the ancient version of drone footage of Jesus from the sky. The crowds were so large that Zacchaeus couldn't see Jesus by simply standing on some steps or getting on a roof. He needed to climb a tree to see Jesus in the crowds. That is a lot of people!

There is an additional factor that led to Jesus' intense popularity at this time. Earlier I showed you a map with the location of Jerusalem and Jericho. That map also showed a small town just outside of Jerusalem called Bethany. That is where Jesus stayed at the house of Mary and Martha. Prior to Jesus coming into Jericho



for Passover, Mary and Martha's brother, named Lazarus, took sick. They lived in Bethany. Lazarus died. Jesus traveled to Bethany and resurrected Lazarus from the dead. We read about that in the Gospel of John. After Jerusalem, the closest town to Bethany was Jericho, maybe only 12 mile away. Do you think word of

Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead was being talked about in Jericho? I guarantee you it was! Are you getting an idea how popular Jesus was at this moment? Everyone wanted to see the Jesus that raised Lazarus from the dead. The crowds were so large that Zacchaeus need to climb a tree to see Jesus. Everybody was pressing into Jesus. Everybody was desperate to be with Jesus. They wanted to touch Jesus. It is a mob.

Our story focuses on one insignificant person on the outskirts of that huge crowd. His name was Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus. He was blind so he sat by the edge of the road. If you are going to be a successful beggar, that is the best place to go. If you don't go where you can find people, you won't be able to get money from people.

Incidentally, Matthew 20 tells us there were actually two blind beggars, while Mark and Luke only tell us about one of them. Is this an error? Were there one or two blind beggars Jesus healed at this time? This isn't an error. If there were two blind beggars healed that day, it is OK for a gospel writer to choose to tell the story of only one of them. That doesn't mean there weren't two of them.

We saw the same thing happen with the Gadarene demoniac earlier in this Gospel. Even though other Gospels tell us there were two demon-possessed men that came out of the tombs that day and that Jesus cast demons out of both of them, most of the Gospels only talk about one of them. Why do most Gospels focus on the story of only one of them instead of both of them? The one most Gospel accounts focus on is the famous one. The story of the Gadarene demoniac in Mark — which only tells the story of one of the demon-possessed

men — closes by telling us the formerly demon-possessed man went and took the gospel to the Decapolis, that is the entire eastern shore on the Sea of Galilee. He was transformed from a demon-possessed maniac to a massive evangelist. He became the famous one in church history. That is why most Gospels only focus on his story instead of the stories of both demon-possessed men that had demons cast out of them on that day.

I think we have the same thing happening here. In the Gospel of Mark, it is unusual for Mark to give us a specific name of a minor character. It is especially unusual for Mark to give the specific name of a minor character's father. Why would he do that? My guess is that Bartimaeus and his father became well known in the early church so people recognized their specific names. I think Mark was telling the story of the healing and conversion of a man who became a famous Christian in the early church. That is why Mark focused in on Bartimaeus' one story and not the stories of both blind men that were healed. In addition, I think that is why Mark gave us the details of his name.

How did Bartimaeus end up blind? We don't know. He may have been born blind, like the man in John 9. He may have become blind through an infection. Blindness was common in the ancient world. The dust in that climate caused many eye infections. Without doctors, that led to many people becoming blind. As a blind man, it didn't matter what your background was. When you became blind, you were reduced to begging. The only way to survive was to live off the generosity of others.

In addition, the Jewish understanding of the day was that blindness was a way God punished you for your sin. That is not true, but that is what many believed in the ancient world. So Bartimaeus lived with a constant sense of his sin because he would have believed that his blindness was the result of his sin. We see the commonly held belief in the day that blindness was a result of sin in the Gospel of John when talking about a different blind man.

And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” John 9:2 (ESV)

Let’s see how Bartimaeus responded when he heard Jesus was coming down the road.

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!” Mark 10:47 (ESV)

In the parallel account given in Luke 18:36, it tells us that Bartimaeus heard the crowd going by. He said to someone in the crowds, “What’s happening?” That person responded by saying, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” The person in the crowd that answered Bartimaeus referred to Jesus as just another man from Nazareth, nothing special. Bartimaeus had a very different perception of Jesus than the people around him. As soon as he heard Jesus of Nazareth was passing by him, he began to cry out at the top of his voice, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

This is interesting. It says he cried out. Our English translation of the Greek word for cry out misses the emphasis in the original language. It means Bartimaeus literally began to scream for Jesus at the top of his lungs. It is a very strong word. It is used in Mark 5 to describe the screaming of insane epileptics or demon-possessed people. It is used in Revelation 12 to describe the screams of

a woman giving birth. Bartimaeus was screaming out for Jesus at the top of his lungs. He was in a panic. He was desperate for Jesus like a drowning man is desperate for a rope. He wanted to do everything he could in his power to be heard by Jesus above the noise and chaos of that huge crowd.

This was also not a generic cry for help. He called Jesus the Son of David. This is the first time that title is used in Mark. It is a significant title. We don't know how Bartimaeus came to this conclusion but he came to the right conclusion. He saw Jesus as the promised king to come in the line of David. This means he was confessing Jesus as the Messiah! The last major person to do this was Peter, back in Mark 8. Even then, Peter did not see Jesus clearly. Peter's idea of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of David, was that Jesus would be a political leader. Bartimaeus was a man that could not see physically but he could see spiritually, and he had razor sharp vision spiritually that was clearer than even the disciples. He saw Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of David, who could give him the help and mercy he desperately needed.

According to 2 Samuel 7, the Messiah was to be the heir of David's throne. He was to be a descendant of David and known as the Son of David. The Son of David was to bring to fulfillment all the promises given to David that were never fulfilled by David or his descendants. Being the Son of David was critically important to identify Christ as the Messiah. That is why the Gospel of Matthew begins with a genealogy of Jesus that shows Jesus was the Son of David on his adoptive father's side. This is why the Gospel of Luke also begins with a

genealogy that shows Jesus was the Son of David on his mother's side.

Remember what the angel said to Mary about Jesus before he was born:

And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David... Luke 1:31–32 (ESV)

Bartimaeus recognized Jesus as the Son of David, the Messiah.

What did Bartimaeus want from Jesus as the Messiah? He wanted mercy!

He knew Jesus was the Messiah, and he knew he needed mercy from him.

Incidentally, I think there is great irony here. The crowd that could see Jesus physically was blind to the true identity of Jesus spiritually. The guy that was blind physically had razor sharp spiritual vision on the true identity of Jesus spiritually.

Incidentally, the crowd showed no sympathy for Bartimaeus.

And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Mark 10:48 (ESV)

The word rebuke is a very strong word. This was not just a gentle shushing like Bartimaeus was noisy in a library. This was people yelling at Bartimaeus to be quiet. This was an entire crowd of people agitated with him.

In my early days of being a youth pastor, at the last minute on a Sunday afternoon a family in our church invited me to a neighboring town to watch some professional golf. An up-and-coming star named Tiger Woods was playing on the course. We arrived in the afternoon and the golf had already begun so we caught up with the golfers mid-way through the course. When we arrived, everyone was watching Tiger Woods as he was putting on the green. Of course, the entire crowd was dead silent. I didn't know a thing about golf. My cell phone rang and I

answered it and began talking. The entire crowd turned to look at me and gave me the look of death. I quickly hung up the call.

That is the way the crowd was treating Bartimaeus. Everyone was irritated with him. “Bartimaeus, you are a nobody. Jesus is a somebody. He doesn’t have time for you. Stop making a scene and be quiet.”

The problem is the more people tried to quiet Bartimaeus, the louder and more desperate he became as he yelled for Jesus. He knew his only hope for mercy was from Jesus. It didn’t matter to him how much people despised him or how much they yelled at him for making a scene, he knew his only hope for mercy from God and healing from his blindness was found in Jesus. He was willing to fight for it.

Now we move from Bartimaeus, who was physically blind but had amazingly clear spiritual vision that could see Jesus’ true identity as the Messiah, to Jesus the merciful savior.

Jesus is our merciful savior.

And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.” Mark 10:49 (ESV)

If we have seen anything from Jesus as we study this Gospel, we have seen Jesus has incredible compassion toward people who call out to him for mercy. In that massive crowd — that was filled with chaos and everyone demanding Jesus’ attention — Jesus heard the cry of Bartimaeus. Jesus stopped everything and everyone and called Bartimaeus to himself. In Luke 18:40, in the parallel account, it says Jesus commanded that Bartimaeus be brought over. He

stopped everything so he could give attention to the man that everyone despised. Jesus hears and responds to the cries of those who come to him for mercy.

Notice the change in the crowd after this. One minute they were shaming Bartimaeus and telling him to be quiet and stop bothering Jesus. The next minute they were encouraging him to take heart and get up because Jesus was calling his name. This was a fickle crowd. The crowd reacted the same way in the final week of Jesus' life. When Jesus came into Jerusalem, they hailed him as king. At the end of the week, they wanted him dead on the cross. This was a preview of the fickle crowd.

And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Mark 10:50 (ESV)

Mark does not simply say that Bartimaeus came to Jesus. He emphasized how he came to Jesus. He sprang up. He leapt to his feet. There was no messing around. There was no delay. He couldn't get to his feet fast enough and get to Jesus fast enough. Second, he threw off his cloak. The fact that Bartimaeus left his cloak behind is significant. As a blind man, that cloak was essential to his life. It kept him warm by night. It helped him beg by day. He put it in front of him for people to throw money on when he begged, like a street corner musician that kept his guitar case open for people to give him money. Bartimaeus' cloak was an essential part of his old life, but he left it behind when he came to Jesus looking for healing, hope, and new life.

Mark shows us that Bartimaeus fits the pattern of what a true disciple of Jesus looks like. True disciples of Jesus are willing to leave their old lives behind when they follow him. We saw this with the disciples. Many of them had to leave their boats and fishing businesses behind to follow Jesus. In a similar way,

Bartimaeus was willing to leave behind what little he had from his old life when he followed Jesus, even if it was little more than his cloak.

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." Mark 10:51 (ESV)

This is the connection with the previous story. What James and John wanted Jesus to do for them in the previous story was for Jesus to set them at his left and his right hand in his kingdom. They wanted to be in the top positions of power so they could be seen, served, and honored. Jesus never granted that request.

Here we have a different attitude. Unlike James and John, Bartimaeus simply asked for mercy to see.

Matthew's account tells us that at this time Jesus reached over and touched Bartimaeus' eyes. Luke's account tells us Jesus spoke the words, "Receive your sight." With just a gentle touch and a soft word, Jesus instantly healed him and he could see. Jesus granted that request.

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. Mark 10:52 (ESV)

Notice what happens. Jesus said Bartimaeus' faith made him well. I want to propose to you here that we have something more than just a physical healing taking place. We have somebody becoming a Christian before the cross. Think this through. Was there any doubt in Bartimaeus' mind that he was a sinner and there was nothing he could do to save himself? Of course not. He viewed his blindness as judgment from God for his sin. He was reduced to being a beggar. There was nothing he could do to help himself. He knew he was a sinner in need

of mercy. Was there any doubt in Bartimaeus' mind that Jesus was the only one that could provide the mercy he needed? There was absolutely no doubt in his mind. That is why he called Jesus the Son of David, the Messiah. That is why he desperately called out to Jesus for the mercy and healing he knew he needed that he could not do anything about himself. That is why he refused to keep quiet when he heard Jesus was passing by him. Bartimaeus was a Christian before the cross. He saw himself as a sinner that could not do anything to help himself. He knew he needed mercy from God and the only way to find that mercy was from Jesus! That is what it means to be a Christian.

The first half of this Gospel ends with Bartimaeus not just receiving his sight as mercy from Jesus but he became a Christian before the cross.

Let me give you some additional evidence that this is true. When Jesus said, "Go, your faith has made you well." The word Jesus used for well is a special word. It is the word *sozo*. It is the word where we get the word saved from. There is a different Greek word that speaks strictly of physical healing. Jesus didn't use that word. *Sozo* speaks of healing much more comprehensively. It speaks of physical and relational healing. Jesus literally said to him, "Your faith has saved you." As we close out the first half of this Gospel, we have a blind man, who in spite of his blindness, could see the most important thing in the world that almost everyone else in the crowd didn't see. He could see he was a sinner without hope in this world. He could see the only hope he had in this world was for mercy from Jesus, and he was desperate to find it. Jesus gave him the

physical healing he desired and the relational healing with God he so desperately needed.

Another proof that this is more than just a physical healing is the way the story ends. It says, “Bartimaeus followed him on the way.” The word “way” means journey. Bartimaeus left everything from his old life behind, and he followed Jesus and the rest of the disciples from this point forward.

This means Bartimaeus was following Jesus during the Triumphal Entry, which we will study next week. It means Bartimaeus was there when Jesus was crucified. It means Bartimaeus was there after Jesus rose from the dead. It is very likely Bartimaeus was one of the original 120 in the church that met in the upper room. It means Bartimaeus was likely there on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came. The reason Mark gave his name in this story is likely because those in the early church knew his name and knew his story. Bartimaeus was still alive and part of the early church when this Gospel was written! That is why Mark mentioned him by name and closed the first half of his Gospel with Bartimaeus’ healing and conversion story.

Today, if Jesus was to ask you, “What do you want me to do for you?” What would you say? Would you be like James and John and ask Jesus to make your life more comfortable, make you prettier, stronger, and more popular? Would you see yourself like Bartimaeus, as a sinner without hope and desperate for mercy from God that can only be found from Jesus? It is not likely that Jesus will answer your requests to be made richer, more powerful, and famous. However, I can tell you that if you see yourself as a sinner desperately in need of mercy from

God and you call out to Jesus to find it, Jesus will stop everything to give you the mercy you need, especially when it comes to the problem of your sin, because that is why he came.

What does this teach us about Jesus?

Those desperate for mercy from Jesus will find it. Remember the crowd around Jesus at this point. Everyone was asking for Jesus' attention. They were interested in Jesus, but only Bartimaeus was desperate for mercy from Jesus. It doesn't matter how small you are in this world or how insignificant you may be. Jesus came to give mercy to those who are desperately call out to him to find it. That was true 2,000 years ago, and it is still true today for you and me. It is especially true when we see ourselves as sinners, desperately in need of mercy and healing from God for our sin through Jesus. We know we will always find the mercy we need the moment we ask for it.

The weaknesses we despise are the very things God uses to draw us to himself. Did you ever think of Bartimaeus' blindness as a gift? As we just noted, others in the crowd were interested in Jesus, but Bartimaeus was desperate for mercy from Jesus. What brought him to the point that he was desperate for mercy from Jesus rather than just interested in learning about Jesus? It was his blindness. His blindness brought him to the end of himself and left him broken and desperate for mercy. His blindness is what God used to help him call out to Jesus for mercy with all of his heart. Did you ever think that God works the same way in our lives? Rather than just leave us interested in Jesus, God has allowed weaknesses into our lives. The things we despise about ourselves are the very things God uses to break us down. They are the things that help us see our sin.

They help us see our hopelessness. They are the things that leave us calling out to God for mercy from Jesus that we so desperately need. Our weaknesses are gifts from God that move us from just being interested in Jesus to desperate for mercy from Jesus, which is the very thing all of us need.

We are going to celebrate the Lord's Supper as we close. As the elements are passed, I ask that you would take the time to thank God for the weaknesses in your life. Thank him for the weaknesses being used by his sovereign hand to move us from being interested in Jesus to desperate for mercy from Jesus, just like Bartimaeus was on that day. When we seek mercy from God through Jesus, we can know for sure we will find it through him. That is why Jesus came.



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