

Mark 10:32–52

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[0:00] And we can turn to Mark chapter 10, verse 32 through 52. Church family, hear God's word. And they were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them.

And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles.

And they will mock him and spit on him and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise. And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask.

And he said to them, What do you want me to do for you? And they said to him, Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left hand, in glory.

And Jesus said to them, You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?

[1:20] And they said to him, We are able. And Jesus said to them, The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized.

But to sit at my right hand or at my left hand is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.

And Jesus called them to him and said to them, You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.

For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many. And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples in a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.

[2:27] 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 the 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. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Envision with me a young mother over the sink, water running, applying the water to the eye of a child that's been hit, covering the other one and exclaiming, Can you see now?

[3:43] Picture with me the ophthalmologist standing over the bedside of a patient post-surgery, having descaled the lenses that had taken light captive and left one only in clouds and darkness.

And as the bandages are removed, can you see now? Now, visualize with me walking into a Walgreens and seeing what will be one among many of us one day, looking for a pair of reading lenses with strength moving from 1.0 to 1.5 to perhaps 2.5, eventually a magnifying glass and pausing until letters come into focus, with a daughter then coming to the age of one and saying, Can you see now?

Three illustrations, three times over, depicting our struggle to see. Yeah, that's my title, our struggle to see.

In the physical realm, the fight for sight is just a fact of life. It's even more so in the spiritual realm.

Did you notice the header of the text? At least in the one that I'm reading from, the editors have wanted me to know that Jesus now foretells his death a third time.

[5:30] Can you see now? Now? Now? See, it's the third time, and it goes all the way back, if you turn with me, to chapter 8.

This movement in Mark's gospel where he's providing lessons along the way for those who are following him.

In Mark chapter 8, Jesus, prior to seeing a blind man at Bethsaida, had said to his disciples in verse 17, Do you not yet perceive or understand?

Are your hearts hardened? Here it is. Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And verse 21, Do you not yet understand?

Three times now. This struggle to see. Notice the inclusio of this entire unit that began along the road.

[6:41] In chapter 8, right after that, we find him healing a blind man at Bethsaida, and he does it in stages, not because he couldn't heal all at once, but because his followers, at this point, only had partial understanding of who he was and what he came to do.

They couldn't see it all. And the inclusio in our own reading of this morning, good old blind Bartimaeus, these blind men that now see, holding like bookends on the shelf, the struggle of his followers to see spiritual truth.

Mark is as clear-eyed on this main point as could be. Our struggle to see, even for those of us who have been following him along the way.

So what does it take? What does it take to gain spiritual sight? Here it is. Following Jesus demands eyes to see how he accomplishes our salvation and to what end he empowers our service.

Oh, I hope you're paying attention to the S's. They're pretty simple. Sight, like Bartimaeus working backwards. Service, like James and John and the lesson Jesus taught.

[8:19] Salvation, third time now on the road, indicating the sufferings he will meet in Jerusalem. I'm convinced of one thing today.

The church around the world, in our city, yes, yes, dare I say it, in this room, is filled with people following him along the way, who yet, even after decades, decades, are yet struggling to see.

My hope is that you would have eyes to see your salvation, hearts to comprehend the nature of your service, feet that are ready, made willing to stand and rise and run and following him along the way.

So what does it take? How does he, that is Jesus, accomplish our salvation, something which we struggle to see? 32 to 34, and they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them.

And they were amazed. And those who followed were afraid. And taking the 12 again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, see, see, see, we're going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him over to the Gentiles, and they will mock him, and spit on him, and flog him, and kill him, and after three days, he will rise.

[10:04] This is what it takes to accomplish our salvation, is sufferings, your salvation. Can you see it?

It's the third time now. You know, some of these parents with young ones are practicing something that Mark seems to apply here, but I rarely commend for those of you who are raising little ones. the little one is disobeying or not comprehending what you want, and so the parent says what?

One, two, three, assuming that by the third time you've really got to obey.

Now, parenting, you certainly want your child to obey first time, because believe me, I've been there, they'll sit on you until you go for three, or four, or five, or let them get away with six.

Jesus is now saying, I've told you once, I've told you twice, I've told you three times, my sufferings are required to accomplish your salvation.

[11:18] It's interesting. Can't be saved without Jesus, death and resurrection. There's no salvation outside of his decided, walk to Jerusalem, to lay down his life, and to pick it back up again.

The completeness of this paragraph is astounding to me. If you've missed it, he ran it through the first time in chapter 8, verse 32, and following.

The second time in chapter 9, verse 31, and following. And now here it is again. But here, by the time you scroll down the scriptures to verse 45, there's an additional phrase that makes his death

more complete than ever.

What does it take to accomplish your salvation? He's going to say at the end of verse 45 that he has come to give his life as a ransom for many.

This is an interesting word. What is meant by ransom? A ransom had to be paid for your salvation, evidently. A ransom conveys the idea of a redemption, of buying back someone or something that had been taken captive.

[12:52] In the first century, it was commonly used in the arena of manumission where somebody would pay a purchase price to release a slave and to provide for them their freedom.

A ransom then. It's the price for freedom. Now, if Jesus accomplishes your salvation and it demands a ransom, the question is, throughout all of church history, who is the ransom paid to? Now, Origen of the second century or so began to think and write extensively that the ransom was paid to Satan who held all sinners captive.

It became known, really, as a view of how you, how Jesus made atonement for your sin. the ransom view.

In other words, the ransom Jesus paid was to Satan. However, there are shortcomings in this view, especially if taken all on its own, and history has proven other thinkers to emerge and enter into the conversation.

[14:05] I'm thinking of the 11th century and one named Anselm who was a bit dissatisfied with Origen, and he offers a view that begins to emphasize payment, not to Satan who holds you captive, but to God to whom you are indebted.

This is a satisfaction payment. After all, Satan has no legitimate claim over you, and nobody wants to pay a ransom to one who doesn't actually have ownership, and so the view there begins to think that the payment goes to God.

As one writer has put it, in order for your salvation, Jesus' service is offered to God to release us from our indebtedness to God.

Close quote. And that's confirmed, isn't it, in the book of Hebrews where it indicates that Jesus went into the heavenlies and purchased your salvation.

It's consistent with Daniel 7 where the Son of Man approaches, goes on the clouds, to the Ancient of Days, and is given a kingdom.

[15:19] And this is what it was required. The just punishment for sin under which we are all captive was death.

Not just physical death, spiritual death, separation from God. and we have no obedience in and of ourselves to rectify the solution.

So Jesus, Son of God, plunges from the threshold of heaven and in perfect obedience, all along the way, offers himself up as payment.

There's no way home without his payment before God. Can you imagine what it must have been like after the death of Christ and his ascension?

And now he goes on the clouds to the Ancient of Days and stands before God and says, full payment made.

[16:25] For you know that I have not died for my own sins. I have died to satisfy your claim upon their indebtedness to you.

And they know me and they know my name, my name, and therefore from our perspective, your name is exalted above all. This is what it takes to have salvation.

This is how it was accomplished. Prisoners released. Now, in the ancient world, there was something called a debtor's prison, prison, which was the most hopeless of places to ever be in. You had to fail to pay your debts for a while. Your indebtedness grew. Finally, the one who had claim over your loans could put you in prison until a friend or a family member would actually not just bail you out until trial came, but pay off the debt completely in his name or her name.

Jesus is your friend. family member. Jesus is the one who comes before the Father, looks back upon you behind the bars, and says, that one who calls upon my name.

[17:48] Open the gates and release him. Set her free. I am her brother, his brother. We are family, and I now bring them into your presence through the righteousness of my own obedience.

No wonder then, to you, oh Lord, we worship, we bow down, we say, you are my God.

And yet, churches are filled. Let's get it personal. There are moments in our life where you and I fail to comprehend. We struggle to see the cost of our salvation.

We have no wonder. We have no worship. We're like, we're like followers who are with him but never yet fully understanding him.

We have minds that do not perceive him. We have hearts that are not open to him. We have hands that are closed off from him. How amazing though is his love.

[19:10] And how tragic that we have to sing songs like, my eyes were dry, my faith was old, my prayers are cold.

O Lord, I know how I ought to be alive to you. Do it again, Lord. Do it again.

Having been freed from God's prison, given our sin, may we fall at his feet for the accomplishment of our salvation.

Let me ask you, can you see now? Following Jesus demands eyes to see how he accomplishes your salvation, your sin upon him, his suffering sufficient for the payment owed to God, your faith transferred to his obedience and righteousness.

What an amazing thing. But then, what will it mean for your service? Ah, that's the second S, there's the movement of the text, the salvation that comes through his suffering, the service to which we are called.

[20:42] If your freedom stems from the Son of Man suffering on the cross, and he is God's great Savior from eternity past, the eternal Son who willingly came to accomplish it, then what must it be like to be put into his service?

And to what end does he empower our service? Now, James and John thought they had a notion of this. I mean, you can see it there.

Now we're moving into verse 35 and following. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you. Wow, what a statement.

These are some bold boys. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. And Jesus says, well, what do you want me to do for you?

And they said, grant us to sit one at your right hand and one at your left in your glory. Jesus said to them, you don't know what you're asking. I think he had a slight smile.

[21:52] Are you able to drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized? Baptism there means taking the cup of wrath, being baptized with death as payment.

And they said to him, we're able. I love these men. They're so much like you. That was supposed to be laughed at.

Unless you couldn't see. Jesus said, the cup I drink you will drink. The baptism with which I'm baptized you will be baptized.

In other words, yeah, you're going to get there. You're following me along the way. You're going to get greater understanding in regard to what all that meant one day. But to sit at my right hand or my left hand is not mine to grant, but it is prepared for those for whom it has been prepared.

See, this is what they began to think. And by it, you begin to see their own struggle to see. You remember when Jesus first said, I'm going to die, Peter says, that's not the way forward.

[22:58] You see, Peter struggled to see. You remember the second time he said he was going to die, all the disciples began arguing about who's the greatest. You see, they couldn't yet see the implications for their service given his salvation.

And now here, joining Peter is James and John, the big three, indicating that they're still struggling to see. Because as he is going to suffer and secure their salvation, they're wondering where they're going to sit in the new economy.

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I like the way it sounds. Let me say it again. Human nature is blinded by the notion of elevation by association.

In education, if X person is your advisor, then you must be important. If you're hunting for a job, if you have her as one of your references, then you're going to draft in upon their wings.

[24:10] If you are a person that, wow, is in the room where it happens, then you must be destined for a seat at the table. Human nature is blinded by the thought that elevation comes with association.

and notice the ten are just like the two. Verse 41, and when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.

I love that. How dare you guys go up there and ask that question? You guys are out of your mind. you should be like us.

Of course, running through the back of their mind, that was a pretty good idea. I wonder why I didn't come up with it. Now they've put themselves in front of me. How do I put myself in front of them? Well, by sarcastically putting them down. See, all of a sudden, now the head-butting among the twelve is in play like animals on the mountain slopes with horns hoping and somehow to bang one another hard enough so that my own ascendancy rises amidst the herd.

[25 : 26] That's the two. That's the ten. That's us. That's all of us. We tend to think that if we've been saved by Jesus, son of God, then my service must be elevated by association.

Now, here's where he comes in. Jesus shows us the end for which he empowers us. Look at verse 42 to 44. Jesus called them to him.

He said, you know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their great ones exercise authority over them, but it shall not be so among you.

But whoever would be great among you must be your servant. Whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the son of man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

Again, according to Jesus, this is not success is in your service by association. No, this is something entirely different, that your participation in his death will mean an affiliation with his sufferings.

[26 : 44] You're going down, not up. And can you see? Can you see? This is what it is to be a Christian. This is what it is to follow him along the way.

Notice this incredible line, for even the son of man came not to be served, but to serve. A dear friend of mine just two days ago, who spent a lifetime looking at this Bible, when I read this to him, having told him what I was going to be preaching on, he simply shook his head and said something to the effect, this is perhaps the most extraordinary statement in all the gospel.

You will never exhaust the depths of that. Well, he's right, but it's worth trying in an effort to help you see the foolishness is worth the effort.

The eternal son of God is the everlasting servant of all. Plummet the depths of that. The one who dwelt eternally in the presence of God in heaven ascended not only to earth, but took the form of a servant, even unto death, that he might free you from the pains of hell.

The owner of the house of the universe is the household servant who serves all. Can you see?

[28 : 40] He empowers you for that kind of service. These are the terms of discipleship. take up your cross and follow me, he said the first time round.

Become like a child and enter in, he said the second time round. Trade first for being last. Instead of the greatest, become the least.

This is, in one sense, then, the conduct of an officer that is worthy of commendation. Leaders eat last.

Leaders secure the welfare of the whole, the equipment that's needed, the space that's required, the bedding for comfort, the prayers for help, all, before considering their own.

That's what he did, that's what we do, and that's how you know if you see or not. Think of it.

[30 : 01] Following Jesus demands that you have eyes to see the ends for which he empowers your service, not merely eyes to see the salvation that he accomplishes for us.

And so now, I'm closing, because you're asking, how can I know, or you should be, how can I know whether or not I can see? Well, that's where the visual aid has come to enlighten us through this Bartimaeus along the road.

Can you put your eyes as we close on verse 46 to 52? If you want to know, if you have sight, then just follow his lead.

First, seeing Jesus of Nazareth, he had eyes enough to call him son of David. Bartimaeus, blind beggar, son of Timaeus, son of Timaeus, bar Timaeus, son of Timaeus, was looking, sitting by the road, and when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, this is fascinating, Jesus, son of David.

I don't want to make more of it than there, but seeing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, or hearing, he says, oh, Jesus, son of David. He sees something here without eyes.

[31 : 36] He's got spiritual sight to understand that David of old was promised that through his lineage would be one who was given the throne and the kingdom forever.

The son of David would be one who ruled. This is an extraordinary thing. So when he's calling, that's what you've got to begin to think about.

If you want to know if you see him rightly, he's Jesus of Nazareth, but he's more. He's son of David, he's son of man, he's son of God, he's Christ, he's the Messiah, he's the Savior, he's the King of Kings, he's the Lord of Lords, he's all of it.

And all of a sudden the blind man is in affirmation doing this. Secondly, knowing his own condition, that is blind Bartimaeus, notice how he visualizes what Jesus can do for him.

He doesn't just call him son of David, but he goes on and says, have mercy on me. And now they're trying to get him to be quiet, and he says it again, son of David, have mercy on me.

[32 : 49] This is how you know whether you're seen. Have you ever come to the awakened moment moment that you can't see, and you see that Jesus can accomplish your salvation, and now all you can do is say, hey, have mercy on me.

Get me out of this, please. Jesus hears him. Bring him over here.

They go, wow, you better take heart, man. He's calling you. And notice what the text says. I mean, I'm fascinated by it because he can't see. It says in verse 50, and throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and ran, in a sense, to Jesus.

He's on his feet. He's got eyes that can see salvation. He's got a heart that can comprehend his own need. He's got now feet that are arising and willing to run to the one he knows who can help. Have you ever done that? Have you ever cried out to Jesus for mercy? Follow his lead, and you will be one who sees. Finally, after being given his sight, notice the wonderful way Mark closes in verse 52.

[34 : 24] 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.

Oh, I love the way the coin turns over there. go your way. He followed him on the way. Jesus says, take up your cross and follow me.

Peter later says, we've left all and followed you. Jesus says, go your way. And he follows him along the way.

Can you see? Can you see? Old blind Bartimaeus beat James and John into the kingdom.

Old blind Bartimaeus beat Peter into the kingdom. You can beat many who have been following him but struggling to see into the kingdom by simply declaring Jesus to be the son of God who accomplishes your salvation with an understanding that my service is completely in him who's willing to give all and that I come to him in faith and then when I rise up I just kind of follow him along his way into Jerusalem.

[35 : 53] may you have eyes to see how you are saved hearts to comprehend how you must serve feet that are willing to rise and follow him for the rest of your days.

Our heavenly father we must acknowledge our Lord that the strength to heal our spiritual eyesight rests not within us.

There is no medicine we can take spiritually to overcome our blindness and so we just call upon you to have mercy on many this morning.

May there be some some here this morning who are never the same because they've heard this word no matter how long they've been following you.

May we worship your name for the salvation Jesus accomplished. May we serve in your name in the most humblest of ways.

[37 : 06] May we rise on our feet and give praise to you as we follow you in your ways. In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Thank you.