

# Jesus & Mercy

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[ 0 : 00 ] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself? The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Let's just bow our heads in prayer, please. Father, we ask that you would continue to have mercy on us and gently but deeply pour out the Holy Spirit upon each of one of us who are here.

Pour out the Holy Spirit upon those who are entering into worship online, either live or even downstream, Lord, because time, that's a, you live outside of time. And so we ask, Lord, that the Holy Spirit would fall with gentle but deep and penetrating power upon each one of us.

Father, help us to be able to be in your presence, to know that we are in your presence, and help us, Lord, to receive the grace and mercy you desire to give us this morning, and help us to respond in a worthy way. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior.

[ 2 : 00 ] Amen. Please be seated. Amen. So a couple of weeks ago, I was having a conversation in a coffee shop. For those of you, that's a bit of a surprise that I ever talk to somebody in a coffee shop. I was having a conversation in a coffee shop a couple of weeks ago, and something happened that sort of, I guess it's happened lots of times over the years. And it sort of, we're talking, and this was like a serious talk about the Christian faith and about this person's faith, you know, her faith and the Christian faith. And I realized when we were about half of the way through it, that one of the problems was that we were using words differently. And so we started, I started to try to point this out. And basically what it came down to was that this person basically said that I had to accept her definitions.

Like I had to accept how she understood words, and that was the only way we were going to have a conversation. And I pointed out to her, well, you're using words in a very odd way, and you're using words that fit with your worldview. If I accept your words, then I'm accepting your, like I've accepted your position. So there needs to be some sort of neutral way that we can talk, you know, about this and the truth. And anyway, we went round and round. And actually, I've spent the last couple of weeks thinking about the conversation, trying to figure out how to move it forward. Now, we left as friends, and, you know, we've seen each other, you know, since. But it really made me think of something that I read in the paper a couple of years ago. And that is, when people no longer believe in truth, the only way to settle differences is with your fists. When people no longer believe in truth, the only way to settle differences is with your fists. And that's obviously said very starkly.

But, you know, it's really very true, a funny thing to say, isn't it, in our culture, that increasingly it doesn't seem as if there's this, like this way that two minds or two groups can meet and have a discussion about what's true.

I mean, good grief. Good grief. What do you do with people who are responsible for education when they say that two plus two equals four is a patriarchal imposition to oppress people?

Like, how do you have a conversation with somebody like that? Like, when you hear that, all that's left are fists. Now, the Bible text today, it's going to touch on truth, obviously. And in fact, the truth is very important to the text.

[ 4 : 57 ] But it's also talking about something else that in our culture, even amongst Christians, is both misunderstood and not wanted at all. But it's something else which is really needed if we're going to have peace in our own lives, peace in our families, peace in our neighborhoods, and peace in our world.

So it's something that Canadians don't understand and they don't want. But it's also something on top of truth or beside truth or with truth that's needed if we're to have peace with ourselves, peace in our families, in our neighborhoods, with our friends, in our country, and ultimately, of course, peace with God.

So let's look at it. And so we're looking at, if you're using this, it's page 66. And if you have your own Bibles, it's Mark chapter 10, verse 46, the story that I read before.

But we're going to begin the verse before. Because, of course, the book is written as a book, right? It just goes from word to word, sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph, all the way through. But those of you who were here last week, you might remember that I said that this actually is a really...

I mean, all the verses are important. But if you look at... Well, look at verse 45. It begins like this. It's for... Now, the word for in this case, I'm not being just a grammar nitpicky guy.

[ 6 : 16 ] It's a purpose verse. It's the purpose for. Like, what... The purpose, for even the Son of Man, Jesus is referring to himself, came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

And so, as I tried to show last week in the sermon, this is a very important verse. Jesus is... This is one of the two primary times. There's another one or two. But there's one of the primary times in the gospel where Jesus tells you what the purpose of his life is.

Like, what the whole purpose of the gospel is. Like, you don't have to try to figure it out yourself. You know, it's not like you have to sort of take animal entrails and try to figure out what the omens and the signs are.

Or here, you know, record five of your dreams and then try to figure out what on earth is going on in your psyche or your, you know, whatever. Jesus tells us, okay, you're trying to understand everything in the gospel.

I'm going to Jerusalem to die. Here's what you need to understand. The Son of Man. I am the Son of Man, which is both on one hand means that he's... It's a way of saying that he's the representative of humanity because he's human.

[ 7 : 23 ] But it's also claiming in the book of Daniel, Daniel, the Jewish people would have had a... Couldn't have quite get their mind around it because it almost sounds like the Son of Man is God, which they couldn't get their minds around.

So this is what he used. When he says the Son of Man, that's what's going on. That he came not to be served, but to serve. And he didn't just come to be...to serve.

He came for something even more important. And it's when this other thing is understood that you understand why you'd serve. To give his life is a ransom for many. And that word ransom, you know, I've been thinking about this a lot this last week.

One of the things which you don't learn in school is that basically up until only a couple of centuries ago, and only in places where Christianity was significant, every culture was a slave culture.

In fact, I think it was only around the year 2010 that there was a country in Africa that actually outlawed slavery. And as we know, of course, the Chinese Communist and the Soviet Union, atheist states, practiced in effect slavery within their own countries.

[ 8 : 34 ] So all cultures and countries up until fairly recently were slave cultures. And one of the things that's so important about this word is its acts in the Christian consciousness of the followers of Jesus as a way that slowly to move human beings who just think that slavery is natural to a state of affairs where even if it's natural, it needs to be stopped.

Because at the heart of this image is an image that when a person in that time period, they're a slave, a *doulos*. And it could be, you know, there wouldn't be a slave because of their race.

That's one of the things which was different about this time than it was, let's say, in the American South. But it could be they were captured more. It could have been because of debt. It could be for some other type of reason.

But you could get out of slavery if the debt, so to speak, was paid, the debt that you were owed. In a sense, if you think about it, it would be as if, you know, I'm the conquering army.

And if you fight against me, well, how dare you fight against me? I just want to take over your country. And in a sense, you sort of view that person fighting against you as now owing you a debt. You fought against this. You killed some of your soldiers.

[ 9 : 47 ] You're now in debt to me. You know, or you're just actually in literal debt because you've overextended yourself. And so, in a sense, all slaveries were understood as a way of belonging to another person and, in a sense, trying to work off your debt, which would be impossible.

But it was possible for—sometimes a slave could work—save up some money and pay themselves and ransom themselves. But fundamentally, it would be that somebody else pays that debt for you and ransoms you.

And in this case here, when Jesus says, for even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many, he's saying that his life and his death upon the cross and his resurrection is a pain of your debt, a debt that delivers you from slavery and transfers you into the freedom of Christ, the crucified king's kingdom.

You can see how, as that becomes sort of more real to people, as the gospel becomes more real, it starts to make slavery unthinkable at a very, very deep level. And so, you have this very powerful statement by Jesus that, as you're looking through the whole gospel of Mark, keep in mind that all of those things are recorded.

And part of the purpose—a very significant reason is that they're trying to communicate this profound mystery that God, the Son of God, would set aside his glory and splendor and divine prerogatives and appearance as God, but he'd still be God, but he'd take into himself our human nature.

[ 11 : 30 ] And he, in a sense, could be then as that human one that could represent all human beings. And that his death is an act of substitution and representation so that the debts that you owe are paid and you now are freed from slavery and enter into the liberty and freedom of Christ's kingdom.

With Christ as your king. That's the image. Now, how does that get into you or how do you get into that? Well, I mean, there's obviously several aspects about that, but Mark wrote his gospel in such a way that almost immediately he helps you to start to understand that.

And that's what happens next. Look what happens. It's very interesting. And it goes like this, verse 46. Now, just sort of pause here.

I've talked a little bit before about how important stories are. Because as you learn, one of the things that we need to do, one of the things for those of you who are parents with young kids, it's really important you tell them Bible stories.

Because it's really important that you tell them Bible stories. In fact, it's also important that you guard the stories they watch. You guard that.

[ 13 : 08 ] Because stories form us at a sort of a deep unconscious and subconscious level. They make certain types of things more believable. They help to form.

We might have this idea in our head and not realize, you know, that as a teenager and adult that there's this idea. And not realize that it maybe came from a story. Just as an aside, and this is just crazy.

I lived in a completely Jewish neighborhood. I was the only Gentile kid. Me and my brother and my sister, only Gentile kids. And when they had the Jewish holidays in the fall, and in those days, you know, there were like hundreds of kids in our school.

They could take all of the non-Jewish kids. And I think there were like 500 kids in the school. And all of the non-Jewish kids added up to about 20 from all grade 1 to 8. And they could put them in one classroom, which is what they did.

And after a couple of years, I said to mom, can I just stay home? And be with all the Jewish kids? And I did. But anyway, so here we have this school with a Jewish teacher. And I remember she read *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to me.

[ 14 : 11 ] And I remember crying in the classroom. This would probably have been like grade 2 or something, or 3. And I remember crying when Aslan died for Eustace.

I had no idea that this was a Christian story. But later on, it struck me, like as an adult. Gosh, that story that brought tears to my eyes of Aslan giving himself to the witch so that Eustace could go free.

That's Christian. I mean, the teacher didn't tell me this was a Christian author or a Christian story. It was just a good story. And many, many kids in the class had tears in their eyes.

You'll go back and you can read it. It's well worth reading. Even though it's just written for kids, it's well worth reading *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. It's a simple but very profound read. But here's the point about this story.

So it's a very, very simple story about Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, begging by the side of the roadside. And he hears in verse 47 that it was Jesus of Nazareth who's going by.

[ 15 : 20 ] Now, the first thing is this. Bartimaeus is you and me. Bartimaeus, he might have been in the vicinity of Jesus doing miracles, but he never saw the miracle.

He couldn't see the miracle because he was blind. All he could do is hear about the miracle. Does that sound familiar? That's you and me. I can't see the miracle.

I can only hear about the miracle. So Bartimaeus, in a very profound sense, is you and me. We can't see the miracle.

All we can do is hear about the miracle. And the second thing is it's very interesting that there's a big crowd. And look how they describe him in verse 47. Jesus of Nazareth.

And some of you who've come to the church a lot, I know it's a terror. I use this analogy over and over and over again. This is not like saying, oh, gosh, you know, that's John of Cambridge.

[ 16 : 22 ] Or that's John of Oxford. Or that's John of Harvard. Or that's Susie of Stanford. Or that's, you know, that's Rebecca of Manhattan.

Or, you know, that's Sally of the city. You know, a graduate of Oxford now lives in the city, that square mile right in the very heart of London.

Or wherever, of Paris. And we get, you know, go, oh, wow, like that's a significant, whoa, that's a significant place. What the crowd has just said, and it's really actually very Canadian, it's like saying that's Jesus of Brudenell.

And Brudenell is a little speck on a map with, I think, just an old abandoned church and a rectory. And you pass through Brudenell from nowhere to nowhere.

And so really, in a sense, they're putting Jesus down. You know, they're saying on one hand, whoa, whoa, he's a great guy. But, you know, it's like if you ever listen to a group of guys talking, and the way that guys often talk is they talk by putting each other down.

[ 17 : 28 ] They make little digs at each other. I don't know if women do it as well, but it's a very guy type of thing, that they make little digs putting each other down. In fact, when I was serving in Eganville, a rural parish, I knew the guys in the church had started to accept me when I was out for my run, and they'd pull up beside me in the pickup truck, roll down their window, and insult me.

I thought, I've arrived. They like me. How do I know they like me? Well, they made fun of me. That's how I know they like me. And in a sense, the same crowd is doing this. Yeah, yeah, he can do miracles and all that, but we have to remember, he's just Jesus of Brudenell.

He's not Jesus of Oxford, not Jesus of Cambridge, not Jesus of Stanford, not Jesus of Madison, just Jesus of Brudenell. Like, he's not really a, you know, he thinks he's a big thing, but he's not really a big thing.

But he's really fun. Let's hang around with him. And then the thing then is that Bartimaeus, who's never actually, like many of the crowd have actually seen Jesus do miracles, but they still think of him as Jesus of Brudenell.

And Bartimaeus has only heard stories about Jesus. He's never seen Jesus, and he's never seen a miracle. But Bartimaeus says, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

[ 18 : 47 ] Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And son of David is a messianic title. He's really saying Messiah, the Messiah of God, have mercy on me.

Now, verse 48 is, once again, like we can relate to it. Like if you, many of our friends, and maybe this was true in your life, maybe you started to tell people that you were actually thinking you would become a Christian, and many of your friends would tell you not to do it.

Or if they did, they'd just say, well, okay, become a Christian, but just remember he's Jesus of Brudenell. Like don't get carried away, like don't get too crazy about it. Just remember he's Jesus of Brudenell.

But in verse 48, many rebuked him, telling him to be silent, but he cried out all the more, son of David, have mercy on me. Now, here's where we're going to have to have a little bit of a longer pause.

And we have to take off, in a sense, our Christian hats for a second. We have to look at this phrase, son of David, have mercy on me. Son of David, have mercy on me. Now, how would most Canadians counsel Bartimaeus to speak to Jesus?

[ 20 : 09 ] And this is an important question to ask because, you see, we're Canadians. Like how would the editorial board of the CBC or the Globe and Mail or the National Post or how would the psychology faculty or other academics at the University of Ottawa, how would counselors advise you?

How would coaches and lifestyle gurus and TikTok and Instagram influencers, how would they counsel you to talk to Jesus?

Well, here is Bartimaeus' blind. Well, many, many, many, many people in our culture would say, don't be an ableist. You're just differently abled.

Don't demean yourself by asking for mercy. If you demean yourself by asking for mercy, you're saying you're being an ableist. You're saying you're not fine the way you are, perfect the way you are.

You are giving up autonomy and authority of your life to some other person. Don't you say that. Many of them would also give the different advice. It's sort of a contradictory advice because it's one of the things which is so contradictory in our culture.

[ 21 : 33 ] In fact, it's one of those things in our culture that it's incoherent, but people aren't aware of the fact that it's incoherent. Because on one hand, you have to accept people the way they are.

But on the other hand, if they don't want to be the way they are because they want to find their true self in some other way, you've got to support that. It's almost as if they've talked to you, you have to take a step back and say, okay, one moment.

Okay, just time out. Let me figure this out. Am I supposed to encourage you because of the way you are or encourage you because you don't want to be the way you are to become some more authentic self? And if you guess wrong, you get yelled at, right?

Or you're accused of doing something terrible. But once again, you see, the advice would be, pardon me, don't be an ableist. Like, don't degrade yourself by asking for mercy.

Or in fact, just don't even, the fact of the matter is, is you just need to, you need to say, Jesus, I'd really like your support to support me as I become the man I've chosen to be. Or it might be even that we just sort of go right to rights.

[ 22 : 40 ] One of the ways, if you go back and you read the three of the, the three of the accounts of the, of this miracle, it looks as if there's a bit of a contradiction, but there's not a, not a contradiction. It's, it's, it's, it's, it's a, there was the ancient city of Jericho, which was by now mainly ruins, but it's still on the main road.

And then just off the road, Herod had built this magnificent palace just outside of Jericho. And, and of course, with the palace and a magnificent palace and administrative center, that would have meant that that's where most of the stalls and market and food place would be at the new place, but it's just off the main road.

And so probably what's happened is Jesus has left the main road with his disciples, gone to this other center, and then he's walking back. And, and so some people might say, you know, Jesus, and so he's walking back to the old original ruined city of Jericho.

And some people might say to Bartimaeus that Jesus went by you that first time and didn't heal you. You have rights. You deserve to be healed. You don't call out for mercy to Jesus.

You stand up and be a man and say, Jesus, how come you didn't heal me? I demand you heal me. I have rights to be healed. Don't say, have mercy.

[ 23 : 51 ] Say, give me the rights that I am owed. And that's how we would counsel Bartimaeus to speak to Jesus. And that is actually how many of us speak to Jesus.

We say, Jesus, didn't I? Good grief, Jesus. You know, I, I, I've given, I've given money to the church.

I've helped in the Sunday school. I, I've, um, you know, I've worked as a door host. I've, I've been a warden. I've been served on council.

And, and don't you think after all those things I've done for you, I, I deserve to have that boyfriend. I deserve to have that marriage. I deserve to have that promotion. I deserve to have health.

And that didn't help me. Jesus, I, I have, we, you see what I mean? It's in our heart. It's in my heart. It's in your heart. But there's another deeper problem here with the text, beyond the fact that most in our culture wouldn't counsel Bartimaeus to say, son of David, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

[ 25 : 01 ] And the second thing is this, is that fundamentally, we don't need mercy. You and I don't need mercy. In fact, actually mercy, well, sort of mercy, it's one of those fundamental things.

We sort of, maybe we sort of do and maybe we don't. See, because the fact of the matter is for most, most of our culture, what most of our culture would mean by mercy isn't actually what the Bible means by mercy.

And we're either both wanting it or repelled by it. I'll give you an example. I'll give you an American political example.

What, in fact, if it turns out that Hunter Biden has been selling influence to the Chinese and his dad knew about it? Now, if you're a Democrat, what are you going to want?

You're going to say, give him some mercy. What does mercy mean? A pass. Give him a pass. On the other hand, what if it turns out that Trump actually did collude with the Russians to fix the election that he won in 2016?

[ 26 : 11 ] Like they prove it. Like prove it. They finally prove it. Well, Democrats are going to want his head and people who like Trump are going to say, give him mercy.

What does mercy mean? A pass. Right? Of course, we're all way better than all those other people.

Not. I was talking to somebody the other day about a couple of months ago and they made some comment about, oh, you don't have to worry about that thing's a church.

Everybody in the church are good people, right? And I felt like, afterwards I kicked myself. I said I should have told them a church isn't where good people meet. A church is a hospital for sinners.

That's what a church is. A hospital for sinners. But you see, here's the problem, right? For basically, the problem is for us, mercy, and it goes along with forgiveness, is basically letting yourself or your friends have a pass.

[ 27 : 16 ] But in the Bible, and that's why on one end we want it, on the other hand we don't want it. And so texts like this, not only will we never counsel them, but it doesn't really make any sense to us.

Because you see, here's the thing, is the Bible understands mercy as being at one with justice and at one with truth. And that's one of the reasons why justice, that's one of the reasons why mercy, when you see real mercy, is deeply beautiful.

It's deeply, deeply beautiful. Now, how do I say that? Well, because you see, that's, remember, it all began with verse 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. And what does that mean? Jesus looked at my life, and he saw George as George really is.

Jesus knows the dreams I have at night that I forget when I wake up. Jesus knows the different masks and fronts which I put up to keep people at a distance. And he knows every mask.

[ 28 : 27 ] He knows every false front. He knows the order I put them in. He knows the way I will use those masks to keep people from seeing who I really am. And he knows every single thing about my life from the moment I was born to even for me, which, unless he comes back, I hope it's not for another 40 years, my moment of death.

And he knows every single thing. He knows everything I've done that I'm ashamed of. He knows every single thing I've done that I've wronged. He knows all those times I could have done something right and I didn't do it.

I closed my eyes. And he knows all those, he knows how I talk about other drivers or how I talk about people. And he knows all that self-talk in my head.

And he sees every single aspect of that completely, truly. And mercy says, he still died for me. And in his mercy, not only does he die for me, you see, what happens is, remember I said in slavery, in a sense what happens is the debt is accrued.

And one of the ways to understand anybody wronging you, in some ways, they owe you a debt. It might be that they've, you know, punched you or something and scarred you physically and you might have to bear that scar for the rest of your life and you feel that you've been wrong.

[ 29 : 46 ] Something's been stolen from you. Maybe it's been something in their language or they've lied about you and you've had some type of a punishment. And in a sense, you've had something taken away from you.

They've taken something from you. And part of life is that you want to try to get that back and, but you can never really always get it back. Even if the person goes to jail and even if it's actually a just, a just sentence.

Not one of those times where judges do something, you go, what? Like what? Even when those things happen, it's still not a full repaying of that debt of something that's been stolen from you.

But what we see here is that Jesus sees everything there is to see about you and he says, remember I said that as son of man, he's the only, he can actually represent you.

And because he can represent you, he can become your substitute. And he says, George, you're sitting on that chair over there and the judgment is read out about you and the list, it just goes on and on and on and on and you cannot possibly pay that debt.

[ 31 : 04 ] All those people you've wronged, the ways you've even wronged, the created order and wronged God. And he, and Jesus says, George, you can get off that chair, the chair of judgment, and I will sit in that chair in your place.

And I will pay the price that you cannot pay. And I will do it, knowing full well all the wrong you've done and knowing that justice is needed to be done.

And I will do it for you. And I will do it out of mercy. The word mercy comes from a Latin word. You know what the Latin word means?

Price paid. Price paid. Those little Christians knew what they were talking about.

And so you see, for Christians, we understand mercy as being something which is at one with justice, you see, if it's unjust, it's not mercy.

[ 32 : 10 ] And if it's not true, it's not mercy. And on this side of the grave, it's very, very hard for us to get those things all straight.

But that's the model by which we understand mercy. I'm sort of jumping ahead a little bit, but I think I need to say it right now. Remember at the beginning, some of you, if I haven't put you to sleep, I told you how that thing, that if you no longer believe in something like truth, where you can meet and discuss things and work things out, all that's left are fists.

And I said, there's something else which is deeply needed for there to be peace within your life and peace in families and peace in our culture. And what is needed is what is no longer found in our culture, which is mercy.

We need mercy. We need people to start showing mercy. And a mercy which is at one with justice and at one with truth that isn't just favoritism and passes for your tribe.



And you see, for a Christian who follows Jesus and the gospel starts to become, one of the things I pray very regularly is that the gospel, you know, this thing that Jesus died as a ransom for me, he didn't come to serve but to be served in, I pray very regularly that this will become more true to my heart.

[ 33 : 42 ] It will become more true to my heart, very center of who I am. And you see, as it becomes more true to who you are, as you understand that this is what Jesus has done for you so that you can now be in his kingdom as a full citizen, you're reconciled to God because of his profound mercy.

And as that shapes you, it has to shape you to start to say, I need to show mercy. And I have a model for how mercy is. And you see, all mercy and all forgiveness is always going to involve you accepting and accepting to pay yourself part of the price of the wrong that was done to you.

And you do it not because your mom forced you, not because people say it didn't matter, not because people say it didn't happen, not because people say they suffered enough, not for any of those reasons because those are lies.

They're untruth and they're unjust. And it's not that you listen to lies. Don't listen to them when they say that it didn't happen. Don't listen to them when they say it didn't matter. It did matter. It did happen.

Don't say they suffered enough. No, they did not suffer enough. Don't listen to any of that. But you can listen to the one who came to give his life as a ransom for many.

[ 35 : 08 ] And you can say, you know, there will never be any peace in my family if I don't forgive, if I, in a sense, don't swallow part of the wrong that was done for me.

and recognize I need to set aside the desire for revenge or the hatred, the slander I desire to do the other person because I want to make them pay.

I want to make them pay. I want to make them pay. And I don't have peace until they've paid. And even if they never repent and even if they never do anything wrong, the Bible is so unbelievably wise that you and I need to learn to show mercy and have forgiveness because to go through your life wanting them to pay, well, you know what, that's like every day you have 10X laxes hoping they get diarrhea.

And it just doesn't work. It just beats you up and bends you out of shape. So you see, we don't think we need mercy and we wouldn't counsel people to be like Bartimaeus and pray for mercy, but mercy is exactly what every single one of us needs.

In fact, if you meet a person who only thinks they need justice and they don't think that there's anything in their life, anything about the way they've treated other people, treated the created order, treated their pets, that there's never been a single thing that they've ever done that they need forgiveness and mercy for, that all they ever need is justice and their rights, well, you know there's something wrong with that person, don't you?

[ 36 : 45 ] You say to yourself, well, they think they're at the number twos they do in the toilet, don't smell like everybody else's, but they do. They're just a self-righteous person who's unfeeling and uncaring about how they treat other people.

So the Bible very wisely tells us in a way that reminds us that what we need is truth, for to have peace and in our culture and in our own lives we need to show mercy and we need to receive mercy from Christ.

Just very quickly wrapping it up, the last little bit is also very important. Verse 49, and Jesus stopped and said, call him. They called the blind man saying to him, take heart, get up, he's calling you.

And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Verse 51, and Jesus said to him, what do you want me to do for you? Now, this question is one of those things that has lots of layers.

And the part of the layers are seen in the next few lines. And the blind man said to him, Rabbi, let me recover my sight. And there's no way in English to communicate this, but there's two different words in the original language for Rabbi.

[ 38 : 02 ] Rabbi. And most of the time the word that's translated is the word for teacher. But there's another rarer word that usually in Greek literature when it's used is only used of God.

It's only used of God. That God is teacher. And that's what Bartimaeus says to Jesus, the son of David.

He says, God who teaches. Messiah, let me recover my sight. Verse 52, and Jesus said to him, go your way, your faith has made you well.

And you don't see it in this version. I mean, you would if you had a different, but in some of your Bibles it'll have a little note there and it'll say your faith has saved you and it can be translated equally either way.

But it's a very important double meaning. You see, salvation is Christ's making you well. Our deepest need, we were made to have a relationship with the triune God.

[ 39 : 12 ] As Augustine said, our hearts are restless until they rest in you. You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. and we can't rest in him unless we receive mercy from him and he takes us to himself.

And so the act of salvation is an act of being made well. That's a way to understand what salvation is. He makes me well. He begins to make me well on this side of the grave and one day, on one day, on one day, I can say with complete confidence, it is well with my soul.

I am well. Free at last. Free at last. Thank God almighty. I'm free at last. That is our destiny in Christ.

And immediately, Bartimaeus recovered his sight and look at this. Not only does he have faith to call out to Jesus for mercy, but he follows Jesus on the way.

It's not just that we have him make us well. We follow him. We follow him. He sees when we follow him that we start to learn how to show mercy.

[ 40 : 35 ] Because unless there starts to be some mercy in our culture, all that's going to be left is fights. Just fights. Fights upon fights. And even if others don't show mercy, it is good for our soul to receive mercy from Christ and learn the way of showing mercy and forgiveness.

That is the way for wholeness and completeness and freedom and dignity when we can learn to do these things.

one of the things I said to my friend a couple of weeks ago who couldn't agree on words is I said, you know, there's no logical connection or necessity to go from the fact that if Jesus really did rise from the dead, if he really did in history, in truth, in history, rise from the dead, it doesn't prove anything on one level.

but we know as a matter of practical knowledge, how do you know that Jesus can save him? Because Jesus made the blind man see.

how do you know that Jesus is God, the Son of God? How do you know that his life and death and resurrection is a ransom? Because he rose from the dead in truth, in history, in time and space, recorded by Greek and Jewish historians as being the central Christian claim almost immediately.

[ 42 : 11 ] he did it. It's true. And since it's true, I urge you to turn to him in faith and follow him.

I invite you to stand. Please stand. I invite you to just bow your head as we stand. It's also sort of a chance to get a bit of a prayer stretch.

Let's just bow our heads. Father, if there are any here who have not yet come to Christ as their Savior, and Lord, I ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would move and work in their lives, whether they're here or whether they're online, and Father, I just ask as they hear Jesus knocking on their heart, Father, that you would help them sort of, in a sense, stop listening to me at this prayer and speak to Jesus and open the door of their heart and let Jesus come in.

That his mercy might come in and that he might come in as Savior and Lord to make them well. Father, I ask that you would help them to navigate that step, that interior step of faith and to do it now.

And Father, for each of us, you know, Father, how easy it is for us to forget the gospel and to live out of other scripts and other narratives and other stories and live out of our wounds and live out of our prejudices and live out of our hatreds and live out of our egos.

[ 43 : 40 ] Father, you know how easy it is for us just to revert it.