

PM Mark 10:32-52

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[0 : 01] I'm not trying to pretend. This is a short time this evening, and it will be a short time, not because I am making tracts to get away from you, but a short time on purpose, Lord willing, because we have before this evening another journey.

This morning we had Psalm 84, which of course is a Christian's journey, a lifelong journey, a lifelong pilgrimage. Well, this evening we have another journey shown to us. This one's much shorter.

However, as we look at this journey, verses 46 onwards, we see the story, the account of poor Bartimaeus, this blind man by the roadside.

As we spend time looking at Bartimaeus' story, I want us to look at it carefully, and to see where indeed our lives fit in with the timeline, the story, the life of Bartimaeus.

Again, I know a few faces, but I still don't know where most stand. Again, this is, all being well, being recorded. I don't know who will listen to it.

[1 : 05] So this evening, as we look at the account of Bartimaeus, first of all, I would ask for those who as of yet don't know Jesus. Those who can't say that Jesus is yours and that you are his. As you listen to the account of this man, and what happened to him when he encountered the living Lord himself.

Listen to this. See what it is to know Jesus for yourself. What it is to encounter Jesus for yourself, and see the reality of knowing him. For those of us who are Christians, who know and who love Jesus, as we look at this account, let's be reminded as to the beauty and the simplicity of the Gospel.

The power of our Saviour, and the love and the genuine care he has, and how we as Christians, that we should show that same love and that same care to those around us who need to know Jesus for themselves.

So, all being said, we can look at this account, verse 46 to the end, just under four very brief and very simple, and perhaps at times overlapping headings. First of all, looking at verses 46 down to verse 48, we see, of course, the condition of Bartimaeus.

Then in verse 48, we see the crowd around Bartimaeus. 49 to 50, we then see the call and the care of Jesus towards Bartimaeus.

[2 : 24] And then finally, we see, the last few verses, the conversion of Bartimaeus. His condition, the crowd, the call of Jesus, and his conversion.

Looking briefly, first of all, verses 46 down to verse 48, we see, of course, the condition of this poor man. He is, we see, first of all, outside the town.

He's there on his own. Perhaps there are other beggars we don't know, but he's outside the town. Outside the city walls. A blind man.

A beggar. In all ways, this man was completely, I say this with respect to the time he was in, completely useless.

He had no benefit to society. He had no use for society. He did nothing for anyone. He could do nothing for anyone. He could do nothing for himself. He was blind.

[3 : 30] He had no money. He had no prospects. He had no hope. And here he is outside the city walls. This is a blind man whose condition to the world around him was completely useless.

We can imagine ourselves, and indeed, many of us and all of us, we know what it is to see, and to not see, to our shame, to not see, as the case might be, of those who are around us.

It's what passed the alleyways and the doorways. Of course, I was in Glasgow a few days ago, and just, I think, being back home, which is a homeless problem, of course, in Lewis too, or it is across Scotland, but there's no one out and about.

It's not as seen, it's not as known. And quite a shock coming back down, of course, having this text in my mind and seeing in the doorways in Glasgow, our dear homeless friends, unnoticed, uncared for, worth nothing to those passing them by.

That's how we find Bartimaeus. To the world, to those in Jericho, just never man at the side of the road, never beggar, never blind, useless beggar to walk past and to ignore as you went about your daily business.

[4 : 46] His condition is completely and utterly pitiful. But we see that Scripture gives us some insight into this man.

In verse 47, When he heard it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out. Somehow, at some point in his life, Bartimaeus had heard something about Jesus.

Perhaps the crowds passing by, perhaps they listened to the conversation, we, of course, we do not know. But at some point, this blind, useless, uncared for beggar, had heard something about Jesus. And it's clear that he had heard somehow that this man, Jesus of Nazareth, this man, Jesus, the son of David, this man who was promised, that this man could well be the Messiah, that God had promised would come.

If nothing else, Bartimaeus at least had a hope, if even a vague hope, that somehow this man called Jesus, this man who had healed other blind people, this man who had healed and done many miracles, this man who claimed to have brought those back from the dead, that this man had done so many wonderful things in his life, Bartimaeus had perhaps even the vaguest of hopes that this man would do something for him.

[6 : 16] See, Bartimaeus was, to the world around him, useless. He was without hope and without purpose in that world. But Bartimaeus, as blind as he was, as much as a beggar as he was, he knew his need.

He didn't pretend otherwise. He knew that without Jesus, he had no hope. He knew that if he stayed as he was, there was nothing anyone could do for him. Nothing he could even do for himself.

And the simple question is, as we look at this man's condition, is where do you see yourself fitting in to his story? Where do you see yourself fitting in to this account?

We say, well, perhaps my life isn't sorted, but I'm certainly not a blind beggar out in the streets. Life's been quite good to me, I'm okay, I've got a roof over my head. Life could be worse.

Perhaps physically that's true, and perhaps in terms of material wealth, you are doing okay for yourself. The question is, where are you in relation to blind Bartimaeus? Scripture is clear, is it not?

[7 : 27] Again and again, that without the reality of knowing Jesus for yourself, we're told that we are spiritually blind. Totally.

Completely. In darkness. Without Jesus, the truth is that we are beggars, waiting for the world to pass us by and to throw us some coins every now and then.

relying on those around us to give us our meaning, to give us our purpose, to give us all that we have. All that blind Bartimaeus had was given to him by those who walked alongside him and those who walked past him.

And without Jesus, as hard as it is to hear it and to admit it, and perhaps even to see it, we are just waiting for the scraps of this world throws us. At times they feel glorious, at times they feel amazing, at times what the world offers us seems so good, and we heard that in the morning, didn't we? The reality is, it's simple pennies are thrown to us that are good for a second, then it's gone. It doesn't last, it doesn't buy anything substantial for us.

[8 : 36] It doesn't actually cure us of our problem. Without Jesus, you are blind, and I am blind without knowing him for myself. Without Jesus, the truth is, we're nothing more than beggars looking for and waiting for the scraps the world throws us.

The third point is here, that are you like Bartimaeus in that he, even his dire condition, he knew his need. He knew he needed a saviour.

And he knew that only Jesus could help him. The truth is, for those who, as of yet, do not know Jesus, for those who, as of yet, don't want to know Jesus themselves, that they are actually in a worse position, a much worse position, than Bartimaeus ever was.

For all his physical and all his material sadness and darkness, for all his poorness of sight, and poorness in terms of his lifestyle and his living situation, for all his poverty and his blindness, for all his misery, blind Bartimaeus, he knew his need, and he knew that only Jesus could even possibly help him.

The question this evening is, do you know, do you genuinely know your need? And if you do, do you know it's only Jesus that can help you?

[10:04] Can you say that about yourself? That you are a poor, blind beggar. Only Jesus, the Jesus alone, can cure you. So, Brian Bartimaeus, he's in a poor state, but he knew he needed Jesus.

So, what happens? He heard, of course, Jesus coming, and he starts calling out. verse 47, they began to cry out and say, Jesus, son of David.

Jesus, son of David. Jesus, son of Nazareth. He's crying out. He's crying out. Have mercy on me. What happens the second this poor, blind man cries out? What happens the very second he begins to ask Jesus to come and to save him and to cure him?

See that in verse 48? The second that Bartimaeus opens up his mouth and starts crying out to Jesus, verse 48, many rebuked him, telling him to be silent.

[11:16] Dear friends, the second Bartimaeus opens his mouth, those around him tell him to sit down and to keep quiet. when you look a wee bit into the language being used here, of course our translation is perfect and it's a good translation, but the tone and the sense of the tone is much more rude you could say in verse 48.

Many rebuked him, told him to be silent. You can imagine the words were harsh, the strong words being used here. He was told to sit up, to sit down and to shut up basically.

Sit down Bartimaeus. Shh. Stop bothering us. Stop bothering Jesus. Just keep your mouth shut. Stop crying out. The reality is, as the Christians here will testify, the second you start showing interest in Jesus, the second you start showing a saving interest for yourself, the opposition will begin.

And the opposition will begin perhaps even for yourself internally that you will find yourself every time you want to spend time with him or spend time in the word being drawn away.

The phone goes, something else comes up that seems more important and before you know it a whole day and the Bible remains untouched, the prayer remains unsaid and so on. But also at times you see here from Bartimaeus the opposition comes externally from those around you, those who love you and perhaps even those who care for you but still they will oppose you.

[12:54] They will oppose you as you cry out to Jesus. Now this is hard to say but it's true and we know it's true. Again, the Christians here will testify to this.

Often it's family and friends, often it's those closest to us who put up the most opposition towards us coming to know Jesus for ourselves and coming to call him and have him as your Lord and as your saviour.

Family worry because they feel you becoming interested in this strange situation reading this ancient book because it's so against the culture of course, it's so against our world to be interested. To believe in Jesus is for those who are weak minded and those who need extra help and for those who can't cope by themselves. To want to come to church is for those who are on the fringes of society.

If they always want to come to this place where we're strange, it makes us weird, it makes us different, it makes us odd. And no family member wants someone they love to be strange or to be weird or to be odd.

[13:57] It comes from friends. Opposition comes from friends who love us and who want to get close to us and who want us to be the same as we always were.

As friends see us begin to change, as friends see our interests begin to change. As friends see our personalities perhaps begin to change the closer we investigate Jesus, the more and the more and the more we begin to oppose all that you stand for and all that you are.

We begin to oppose your desire to know Jesus more, to serve him more, to love him more. Dear friends, don't be discouraged if when you cry out to Jesus you face severe and oppressive opposition.

The reality is the enemy of your souls, the devil, he is expert. Not to give him credit, but he is expert. He has a lifetime, we could say, of experience in opposing the gospel and seeking at least to oppose the gospel.

And all and every way will be used to keep you from coming to know Jesus for yourself. Friends, family, life, circumstances and so on and so on, you will find the opposition grows.

[15 : 25] The second you, like Bartimaeus, begin to open your mouth, the opposition will come and it will not stop. So what do we see taking place here? What happens? Verse 37 and Bartimaeus cries out, Jesus and David have mercy on me.

The crowd tells him to keep his mouth shut, to shut up or to sit down, to shush, to get back, to stop bothering him. What does Bartimaeus do?

He cried out all the more, son of David, have mercy on me. Your friends learn from Bartimaeus. When opposition closes into you, when the world, when friends, when family, when your own mind perhaps tells you to stop bothering with Jesus, to stop seeking and stop searching, stop going towards Jesus, follow the example of blind Bartimaeus.

He doesn't stop, he doesn't give in, he closes off his ears as aware and he just keeps shouting all the louder. He keeps going, he keeps crying out to Jesus again and again, he cries out all the more. Again, it's a plural being used here. The idea here is that Bartimaeus, he is not stopping for no one. He is crying and he is shouting and shouting, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

[16 : 51] Please have mercy on me. That should be our cry, our position as we face the opposition of the world. Don't stop crying out, don't stop shouting out, but shout out all the more that Jesus would hear you and have mercy on you.

Because the beautiful reality is as you keep calling out, and we'll see this in a second, what takes place, what takes place as you cry out? Jesus hears the cries of those that cry out to him.

See, naturally, of course, naturally, you and I, we have no desire to be in this place. We have no desire to cry out to God. We have no desire, naturally, to do anything, even resembling service towards God.

We're born hating him, we're born in sin, we're born rebelling against him. We know that. If any desire is in your mind to want to know Jesus better, to know him for yourself, to want to get to know what it is to follow him and to know him, that desire, it is not coming from you.

And Krishna, as friends, tell us about a desire to know Jesus or share with us a desire to want to know him, take that in prayer straight away because that desire is not coming from them, that's coming from the Lord.

[18 : 10] Because naturally we have no desire to be near to God, to want to get to know God, that comes straight from the Lord himself. Cry out all the more. What happens?

He cries out again and again, he's not stopped. Then we see in verse 49, we see now the care of Jesus and the call of Jesus.

Verse 49, Jesus stopped and said, call him. And they called a blind man saying to him, take heart, get up, he is calling you.

The simple call of Jesus. Jesus stopped and said, call him. Dear friends, Jesus stopped.

We meet Jesus, of course, leaving the city. We read in verse 32 onwards down to verse 34, that Christ has again told the disciples that his end is near.

[19 : 14] He's told them that he is heading towards his death, he's heading towards the crucifixion and the torture and the death that awaits him. He has told them that his end is coming, he has told them that he's not long to be with them.

Here he is passing through Jericho, of course, never to return through the city again. Jesus, we could say with respect, had much in his mind at this point.

He is getting closer and closer to his final days, he's getting closer and closer to the cross. And there's no doubt, of course, that the weight of responsibility was bearing down on his shoulders in a way we can't begin to discuss or imagine or understand.

And here he is, crowd surrounding him as he leaves the city. And one voice amongst the hundreds, if not thousands, calls out to him. And Jesus, the eternal Lord, the second person of the Trinity, Jesus who has been for all times and to all times, who has all power and all glory, he stops.

Jesus stopped. At the call of a useless, worthless, blind beggar, Jesus stops. Jesus declares, Jesus demands to those around him to call him.

[20 : 46] Call him. Dear brother, dear sister, this is our great privilege, isn't it? This is our great duty. Our call this evening is this call. The call from our saviour to those around us, to call them.

Call them. The call to be witnesses to those in our families and those who we love so dearly and so deeply. The duty of being witnesses for Christ is not just one that lies on a minister, of course it's not.

Not just one that lies of those who have been called to be evangelists, it's to those who follow Jesus and who love Jesus. We're all called to call those around us.

To do what? What does the crowd here do? What do the disciples do? When Jesus tells them to call the blind man, they point him towards Jesus.

Brothers and sisters, that is our responsibility, that's our privilege, that's our solemn duty. We're called to do what this crowd has been called to do. To the ones around us who are dying, the ones around us who need saving, the ones around us who as of yet do not know Jesus for themselves, we are called to point them towards the one who can save them, the one and the only one who can give them sight, who can give them life.

[22 : 11] That's our calling this evening. What does the crowd say to blind Bartimaeus? They called a blind man saying to him, take heart, get up, he is calling you. Take heart, get up, he is calling you.

Dear friends, that is the beautiful, glorious call of the gospel, isn't it? That's our call this evening. As Christians, this is the great, wonderful gospel message that's been given to us.

We're told to tell those around us to get up, take heart, he is calling you. As Christians, we have that glorious gospel given to us, and yes, we understand that we are jars of clay, we feel that and we know that, and we feel our witnessing so poor at times, we feel in our conduct so sinful at times, we feel in our way of sharing the gospel so slow and so unsteady and uneven at times.

The truth is, our duty has not changed. As Christians, we have the great responsibility, the great privilege of this verse, of declaring to those around us the good news, the saviour of his people is calling them.

The question has to be, do you feel, do you know that's calling your life even this evening? As we hear again and read again from God's word, the call of get up, Jesus is calling you, get up, he is calling you, do you know that call for yourself this evening?

[23 : 48] Can you say that in your heart, do you know what it is to him to say to you that he is calling you? You're here, perhaps you're listening in and days and weeks to come after this service, and somewhere in your mind or somewhere in your heart, you have a sense that this is for you.

Christ is saying to you, get up, because he is calling you. Again, that desire doesn't come from you, dear friend, it comes from nowhere near you, it comes from the Lord and the Lord himself.

Take heart, get up, he is calling you. That's a glorious gospel call this evening. It's a glorious gospel call we have presented in these verses. The desire to know him, the desire to follow him, the desire to call out to Jesus, it's not a natural desire.

If you have that desire, waste no more time and come to Jesus. Call out to him yourself. Listen to these words of encouragement that Brian Bartimaeus listened so carefully to, that he followed exactly.

Get up, take heart, he is calling you. Dear friends, don't ignore this call. See, for all the careful sermon, crafting, for hours being poured into writing and preparing sermons, I could come with my whole back catalogue and preach from one after the other after the other and it wouldn't save a single one of you.

[25 : 22] We could come down and we could shake you all by the shoulders, get you to understand it for yourself, word by word by word, it won't save a single one of us. Only the Lord will save his people.

Only he can work in your life to save you. Only the gospel working powerfully in your heart can transform your heart, can give you that new life and this is a gospel call going out to you this very moment.

My words, take my leave them, words of your saviour, the words of God you cannot afford to ignore this evening. Take heart, get up, he is calling you.

As we said, Jesus passed this way no more. Never again did Jesus walk past this town, never again would Jesus walk past this part of Jericho, never again would Jesus go near where this blind man was.

If Bartimaeus had listened to the crowd and kept his mouth shut, what would have happened? Well, nothing. Jesus would have kept walking, gone to the cross.

[26 : 33] Bartimaeus would have left there where he always was till his dying day begging for those who walked past him. Bartimaeus raised his voice.

He called out to Christ. And you've heard us a thousand times, but we know the truth is our day, our evening is passing us by.

The time even this evening has gone by so quickly. And not one of us, it's not one of us, myself included. We have no guarantee for ever meeting this place again next week. Not a single guarantee.

We have guaranteed at this very moment in time we see the gospel call to come to Christ, to come to the one who is calling you. Come to him, that he would give you sight, he would give you new life, that he would make you his.

Please don't ignore this gospel call. Don't ignore how serious this is. I think if we say this so plainly and say it with respect, we get so comfortable, don't we? So comfortable in our suits, so comfortable in our church patterns, so comfortable in our Sundays, we forget how real this actually is.

[27 : 45] This is life or death. Please don't ignore the gospel call any longer. What happens to Bartimaeus?

He gets called by Jesus. How does Bartimaeus respond to the call of Jesus? We see that in the final few verses we have here.

Verse 50. And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. First thing this blind beggar does, he throws off his cloak.

His cloak, of course, which he used to wrap around himself, his cloak which kept him warm, his cloak which no doubt he used to gather up perhaps the pennies that were thrown to him to gather up the food, the food that was given to him, the small scraps that were given to him.

This cloak which represented all that he once was, all that his past was, what happens? It's thrown off.

[28 : 47] And again we have here in these verses, in verse 50, such strong words being used. He throws it off, he completely gets rid of it. just chucked away. Blind Bartimaeus, who is blind no longer, he jumps up and he's blind and he's still blind but he jumps up and the cloak is gone.

His old life has gone because Jesus has called him. Dear friends, this is the most glorious example of what happens when someone comes to know Jesus for themselves.

Their old life has to die. not for a second I would say you become some brand new personality. Well no, that's not the case. God has made us with the personalities he's given us.

Yes, he gives us a new heart as we heard in the morning. He gives us new life, yes, but he has made us in many ways as we are. All the good aspects of our personality, they are good for us. The truth is the old man, the old way, it has to be cast aside when we come to Jesus.

Like Bartimaeus, that's gone. The cloak's gone, cast away. Then what? He springs up. He springs up and comes to Jesus.

[30 : 02] See, the old cloak is gone, Bartimaeus is now covered by a new covering. Not the cloak of his works, not the cloak of his world, not the cloak which represented his old life.

Bartimaeus is now covered, of course, by the perfected and the finished work of his saviour, of his Lord. God. That's the story for the Christian. As we throw away the old, throw away the cloak which once represents all that we once were, all we once did, of us fighting for the scraps of this world, that means nothing to us now because we're now covered, of course, by his perfected, his total covering of his righteousness.

The cloak is gone. Bartimaeus, he springs up and he comes straight to Jesus. He springs up, this symbol, this glorious image of new life and of fresh life.

This blind man has spent his days sitting by the wall waiting for pennies to be thrown at him. He is now springing up and making his way at speed, we can imagine, towards where Jesus is being helped, we assume, by those around him.

He's still blind, of course, at this point. But spiritually, it seems that blindness has gone. He comes to Jesus. Again, we see the conversion of this man.

[31 : 25] Jesus asks him, what do you want me to do for you? Again, the care of Jesus here. Jesus doesn't patronize this man. Jesus asks this man the simple question, what do you want me to do for you?

As he said, Bartimaeus, he knew his need. A blind man said to him, Rabbi, teacher, let me recover my sight.

In that second, in the breath between verse 51 and verse 52, blind Bartimaeus, his whole life had been characterized by blindness and being a poor beggar.

He's now given sight. Rabbi, let me recover my sight. Jesus said to him, go your way, your faith has made you well. His eyes are opened.

But we see as we conclude here, it wasn't just his physical eyes, we see it spiritually, that Brian Bartimaeus now has real spiritual sight. We see that in the final phrase we have here.

[32 : 32] See, Brian Bartimaeus, he's now got sight of course, he's now just Bartimaeus, he could have easily gone back to the life he knew. The life he knew was a begging life. He could go back, I'm sure, to sit beside the walls of Jericho and beg again.

It's all he ever knew, it's all he ever did. Go your way, Jesus tells him. Go, go do your thing, go your way, go follow after your way.

What is Brian Bartimaeus' what is Bartimaeus' new way? What is his way now? Glorious words at the end of our section. And immediately, he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

Brian Bartimaeus was, now he's again just now, Bartimaeus, Bartimaeus was going his way. And his way was not the way of begging for the change of the world.

His way was not the old ways. Brian Bartimaeus was now going his way. And now Bartimaeus was following Jesus. His way was now the way of the one who had healed him.

[33 : 43] His way was now the way of his saviour. That is our hope, as I'm sure is a congregation, that is a hope for those who yet don't know Jesus for yourself.

But you could say for certainty that your way is now Jesus' way. You follow him and him alone. It's him who has opened your eyes, given you new light, a new life, given you hope.

That's our prayer, that's our hope this evening. That's our prayer, Christians, is it not for those who we love and those who we care for. As we're reminded from this account, we're reminded as we keep praying for those who we love, praying for those who do not and who will not pray for themselves.

We pray the Lord who opened the eyes of Bartimaeus. He's able to open the eyes of those around us who are still so blind, so blind to the reality of their sin, so blind to the reality of the destruction they're heading towards.

We give you praise to the Lord this evening that he is able to open the eyes of the blind, he's able to change lives so that the old ways are gone, that those who he saves now follow him.

[34 : 58] That is our prayer for our community, it's our prayer for this town, it's our prayer for those who we love and we care for. But like blind Bartimaeus, their eyes would be opened, and for the rest of their lives they would follow Jesus and see Jesus and him alone.

Let's bow our heads now, a word of prayer. Again, we thank you Lord for the beauty and the simplicity of your word, in it we find such encouragements and such hope, in it we find, Lord, such truths.

Lord, we thank you Lord for the account we have read this evening, the account of that man, born blind, Lord, that man who spent his life begging the world for loose change, as it were, how in the love he had for him, and the care shown towards him, our saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, how he carefully and lovingly transformed Bartimaeus' life.

Lord, we ask that same transformation would be known in this congregation to any who as of yet don't know Jesus for themselves. We ask the Lord the same transformation would be known in the lives of those we care for and those we love, those who are on our mind just now who as of yet don't know Jesus for themselves.

Lord, we ask that you would work through them, or you work in them, you would show them the reality that they need a saviour, that one has come, the only eternal saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[36 : 25] Again, Lord, bless this congregation, bless them as they go forward, encourage them in all they need to do for your name's sake, bless all that goes on for your glory and for the sake of the kingdom in this place.

Help us to sing our final item of praise, we do so with hearts and minds full of joy, full of understanding, we sing about the care and the love and the guidance of our great saviour. God, we sing in and through and for his precious name seek. Amen. Amen.