

Blind Eyes Opened

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[0 : 00] Well, turn back with me to Mark chapter 10, and I want to consider with you that section from verse 46 to verse 52, where we read of Jesus healing blind Bartimaeus.

And you know, the more that you read of that journey that Jesus was on as he was going towards Jerusalem, as he was going towards that arrest, his arrest and trial and crucifixion and resurrection, the more, you know, you look at the details that the Gospel writers give us of that journey that Jesus is on towards Jerusalem, the more you, you know, the more we then grasp the wonder, the greatness of Jesus' love for sinners in his resolve to go there to Jerusalem.

And as we said, the more we look at the details, even the details in the passage we read just a moment ago, the more that surely we can grasp what Jesus has done for us in his grace, in his love, in his compassion and in his care for sinners such as ourselves.

And as we said, even this little incident as Jesus is on the road to Jerusalem, as he stops at Jericho, even that little incident with Jesus healing that blind man, again you see the wonder of the love of the Lord Jesus in that love that brings life, that brings true life to all who are his in our helplessness and our weakness.

And, you know, as we look again at this incident that Mark records, and Matthew of course he records as well, Luke in his Gospel, but look in particular at Mark's account, that as we said, we do grasp the great love of Jesus.

[2 : 02] And the more we grasp the great love of Jesus for sinners such as ourselves, the more we should actually see the desperate condition that you and I were once in, and when Jesus came and opened our eyes, opened our eyes of faith to see him, to see Jesus as Lord and Saviour and put our trust in him and follow him.

And, well, just as blind Bartimaeus put his trust in Jesus when Jesus healed him, and blind Bartimaeus followed him after he was healed. So, let's look at this passage then in detail. I hope that three things I want to look at with you this morning, the cry of a solitary man, and then the question of a loving Saviour, the question that Jesus asks Bartimaeus, the same question incidentally, that Jesus asked James and John.

We'll look at the differences in a moment. And then thirdly, the quality, the quality of a changed follower of Jesus. Well, first of all, the cry of a solitary man.

Just, you know, as you're reading that account, I'm sure you had a picture in your mind there of what's been happening. I mean, that's why we read from verse 35 onwards, that account, remember, we were looking at last.

[3 : 21] It's Sunday morning, that request of James and John to have places of honour in Jesus' kingdom. And notice, just again, look very carefully, notice how Mark moves swiftly on from that account to this account here of the healing of blind Bartimaeus.

He does it so quickly. If you look, I mean, okay, start at verse 46. And notice every verse begins with and. You know, Mark is taking us, I've said it before, this fast-paced account of the life of Jesus and the importance of Jesus and his ministry for sinners.

And it's, and he came to Jericho. And he heard it was Jesus. And many rebuked him. And Jesus stopped. It's, you know, it's happening so quickly and so importantly.

And as we said, there is that link between the request of James and John and the healing of blind Bartimaeus. But we'll look at that later.

But, you know, as we've been told here of this fast-paced account, Jesus comes to Jericho as he's about to leave Jericho with his disciples. We're told, with his disciples and a great crowd, what do you notice immediately next?

[4 : 33] Notice the name of Bartimaeus. Now, okay, in the original language, it's ever so slightly different. It's something like a great crowd and then son of Timaeus.

It reads something like that, Bartimaeus. A great crowd and son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus. But it's the same principle. In other words, you know, as it were, beside this great crowd, there's this one individual.

There's one individual. So, immediately following this information of that great crowd following Jesus, there's the mention of a solitary individual.

Amidst this vast number of unnamed people, you know, following Jesus, no doubt, you know, even surrounding Jesus as Jesus is on that road.

Jesus has time for this one man. And that surely tells you of the care and compassion of Jesus for helpless sinners, for helpless individuals.

[5 : 37] Me, like you. This, you know, just think of this blind man. That blind man, he may well have sat there on a very dry and dusty roadside.

He might have been there for months, maybe even years. Nobody really caring for his needs. But Jesus cares. And not just, of course, for his physical needs, but Jesus cared for that whole man. He cared for that man's very soul. And you know, when you at times, well, may well feel alone, you who know Jesus, you're never alone. The one who's promised to be with you, always, is with you even now.

He knows your needs. He cares for you. He knows who you are. He said in prayer, he knows you're better than you know yourself. He knows the tears that you've shed. He knows the suffering that you've endured even for being a Christian, whether it be in your home or your workplace or wherever, you know, community you live in.

Maybe you've endured what even your closest friends don't know what you've endured for the sake of the Savior. He knows even the struggles that you're facing now.

[6 : 49] He never leaves you. He's never left you. Well, you're calling him for mercy, just as the blind man called in Jesus for mercy. Jesus knows you.

He knows your name. You're his by faith. You may even say this, wonder upon wonders. Your name is engraven in the palm of his nail-pierced hand.

He's calling you to himself to be strong in him, to trust him, to trust him for his grace, even in the deepest, darkest moments that you find yourself in, just as Bartimaeus there in his darkness, the darkness of his existence.

Even Bartimaeus, he put his trust in Jesus as Jesus passed by. And you know, again, when we think of the context here, Bartimaeus may well have known or realised that this might be the only opportunity he has for him to be freed from the suffering.

So he called out to Jesus, as we read there in the passage, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. Now, I have a father who's blind. He has certain compensatory senses that make up, as it were, for his blindness.

[8 : 06] And I've no doubt that Bartimaeus had a compensatory, you know, hearing. He could hear maybe more clearly, you know, there's a crowd following Jesus. The din would have been astonishing, but yet, and yet, he hears.

Someone's saying, you know, that Jesus is there, Jesus of Nazareth. And Bartimaeus latches onto that knowledge. And he pleads for Jesus' attention.

I mean, even when the crowd rebuke him for, you know, for his noisy outburst, I mean, there must have been a great deal of noise anyway, but the crowd are rebuking Bartimaeus for shouting out at Jesus and her, David, have mercy on me.

You know, he persists. Bartimaeus persists. I mean, you've obviously heard of Jesus in his life-changing healing miracles. Bartimaeus knows his own need.

And Bartimaeus is going to grasp this opportunity that's given to him to cry out for mercy. The opportunity that you have been given to call out to Jesus, have mercy upon me.

[9 : 10] This is an opportunity. If you don't yet know the Lord Jesus, a Savior, call out to him in the opportunity that you've been given. Who knows how many other opportunities you might have.

Well, this blind man used that opportunity to call out to Jesus. And he's not going to be silent. I mean, other people thought he was a nuisance. Just thought, you know, here's this man.

He's just an impediment. Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem. This man's going to try and, you know, he's going to hold Jesus back. But Bartimaeus perseveres and he calls on Jesus.

And he calls him, son of David, have mercy. I mean, I think there's some things we need to look at more closely here. Again, the perseverance. He's not going to be put off by those who consider him a nuisance.

You know, he's not going to be put off by those who think that Jesus has no time for him. He's not going to keep silent in his great need. He's given this opportunity to call on the name of Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

[10:18] Meet me, Lord, at the point of my need. He's going to call on the only one who can deliver him from his affliction. Only Jesus can rescue him.

Only Jesus can deliver him. And certainly, Bartimaeus doesn't consider himself a hopeless case when he cries out to the Lord Jesus. And not for a minute does Bartimaeus hesitate in calling on Jesus.

In his utter helplessness, he's calling on the one who alone can help him to be restored and healed and delivered from his oppression.

Well, bring that to yourself. You're not a nuisance to Jesus. You know, the words of Psalm 50 come to mind here.

You call upon me in the day of trouble. God's speaking to those in need. Call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you and you shall glorify me. You who are seeking the Savior, cry out and call upon him.

[11:21] Call on Jesus, have mercy on me. You who are in great need, call upon him. Call upon him in the day of your trouble, trouble of soul. You who need his leading.

You who need his guidance. You who need his help, his comfort, his care, his compassion. Call upon him in the day of trouble. You're not a nuisance. You're not a nuisance to the Savior.

During Jesus' ministry, what did he say? Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. So persevere. Call upon Jesus.

Even when others try and prevent you from calling on the Savior. I mean, there's Bartimaeus. He was so resolute, he's had such resolve to, you know, he's not going to be silenced by those around him because his focus was in Jesus alone.

And you know, we haven't lived in a society where there's so much pressure to conform. There's that crowd mentality that, you know, seeks to silence people who are calling upon the Lord Jesus for mercy.

[12:28] People, you know, wanting to try and silence those who seek the Savior. Well, don't be put off by that mindset. Keep calling on Jesus.

I mean, what matters? What matters if the world would try and silence you to silence your voice? Well, you persist. And don't keep quiet when others are seeking to silence your voice and calling upon the Savior.

Bartimaeus wouldn't keep silent because he recognised his weakness in relation to Jesus. He knew that Jesus had that power to save.

So he calls him Jesus. He calls him Son of David. Why does he call him Son of David? Well, let me just suggest this, perhaps. Son of David, it's an Old Testament designation.

You've got the Old Testament and you read there the association the name Son of David with the promised Messiah. Now, whether Bartimaeus recognised Jesus as Messiah at that very point, we don't know.

[13:33] I don't know. But the very fact Mark gives us this designation surely tells us of Mark knowing the reality of Jesus as the promised Christ, the promised Messiah.

Jesus having that power to heal and to restore and deliver and save those who in their weakness can't save themselves. Well, bring that to Jesus and His mission of salvation coming to deliver you, deliver me from sin because we're powerless to save ourselves, powerless to deliver ourselves from the power of sin.

Only Jesus can restore you to that right relationship with God, that relationship that sin's destroyed. word of me is the end we have to say even knowingly or unwittingly.

He's voicing that true nature of Jesus as the promised Christ, as the promised Messiah, the one who's come to save His people from their sins, come to bring into His kingdom those for whom He's come to give His life.

Is that how you see Jesus? the Christ, the Anointed One, the one who is promised by the prophets of old, the one who fulfilled these promises, the one who came in human form, the one who came

as our Savior, our representative, our substitute, the one who came to take your place when He bore the wrath of God against sin on the cross.

[15:10] Jesus is no mere Savior among saviors. He is Lord. He is the Son of God. He's the Christ.

He's the descendant of King David. David, remember, was promised a one to come whose throne would come from His line. One whose throne would be established forever. The Son of David has appeared.

Has appeared in glory. The only begotten Son of God are full of grace, full of truth. Do you recognize Him? Do you call on Jesus, Son of David, to have mercy on me?

Do you recognize Him as Lord and Savior who alone can show you that mercy and grace that you need for life, for eternal life?

Well, Bartimaeus called on Jesus. He called Jesus, Son of David. He called on Jesus for mercy and he was rewarded with Jesus. There's a tension that we see in verses 49 to 50 where we see in these verses the question of a loving Savior.

[16:19] Look at, look there in verse 49, look at Jesus' reaction to the cry of Bartimaeus. What does Jesus do? He stops. He stops in his tracks. I mean, remember, this is Jesus on his way to Jerusalem.

Jesus is on his way to the cross. He's on his way to bear the sins of many. He's on his way to fulfill his Father's will for the sake of his own. But Jesus stops there and then he stops and he shows his loving kindness to this needy man.

He's got time for this blind man. This is time for all who are blind and sin. That's the message that was prophesied of the Messiah to come in, as we read in the Old Testament, come to open the eyes of the blind.

That blindness, that spiritual blindness only can be relieved when Jesus opens your eyes to see him as the glorious Savior, to open your eyes to see the sin that's offended God and offends God, to open your eyes to see the Savior of mercy and to put your trust in him.

Well, we'll come to the miracle of the healing of the blind man in a moment, but, you know, just think of the response that Jesus gives to this man. He stops.

[17:38] What does Jesus do? He tells those around him to call that man to himself, to lead him to himself. I mean, obviously that man in his blindness, he can't directly find his way to Jesus.

He's going to be led by others to Jesus. Tell him, get on your feet and approach Jesus. And notice when the blind man comes to Jesus, comes before Jesus, Jesus asks him the same question that he'd asked James and John just a short time before.

What do you want me to do for you? Now, notice the two responses. Jesus is asking the same question, but notice, you know, when Jesus asked these two disciples, James and John, what do you want me to do for you?

What's their reply? They want self-glory. But when Jesus asked the blind man, he asked Jesus to reveal his power.

Let me recover my sight. Let me recover my sight. The blind man has that utter dependence on Jesus to save him, to heal him, to restore him.

[18:49] There's nothing of any, you know, desire for self-glory that James and John had. But, you know, again, look at the motive that Jesus had in asking that question to Bartholomew.

You see, just a wee while before, Jesus had reminded his disciples what true, or where true greatness lay, or lies.

True greatness lies in humble service. It doesn't lie in, you know, jostling for power. And in Jesus' approach to Bartimaeus, he stops, remember?

He deals with Bartimaeus' need. He calls Bartimaeus to himself. He asks him, and he asks him very tenderly, what do you want me to do for you? Jesus is showing his greatness.

He's showing his greatness as servant in his humble service. He's showing exactly what he said to the disciples about where true greatness lies. It lies in humble service.

[19:51] Here's the glorious Son of God. He's beckoning that poor, helpless, that blind man to come to him and to be healed. He's revealing his gracious Jesus is revealing his greatness in his servant action.

It's the same Jesus who stops to call you to himself and he asks you, what do you want me to do for you? Well, what do you want Jesus to do for you?

And your response will indicate where your heart truly lies in relation to the Saviour. Is it going to be the response of the disciples for some kind of self-glory, some kind of power or status or riches or some kind of life of ease?

Or is it going to be the response of need that the blind man, blind Bartimaeus gave, Rabbi, let me recover my sight. Let me see, let me see you in your glory. Let me see you so that I can tell others and show others the Lord Jesus, the Saviour.

Lord, let me be whole. Well, as Jesus said on another occasion, ask and it will be given to you. Ask, ask for his glory's sake, for your good.

[21 : 07] Ask, ask to see Jesus. And as Jesus says, the one who asks in faith will receive. Well, what about the man there being healed, the actual action of healing and what happens next?

The quality of a changed follower of Jesus. So Jesus, Bartimaeus is called in Jesus, he's called in Jesus, in faith, he's called by faith.

And Jesus heals him and Jesus declares his faith has made him well. Your faith has made you well because as we know without faith it's impossible to please God. So Bartimaeus has been gifted faith to believe.

He's exercised that faith in Jesus. Jesus has healed him. And it's very interesting, this is actually the last miracle that Mark records here in his gospel.

And surely that's important because it tells us something here. The healing here of Bartimaeus, this giving of Bartimaeus' sight, surely pointed to the wonder of salvation in Christ alone and by faith alone.

[22 : 14] And it's this response of saving faith. There's healing but there's following. It's not just healing, it's for you can't have one without the other. You can't be saved without following Jesus.

The one who's saved, the person who's saved, is the person who follows the Savior. That's what we see there in verse 42. I mean, Jesus has saved Bartimaeus.

Bartimaeus, his life's been transformed, he's been changed from darkness to light. I mean, the man who just moments before had called on Jesus and his weakness, he now knows the power of a new affection.

He's not going to go back to his old way of life. He's going to follow Jesus. And he's going to follow Jesus, we're told, there, if I can find the right verse, verse 50, followed him on the way.

On the way, on the way to Jerusalem. On the way, on the road, on the path that led to the cross of Jesus. Exactly where you and I must follow. On the way, on the road to Calvary.

[23 : 21] And we've said it before and we'll say it again. When you become a Christian, you deny yourself, you take up your cross and you follow Jesus. And you know, what better illustration of that necessity to follow Jesus, to deny yourself, to take up your cross, follow Jesus, than this illustration of this once blind man, blind Bartimaeus.

Once he's given his sight, he follows Jesus immediately. There's no hesitation. Where Jesus was heading, Bartimaeus would follow.

Follow come what may. And of course, that still applies whether it's the first century or the 21st century. Followers of Jesus follow Jesus on the way.

It's as Jesus called his first disciples, follow me. And so he calls you, follow me. In that daily walk with Jesus, follow Jesus. And if you're to be his disciple, you follow him.

You follow Jesus on the way, the one true way, the only way, the narrow way, the way of service, the way of trust, the way of faith, the way of obedience, the way of sacrifice, the way of contentment, contentment in Christ.

[24 : 37] And that way that leads to the glory of heaven itself. For all who know the Lord Jesus, who see him face to face. And so the question has to be asked then, and we conclude, as our time is almost gone, have you called him Jesus?

Have you recognized your deepest need of salvation, that that need can only be satisfied in the Lord Jesus, and that you must come to him by faith alone, in Christ alone?

There's no other saviour. You come to him in Christ alone. No other saviour. And you come to him in faith alone. You don't come with any, you know, merit of your own, any sort of work to bring before him to show somehow, oh well I deserve your salvation, or at all.

It's Christ alone. It's faith alone. As we say, it's all here. Bartimaeus could do nothing to save himself. He couldn't make himself see. Only Jesus could make himself see because Jesus alone had that power to heal and that power to save.

Well come then, to Jesus. You ask him to give what you truly need. and yes, what your heart truly desires. To see Jesus.

[25 : 54] To know Jesus. And to follow Jesus. And for you who have called in his name, well, keep on calling, keep on following, keep on resolving each and every day to follow where he leads.

To trust in him, to follow him in faith. Even when the road is steep, even when the road is difficult, well you keep on following. Because remember, if you're following, he's gone ahead of you.

He's gone before you. He leads you in his love. He leads you along that path of life. Now follow Jesus. And in following him, give him the glory and serve him as his follower, as his disciple.

Amen. Let us pray. Lord, we give praise for even the word that we have read this morning.

We give praise and thanks that we can truly say we see Jesus. And help, Lord, all here this morning to be able to say, I see Jesus.

[27 : 02] See the one who came for me. See the one who gave himself for me. And may they who see Jesus follow him all their days, even on the way, the true way, the way of life.

Lord, hear us as we continue in worship of you now. Lord, bless our remaining fellowship, even in the service and one with another after the service.

Go before us for the rest of this day. Bless every journey we make this day. Bless us all in your care and in your love. And again, Lord, help us to know that you are our refuge and our fortress.

And you alone we place our trust. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, let's close now in Psalm 130 on page 173.

Lord, from the depths I call to you. Lord, hear me from on high and give attention to my voice when I, for mercy, cry.

[28 : 12] 130 to God's praise. Amen.