

Seeing Jesus

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Date: 09 June 2024

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- [0 : 0 0] Let's turn back to the chapter we had, the Gospel of Mark chapter 10. Mark chapter 10. Over the last year and a half now, almost, we've been slowly working through Mark.
- And the plan was, and the plan still is, to take a short summer break in our study of Mark. We've been ploughing on now for quite some time. But we're back in Mark today, and looking at verse 46 onwards, a section we've seen before as a congregation, but the hope is, over the next few Lord's Days, the next few mornings at least, we can see some of the interactions that Jesus has with people.
- Remember last two weeks, two weeks ago, we saw Jesus telling the parable, telling the story of the lost sheep. Then last Sunday morning, we saw Jesus telling the story of the son that ran away, the son that left, the prodigal son.
- And for today, and the next few Lord's Days ahead of us, we can see how Jesus interacts with different people. Now again, this is a passage we've all, many of us, many of us have read before.
- Many of us know this account. And for some here, we've actually looked at this passage before. But just for a short time, with hopefully a new understanding for us, a very simple look at this passage.
- [1 : 2 5] A very simple look. Almost really, the very basics of what it is to be a Christian are seen in this one interaction that Jesus has with this poor man.
- So we read from verse 35, and the context is, Jesus is making his way to the end, really. Not very yet, but slowly he's making his way to where he's heading.
- We see that at the start of chapter 11, he's making his way towards Jerusalem. But here in verse 46, Jesus and a crowd with him have left Jericho.
- They've left this great city as a city that was known for being a trade city. It was the rich city. It was the cultural city. We know historically, for a fact we know, that in Jesus' day and before Jesus' day, Jericho was known as both a trading city, but also a place of theatres, a place of drama, a place of real colour and real vibrancy, a real mix of all the nations met in Jericho.
- And they leave this great city, and they begin walking away. As they leave, they have interaction with this man. So to help us understand, hopefully, this passage, just four headings.
- [2 : 5 8] Four headings for us. First of all, we see the hopeless man. We then see a hopeful man. We then see this man is heard. And finally, we see the man is healed.
- First of all, let's see this hopeless man. Verse 46. They came to Jericho, and as Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples, and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.
- To help us picture the scene here, as we said, a big, rich, culturally vibrant city. But the second you leave, as it were, the city walls, you find, leaving the city, a roadside.

And at this roadside, they were beggars. This was the way of every city in the day. By the roadside, just at the gates of the city, all the poor, all the injured, all the hopeless, all the helpless, they would be gathered there.

Now, we, of course, think ourselves today of those in our own cities. And, of course, we're in the islands too, but they're more obvious in the cities. Those who are homeless and those who are in the streets.

[4 : 16] And we perhaps picture that, and that's hard enough. But just think, for Bartimaeus and for others of this day, they are totally helpless.

There is no social network. There's no social system. We talk about people today falling through the net, falling through the cracks of our social services. And these days, there's no social services whatsoever.

There's nothing. If you had family, perhaps, you had some help. Otherwise, you were on your own. There's no housing. There's no money. There's no NHS.

There's no benefit of whatsoever from the state. You are left by the roadside, dragged out there, plonked there, and you're there to beg. And you're begging for a few pennies of the rich and the traders and the crowds who are passing you by.

This is a man who has no help, who has no hope. He's blind and he's a beggar. Being a beggar is bad enough in this day, but he's a blind beggar.

[5 : 24] He has zero social use. Also, to add on to that, and we know this elsewhere in Scripture, that at this time, at this day, sadly and wrongly, the culture was teaching and the culture thought, and Jesus speaks against this elsewhere, the culture thought and the culture thought if you were born with some disability, it was because of either your family's sin or worse than that, it was because God knew if you weren't born with this disability, you'd do something awful.

That sounds horrendous for us, but we know that's what we thought. Again, Jesus speaks against that later on elsewhere in Scripture. We'll get to that one day for the Lord's help.

But the culture thought if you were born blind or born with some disability in your body at all, it's because you must have been or you're going to be otherwise a really bad person or your parents did something awful and the Lord was punishing you by making you, by you being born with a disability.

An evil thought, evil thinking, dangerous, sad thinking, but that was the culture of the day. So a blind beggar, a poor man, a blind man would have been absolutely despised and we know they were.

We know the beggars of the day were despised. We know that from history books they had such low position. The dogs received better help than they did, quite literally. So we have this hopeless man, a hopeless man.

[7 : 02] In all ways, he has no hope, he has no help. And the crowd here is passing this man by as he's sitting there with his cloak and thumb to them, begging for a few pennies, a few morsels of bread.

But see, the story doesn't end there. The man is hopeless, the situation is hopeless, but the man himself, we see, is actually hopeful.

Verse 47, when he heard, when Bartimaeus heard it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

he's heard the crowd and somehow, we can assume, he is, I've always blind, he is no fool, he is aware of the situation, he's aware of what's going on, he's been his whole life, with his eyes, not being able to see, but he's been hearing the crowd his whole life and he's heard that approaching him is Jesus.

Now what he's heard about Jesus, we don't know, but we know he's heard something about Jesus because he knows Jesus can help him. He believes at least this man called Jesus, this man who everyone says is the son of God, this man who everyone's saying has come to save his people, this man who is doing these miracles apparently, this man who apparently is healing other people, but maybe, just maybe, he can help me, just maybe all I've heard about him from other people is true.

[8 : 42] He's heard enough about him. He even calls him son of David. This shows us this man, he knows his Old Testament, he knows the scriptures, he knows that his people are waiting for one descended from David, from King David, who'd be a better King David, a perfect King David, who'd rescue his people and look after his people and lead them to victory.

He knows all that. And he thinks maybe, just maybe, this is all true. Maybe this Jesus is the son of God.

Maybe this Jesus is the saviour. Maybe if I call out to him, he might just hear me. He might just hear me. And what does he cry out?

David, son of David, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. He knows no one else can help him.

Nothing and no one else can help his situation. He is completely stuck. And he has some level of hope, but maybe, maybe this man, this man who's about to walk past him, maybe, somehow, this man, it's all true.

[9 : 59] And maybe this man can help him. So he cries out. What happens immediately after he cries out in verse 48? And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent.

Many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. If you remember, last time we saw this text, I pointed out, and I'll say it again, many rebuked him, telling him to be silent.

In our English translations, that's correct, that's what it says in the Greek, but it's been, perhaps it's a wee bit more gentle in the English.

Quite literally, they told him to shut his mouth. Many rebuked him, swore at him, we could say, same translations there, they swore at him and told him to shut his mouth.

That's what the word of the Lord says. Of course we did. Can you imagine how annoyed they are? They're here to see Jesus, to walk with Jesus, and here's this blind, useless, dirt-covered, stinking beggar, annoying them by calling out.

[11 : 09] He's ruining their day, he's ruining their time, but here with Jesus, not this man, this useless, blind person who won't shut his mouth. So I would tell him to shush, tell him to shut his mouth.

But look what he does. He cried out all the more. He doesn't care. He knows this is his one chance. And the crowd is telling him to shut his mouth, the crowd is saying, stop it.

He's saying, no, this is my one chance to be saved, to be healed. Jesus is passing by, I will not lose this chance. I don't care what you say, I want to keep crying out to Jesus.

And he does. He keeps on crying out to Jesus. The Christians here, brothers and sisters, you'll know this. Friends, I don't know if you're feeling this yet, but as you start coming to church perhaps more and more, as you perhaps start showing more of an interest in reading the Bible or asking the big questions about who Jesus is, I can guarantee it.

we can almost guarantee that you will find opposition almost immediately. Almost immediately. Every time you talk about going to church or try and go to church, friends, family members, those who love and care for you will perhaps begin to oppose that.

[12 : 36] Friends will say, why are you wasting your time on this book of absolute nonsense? 2,000 years old, 5,000 years old, if not older.

A bunch of people in suits in a crusty old dusty building in North Tulsa. What a waste of your Sundays. It's all lies anyway. It's all just make-believe anyway.

Don't listen to a word of it. So on, so on, so on. Take your pick, whatever people might say or might think. And people mean well, but they'll try and stop you. They'll say to you, effectively, shush, stop it.

Stop looking into that. Stop asking about that. Or you might see yourself or feel yourself thinking, oh, maybe church isn't for me.

Maybe it's, maybe they don't want me here. Maybe it's not for me. Maybe it's whatever excuse comes into your mind. Friends, I assure you, you will face opposition. By facing opposition, it's a good thing.

[13 : 34] It shows that there's someone, something, that wants you to stop where you are, to stop looking out to Jesus. We call that, and we know that, of course, being the devil himself.

He'll do anything and everything to stop you coming to this place. He'll do anything and everything to stop you reading the Bible or praying or doing your own investigation into who Jesus is. He will stop you.

That's the difference between what we'd say is a cult and what is true belief. We say, research it. Look into it. Ask us all the questions you want.

We can't answer all the questions. We're not geniuses. But we can pray and we can sit with you and we can read with you. A cult will say, don't look, don't read, don't research.

We say, research, read. God is strong enough and God is able enough to withstand and withhold the biggest prodding and research that we can do.

[14 : 37] When you find the urge to stop coming or to stop reading or to stop praying, follow the example of Bartimaeus. He is told to shush, to sit down and to shut up, to stop following Jesus, to stop crying out after Jesus, to stop asking Jesus for help.

And he responds by doing it all the more. I will not listen to you. I will not follow you. Instead, I will come and shout more to Jesus. Jesus, I am here. I want to know you.

I want you to help me. I want you to heal me. He cries out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me. What happens?

But Jesus, of course, has heard him. Verse 49, Jesus stopped and said, call him. And they called the blind man, saying to him, take heart, get up, he is calling you.

All the crowd noise, the hundreds of people around Jesus, a busy market town. Jesus, of course, hears the call of the one person who is genuinely calling out to him.

[15 : 49] Of course he is. Jesus is here for Bartimaeus. This is his time. Jesus stops. The crowd doesn't care. The world doesn't care.

The city doesn't care. Jesus cares. Friends and brothers and sisters, Jesus is on his way to his final few days, final few weeks on earth.

He is on his way to being tortured and slowly killed, to suffocating slowly on his own fluid from his lungs, as it fills his lungs.

He is on his way to a horrifying death. He is on his way to face the full wrath of his father, as it is poured out on him, as he becomes sin for us. His mind is busy. His mind is full.

And yet, he stops to hear the cry of poor Bartimaeus. He cares. Friends, you might think Jesus does not care for you, has no time for you.

[16 : 47] He does. In fact, the more you think that, the less deserving you think you are for Jesus to stop and to listen to you, the more he will.

You think, well, I don't know, I've messed up so many times. I've made such a mess with my life. Or I've, I've got nothing to give him. I've got no idea what's going on.

My life's a mess. My, my mind's a mess. You might think I've wasted chance after chance. I'm too old now. It's too late now. Whatever excuse you use, when I say to you, why not come to Jesus now?

Whatever excuse comes first into your mind when I ask that question. Look at Bartimaeus. Jesus says, no, I'm here for you. I'm here for you.

And the beautiful good news that Bartimaeus hears is this. The crowd says to him, take heart, get up, he is calling you.

[17 : 53] Brothers and sisters, that is our duty, is it not? We are to be the crowd here, to say to those around us, he's calling you. We said this last week.

What is our duty? What is our job? We're not here to be experts in theology. We try and we learn and we grow in our knowledge and that's a good thing. We're not here to be experts in church history.

We're not here to be maintainers of a great and glorious standard. No. What are we here for according to scripture? We're here to be salt and light.

Salt and light. We're to be a city and a hill. A dark world saying there is hope and there is life. And you find it not with us, but you find it with him, with Jesus.

Brothers and sisters, this is a call we're to make to those around us, our family, our friends, our neighbours, to say to them, take heart. Take heart. There is hope for you.

[18 : 57] Get up. He is calling you to come to him. And friends, that is your call today. Not the call of me. Not the call of my sermon. The call today is from God's word saying to you, take heart.

Be joyful. Get up from where you are in life. He is calling you. Jesus right now, my dear friends, he is calling you.

Bartimaeus listens to the call. What happens next? What happens next? Verse 50, while throwing off his cloak, he springs up and he came to Jesus.

Jesus said to him, what do you want me to do for you? The blind man said to him, Rabbi, let me recover my sight. The second he hears that Jesus cares about him, that Jesus wants to meet him, that Jesus actually wants to listen to him, the cloak, he throws off and he jumps up.

Again, the cloak being thrown off, this is God's word. We believe this to be God's word and everything in it is important for us and why does, why does God bother recording when a man throws his cloak off?

[20 : 13] It's a waste of a few words, surely. What was that cloak to Bartimaeus? What does that cloak symbolize for him? What did it mean for him? It's his old life. It's a cloak he covered himself with in the cold days that the cloak he shields himself with in the hot days, the cloak he used to gather up his few pennies and bits of food.

This cloak symbolized his old life, all that he once had. And the second he understands and hears the message that Jesus has come to talk to him, that Jesus is for him, that Jesus cares for him, that cloak is gone.

It gets thrown away because he knows his life is about to change. So he springs up, this blind man jumps up and he goes to Jesus.

We see here this strange question. If we're saying Jesus is the son of God who knows everything, who created all things, that the whole universe is made through Jesus and for Jesus and by Jesus, then why does Jesus ask this blind man the most obvious question in the whole world?

Jesus says to him, what do you want me to do for you? He imagines the crowd saying, it's blind Bartimaeus. We all know what he wants.

- [21 : 34] As we said, Jesus cares. Jesus cares. This is not just a procedure Jesus is doing. He's not just showing off the fact he is God. He cares for Bartimaeus on a deep level.
- Jesus can heal Bartimaeus. We know that he is God. But he does it in a way that is gentle. He lets Bartimaeus speak for himself.
- This is a man ignored, hated, despised, just not cared about by the crowd, by anyone passing by him. A man who has no status and no standing, who has no one to care for him.
- A blind, useless man. And yet, we see Jesus, Son of God, God in human flesh, taking the time to look at Bartimaeus and to say to him, what can I do for you?
- Again, we perhaps think that Jesus does not care. We know he is able to save us. We believe perhaps even some of us that he has the power to save us.
- [22 : 47] But we don't believe yet he truly cares. I don't know perhaps what experience you've had with the church or with Christians in the past.
- Perhaps it's good, perhaps it's bad. And to our shame for many of us, we have ourselves experienced Christians and people who claim to have the name of Christ who have dealt with us in ways that are not good.
- We are horrified at that thought and we are saddened by that. It's not us you come to look to to be saved. It's not ministers.
- It's not our Christians. We're just human. We all come to Jesus and Jesus cares. Jesus will never do you any wrong.
- Jesus actually deeply cares for you when you come to him. So much so, he lets a blind man speak. He gives him a voice.
- [23 : 45] Probably the first time in his life, he lets him speak for himself. And Jesus asks him. And again, perhaps the wording here sounds a bit clinical but it's not. It's actually a lot more informal really.
- Jesus said to him, what do you want me to do for you? It's a jovial sense in the grammar. It's a fun, it's a slang way Jesus asks it. Jesus is like, what do you want?
- In a kind way. In a caring way. What do you want? And a blind man, poor blind Bartimaeus, he speaks. Rabbi, which means teacher, let me recover my sight.
- And then end with this beautiful moment. And Jesus says to Bartimaeus, go your way. Your faith has made you well.
- Go your way. Your faith has made you well. And immediately he recovered his sight. The last few words of this account of Bartimaeus always, I think, make me stop.
- [24 : 52] Jesus says to him, you're healed. I'll heal you. Go your way. Immediately he recovered his sight and followed him. He followed him on the way.
- Bartimaeus' way is now the same way of Jesus. His way is now Jesus' way. His life has been given to him by Jesus. Jesus has given him a new life, a new start.
- He now follows Jesus. We can assume and presume for the rest of his days. We don't hear about Bartimaeus again. He's not mentioned to us again. But for the rest of his days he follows, we can be sure, the way of Jesus.
- Friends, we said this before last week. The Bible at times, very often the Bible is clear and the Bible some folks will say is quite blunt.
- Well it's blunt because God knows us and this is God's word and the God who sustains the very atoms that hold us together, he knows us completely.

[26 : 01] The Bible tells us that we are spiritually blind. Not physically blind perhaps but spiritually blind. And just as Jesus could open the eyes of Bartimaeus, Jesus, every single Christian here, he's done the same thing for us, hasn't he?

We can say before I had no hope, no idea really, but now in a second he opened my eyes and now his way is my way.

Now I want to follow him. Friends, if Bartimaeus, this is our last thought, if Bartimaeus had done nothing, if Bartimaeus had let Jesus, as it were, keep on walking by, he could have listened to the crowd and shut his mouth or even before that he could have not believed what he heard about Jesus and said, well, it's probably not true, it's probably not for me, I'll just say nothing.

If Bartimaeus had said nothing, if he hadn't called out to Jesus, he would not get this chance again. Jesus would never again pass by Jericho.

Jesus would never again pass by this part of road. This is the one chance and indeed the last chance he had to call out to Jesus. He didn't let it go.

[27 : 28] He didn't let it go. He calls out and Jesus hears him, of course he does and Jesus transforms this man's life. We're all adults here, we're not here to scare tactics, no one's ever scared into heaven, it doesn't work that way.

We're not here to manipulate you into heaven, we can't force you into heaven, it's not our jobs. But I will speak the truth, the truth we all know is life changes in a second. We all know that.

One phone call and our life is turned upside down. One three in the morning phone call, one wrong turn of the road, one single situation that goes either left or right and our whole life is changed.

For some our whole life is gone. Bartimaeus lays hold on the chance he has as given to him with both hands. He springs up and he runs to Jesus and he says to Jesus, I am here, I believe in you, I have heard this much about you, I don't know it all, I know very little, but I believe you can help me, you can save me, you can open my eyes, Jesus, help.

Friends, the call today is, the question today is, with how much you believe in Jesus, how much you understand about Jesus, put that aside. The question is, do you need him today?

[28 : 59] The answer is yes. To have your eyes opened and to come and to know for certain, you come to a saviour who knows you, who cares for you, who listens to you, and who is able to transform your life in a second.

That's a Jesus we worship today, that's a Jesus we pray, we will all come to know. Let's put our heads in a word of prayer. Lord, we thank you for the gift of your word, we thank you once more for the gift of being able to spend time together around your word, around the Bible.

Help us, Lord, then we ask to leave this place, not just forgetting all we've heard, but to leave this place, not just having grown in our understanding, but also, more importantly, having grown in our love, to leave this place we see one who believed, who called out, and who was saved.

We ask that to be the same story for some here this evening, this day, and before the end of this evening, they would cry out, cry out for themselves to one who hears them, one who knows them, one who cares for them.

They would ignore the enemy, ignore the devil, ignore all who oppose them, and they would keep on coming, keep on crying out, keep on seeking, because your word tells us that all who knock, the door will be opened, all who seek after Jesus, that they will find him.

[30 : 17] Help us, Lord, then to keep on knocking, to keep on seeking, to keep on believing that there is a saviour who has come to save his people, one who cares for those who none other perhaps care for, who opens the eyes of the blind, who's opened our eyes to.

We ask that he be our saviour today, our King and our Lord. Thank you, Lord, for our gift of being able to sing our worship to you. We know and we feel and your word tells us that you receive our worship, you hear our worship and you care for our worship and you take great joy in our worship.

Thank you, Lord, for those who lead the worship week after week, who are willing to stand before congregation and to lift their voices and praise. Lord, I ask you to bless them in their service. Help us to go home in safety.

I sing all these things in and through and for Jesus. his precious name's sake. Amen. We can conclude in the sing-sams and Psalm 40.

Sing-sams, Psalm 40. Sing-sams, Psalm 40.

[31 : 32] That's on page 50. Sing-sams, Psalm 40 on page 50. We can sing verses 1 down to verse 5 of the Psalm.

Psalm 40, verses 1 down to verse 5. I waited long upon the Lord. He heard my cry and turned to me. He raised me from the slimy pit and from the mire.

He pulled me free. Psalm 40, verses 1 down to verse 5. To God's praise. verse 5. and from the heart He pulled me free.

He set my feet on solid cross, a place to stand but firm and broad.

[32 : 59] give birth a new song in thine life a joyful end of praise to God.

God. He will live with all he fear and on the Lord a holy night.

God blessed are who who trust the Lord who shall the proud and hope that find the wonders wonders you have done for all of many of all and live beyond your plans for us are far beyond our power to number all declare the grace of the

Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.