

Mark 10:46

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn again to the chapter we read in Mark's Gospel, Mark chapter 10, and this well-known section at verse 46, I won't read it all, but, and they came to Jericho, and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples, in a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside, and when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

Now, we all know how important our senses are to us, and it's very difficult for any person to lose any of these senses.

We so often take it for granted, the sense of smell. I know there are some aromas and scents that we would, I suppose, prefer not to be smelling.

Maybe if a farmer, for instance, is spreading manure around, and you say to yourself, oh, that's really strong. But there are so many beautiful smells, and very often natural smells.

I know a lot of people love the smell of freshly cut grass. And our world would be a very bland world if we didn't have the sense of smell or the sense of taste.

[1 : 3 3] Can you imagine if everything tasted the same? Part of, of course, we need food for its nourishment, but part of the wonder of our eating, all the different flavors, all the different tastes, all the enjoyment in it.

And again, if we had lost a sense of touch or feeling, we couldn't feel anything. Again, how difficult our world would be. The sense of hearing, where we would go into a world of silence, where we couldn't engage properly with other people.

If we couldn't hear, we would never hear again the voice of family and friends and laughter and all these things that so often we take for granted. And then a sense of sight, to lose that, how difficult it is for any person who has known what it's like to be able to see and then come to that place in life where they're no longer able to see, no longer able to enjoy the beauty of this world, no longer be able to look into the face of family, friends, and all the many privileges and blessings.

Well, this man that we meet here was one who had lost his sight. We don't know what happened, but he did lose it because when he says to Jesus, he said to Jesus, let me recover my sight, which would, I tend to think, would indicate that there was a time in his life when he did see.

There are some, we know, that Jesus healed, we know he healed a man who was born blind. But this man, he is saying, Bartimaeus is saying that I might recover my sight.

[3 : 1 6] Maybe that includes that he was never able to see, but I tend to think that there was a period in his life when he could see. But anyway, here's this man and he's sitting at the roadside begging.

And that was his only way of getting anything. There were no benefits, there was no provision apart from what he could get from any person who was kind enough to throw him a coin or throw him a wee bit of food or whatever.

His world was a world of darkness. And very often in the Bible, we know that darkness symbolizes sin. And this world is a world that has been plunged into moral and spiritual darkness because of sin.

Everything has broken up. Instead of light, there is darkness. Instead of fellowship, there is separation. Instead of life, there is death.

All the great and wonderful things that God made at the beginning, they've been broken because of sin. And it's into this darkness that Jesus has come.

[4 : 28] And that was one of his great declarations. He said, I am the light of the world. He is the one who brings light and brings meaning, brings purpose.

You know, that's one of the things that the gospel does. Because in this world, there is an amazing amount of despair and despondency in people's hearts.

Although at a surface level, when you look at society, you may think an awful lot of people are enjoying themselves. But deep-rooted, right through the very fabric of our society, there is a sense of bleakness and a sense of despair.

And that is because there isn't gospel light. Because when we're able to see in the way that the Holy Spirit will open our heart and mind, then as our focus is upon God and we begin to see things in a proper way, we have a sense of identity.

We have a sense of purpose. We have a sense of belonging. We know why we're here. We know where we're going. These are vital things.

[5 : 43] And if we don't have a sense of any of these things, if we don't really know why we're here, then life becomes meaningless and empty.

If people, so many people, not that they cannot take God out of the picture, but in their mind they have. I cannot think of a more empty life. And no wonder so many people are asking, what's it all about?

Well, what is it all about if you remove God out of the picture? But side by side with that, sometimes the light, when a little light shines into darkness, it can be quite a frightening thing when we're able to see.

Because sometimes, if, say for instance, I know like, I remember when I was young, going into a fun fair, and you go through this place of darkness, and then all of a sudden, you would be, all of a sudden, a light would go in, and all these scary characters, and you go, oh, it would give you this fright, and you would say, oh, I don't like to see these things.

Sometimes, to a certain extent, it's almost like that, when the Holy Spirit shines into our heart, and begins to reveal a little of ourselves. we see things we don't like.

[7 : 01] Things that make us feel uncomfortable, and things that bring us to see that we're not what we thought we were. And that's what the law of God does. The law of God shows us up, shows us up in the light of God, shows us up against the truth, and it doesn't balance up.

And that is why Jesus said, you know, men love darkness rather than light. because there is something, while we're used to this, just leave me alone.

I don't want to face up, because you see, once the light shines into your heart, and you begin to see, you begin to see something of your accountability, and responsibility before God, it can never be the same again.

You can't just say, ah, I'm going to close that. I don't want to see that. When the light begins to show you, then you have to do something about it.

And that is why it is so disconcerting, and so difficult, and I know that there are people who will close that Bible, because they've come to it, and the Bible has challenged them, and they say, I don't like that.

[8 : 15] I know of people who came to church, and they were disturbed by what they heard, and they said, I'm not going back there. I've never heard of people who have left a particular church, because the preaching was, as it were, getting too hot under the collar, and they went somewhere where they wouldn't be challenged.

It's, thank the Lord, when we're challenged, because it brings us to see, just really, where we are, in life, and to face up, to these sort of things.

So anyway, we find that here's this poor man, Bartimaeus, and he's sitting, by the roadside, begging. And we read here, of how Jesus, and they came to, and they came to Jericho, and as he was leaving Jericho, with his disciples.

Now, we know where Jesus is going, because back in verse 32, and they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem. Jerusalem. And this was, Jesus' last journey, because he was, making his way to Jerusalem, to die.

And in fact, he tells, his disciples that, from verse 33 on, and he's telling, what's going to happen, about how he's going to be, mocked, and they're going to spit on him, and flog him, and kill him, but after three days, he will rise.

[9 : 31] And there must have been, an incredible, pain in the heart of Jesus. That was a lonely walk, although he was, surrounded by crowds.

If you knew, that this was a walk, to your death. If you knew, that in a very short time, it wasn't just, that you're going to die, but that you were, going to be abused, and that you were, going to go through, the most awful horror.

And what, what lay before you, was almost unimaginable, with a terror, and the fearfulness of it. You would find yourself, I'm sure your mind would be, in all kinds of turmoil.

And yet, here is Jesus, and he has time, for others. It would be very easy, for him as, Bartimaeus starts saying, Oh Lord, have mercy on me.

You would think, humanly speaking, Jesus would say, Oh, I have too much on my, it's me that's needing, mercy. It's me that's needing, deliverance from what, lies ahead of me. I don't have time, to deal with, I don't have the mind, to deal with, somebody else.

[10 : 40] But no, Jesus is always, always, always, consistent to himself. And so we find, the beggar is, he's sitting by the roadside, and he's aware, when he heard, with his disciples, and a great crowd, this beggar, he would be aware, that there was this, massive, tramp of feet, going by.

And so he asks, what's going on? What's doing today? Why are there so many people? And when he heard, that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out.

Because Jesus, you see, was on his way to Jerusalem. We're told, in Luke's gospel, I think when we're going through, the gospel of Luke, it says in Luke's gospel, that he was told that, Jesus was passing by.

Just passing by. And that was so true, because at a human level, Jesus was never going to pass by, that road again. Well, he'd walk that road many a time.

This was his last time. He was never going to physically, walk by along there again. Bartimaeus had his last opportunity of meeting with Jesus in this world, as Jesus was walking and mingling and interacting with people.

[12 : 02] Jesus was passing by. This was his last opportunity. And you know, Jesus is passing by in the gospel just now. You see, there are special times when the Lord is closer than at other times.

And just now, is one of these times, where God's people gather together. Every time we come together in worship, we're told that, where two or three gather in my name, I am in the midst, isn't that wonderful, in the midst to bless.

So this is one of the special times. And that is why we ought to grasp these opportunities, as Jesus is passing by in the gospel. Don't go away from here saying, oh, I'll leave it to some other time.

You know, without sounding dramatic, I believe that there are souls in hell tonight that were once challenged under the gospel.

And what they're saying is this, I wish I had one more opportunity that Jesus would pass by once again, and I would have one more opportunity, and if so, I would grab it with all my being.

[13 : 17] But there is no opportunity. Please do not allow Jesus to walk by in your experience.

But cry out to him. Seek him. Even now, in the pew, in your heart. Ask him into your heart. Cry out to him, like Bartimaeus did.

And so, when Bartimaeus heard that it was Jesus, he began to cry out, Jesus, son of David, have mercy upon me.

Now, Bartimaeus had obviously heard about Jesus. We know that from one or two things. First of all, the title that he uses when he calls to Jesus.

He's told it's Jesus of Nazareth. But it's not Jesus of Nazareth that Bartimaeus uses in his description of Jesus. He says, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

[14 : 18] Which indicates that Bartimaeus knew everything about Jesus. And one of the things that Bartimaeus knew about Jesus is that he opens the eyes of the blind.

He had heard all about Jesus. That is very obvious that he knew who he was calling to. And Bartimaeus is using this logic. If he opened the eyes of others, he can open my eyes too.

And maybe you're here tonight and you have to say within your own heart, you know, I know this gospel. But, I'm afraid. I'm afraid the Lord will not have mercy upon me.

I'm afraid that the Lord won't save me. Well, just think about it. You're surrounded by people that the Lord has had mercy on. People whose eyes have been opened spiritually. If he did it for them, he can do it for you.

That's what's Bartimaeus' logic. And that's why Bartimaeus cried with all his heart to Jesus. And, as we see, the great thing is that he says, Jesus, son of David.

[15 : 29] And that means there was recognition in the heart of Bartimaeus as to who Jesus was. Because the son of David was the promised one, the Messiah, the anointed one, the one sent from God.

Do you know, Jesus, as he walked along, there was a huge crowd around him, and everywhere he went, there were the Pharisees, and the Sadducees, and the doctors of the law, and all the important people and people of many letters after their name, people who spent their life studying the word of God, the law of God, and they didn't know who Jesus was.

As far as they were concerned, he was a prophet, yes, he was a great man, yes, at this particular stage, some of them had so turned against Jesus that they were in the crowd to try and find fault with him, to try and trip him up.

And they were saying, you know, see that Jesus, we're going to watch him again, because you know, do you know how he performs his miracles? You'd say, it's by the power of the devil, it's by Beelzebub, they so hated him, they couldn't see what this blind beggar could see.

This blind beggar could see, this is the Messiah, this is the Son of God, and he believed in the power of Jesus to deliver him and to save him, and so this is why he cries out, and he cries for mercy.

[17 : 00] And that's always a cry from the heart that discovers its own need. It's a cry for mercy. Whenever a person comes before God to realize what they are, there is this cry for mercy.

Like the publican in the temple, oh Lord, be merciful to me a sinner. It's where you recognize that you yourself cannot do.

You are in a state of absolute need. And there's only one who can help you, and you're seeing him. Not seeing him very clearly, but you're seeing through the misty haze, sufficient, you are laying hold upon sufficient to bring you to him, and to cry to him, and to call out to him, and say, Lord, have mercy upon me, because I'm in a mess.

I can't sort myself out. I need you. And that is what a soul that comes to discover itself does.

But we see the reaction of the people round about. Many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. You know, if ever you have the slightest interest in the gospel, there will be voices around you saying, hey, hey, no, no, no.

[18 : 32] Now, I don't believe that there is anybody in here tonight who has no care whatever, what happens to their soul when they die.

Because if you have had a gospel upbringing, you know sufficient. Whether just now you're prepared to do anything about it or not is another matter.

But deep down, you know that you want to be right with God when that time comes that you're going to leave this world. But in the immediate right now, there might be some who are saying, yeah, I know all this, but right now, I'm not ready.

I'm not ready for a change in my life. I don't know what it will do in my life. Maybe there are some young people here who are just preparing to go off.

Some may have gone off. And one of the things maybe you're thinking is, well, you know, when I go away, yeah, I appreciated my home, I appreciated all these things, but you know, I'm going to push that to the background just now.

[19 : 45] big mistake. Let me assure you that the Lord will never do anything to you but that which is good. There might be people later who are in the other end of life, old age, and they're still putting it off because it, you know, at the end of the day, it doesn't really matter whether we're young, middle-aged, or old, there will be voices coming to us saying, no, no, leave that just now.

It's going to affect your social life, it's going to affect your home life, it's going to affect your work, it's going to, are you ready for this kind of change?

All those voices saying, no, no, no, no, no, no. That's what was happening to Bartimaeus. You know, if Bartimaeus had listened to these voices, if Bartimaeus says, okay, I better be quiet, do you know what would have happened?

He would have sat there in his blindness all his days. But he wasn't ready to listen to the voices. The more they told him to be quiet, the more he shouted. And so it tells us that, and many rebuked him, telling him to be silent, but he cried out all the more, son of David, that's what he's saying, son of David, have mercy on me.

And we find wonderful words, silence, and Jesus stopped. Great moment that. There's this huge crowd of people, they're all moving, they're talking, Jesus is talking as he went, and all of a sudden, stop.

[21 : 26] There would be just this like massive breaking of people, and somebody would say, what's going on? And then all of a sudden, there would be this silence. People would be looking around. But there was one voice coming through the silence.

Son of David, have mercy on me. But Jesus, you see, has stopped. It's like pressing the pause button. Everything freezes, because Jesus is just going to deal with this man.

And Jesus says, call him. And they called the blind man, saying to him, take heart, get up, he is calling for you. And you know, Jesus always responds to the cry for mercy.

You may be saying to yourself, maybe he won't listen to me, he will. 100% he will listen. Nobody calls out for mercy with a genuine cry from their heart, but the Lord hears and responds to it.

And he responded there. I don't know, maybe Jesus was in a really deep conversation with other people. maybe he was at the most vital point of a discourse and they were all listening to him, but he stopped.

[22 : 43] Everything stopped. He was going to deal with this man who recognized not only his own need, but recognized the Messiahship.

He recognized that here is the Savior and here is his opportunity and he's crying out for mercy. And so Jesus says, called for him. Get up, he is calling for you.

And we find in verse 50, and throwing off his cloak, he sprung up and came to Jesus. This would be his outward kind of coat, which was possibly the most important possession he had.

I don't know in those days whether they had pockets or whatnot, but certainly this cloak would often keep this beggar warm because he sat by the roadside begging.

And I don't know where he slept at night, but he was a beggar. And maybe he slept rough. That cloak was important to him. It was probably the most vital thing he had because maybe it was his pillow and bedclothes at night and it was his covering for the day.

[23 : 47] Sometimes might have covered him in some way from the shade and often covered him from the cold. But all of a sudden this cloak, this coat, which was so important, it is now a hindrance to him because he's in a hurry.

And he wants to get rid of it. This is the one thing that's holding him back. He's in such a hurry to get to Jesus that you can see him just pulling off this cloak and throwing it away. And you know, that is a picture of the great hindrance that we have naturally to us.

And you know what that hindrance is? It's also a cloak. It is our own, the coat or the cloak of our own righteousness. righteousness. And what is that?

It's where we somehow think that at the end of the day, God will accept us for who we are. That's the way we think.

Even when we sit under the gospel and we know that we must have Jesus Christ as Savior, somehow the sinful human logic of our heart says, you know, it's me.

[25 : 02] And I haven't been that bad. Surely at the end of the day, God will accept me. I cannot believe that God would say to me, depart from me, you worker of iniquity.

That's self-righteousness which believes that we of ourselves will be okay before God. Well, the word of God tells us no.

It tells us that our own self-righteousness are as filthy rags in God's sight. And that the only righteousness that will stand is the righteousness of Jesus.

and the Bible tells us that this is a cloak that we must put on. And when we accept Jesus by faith, God looks at us through Jesus.

And he sees Jesus' perfect work made over to us. And that's why it says we are accepted in the beloved. Yes, we're still our own.

[26 : 16] We are still in our own filthy rags. We're still in our own righteousness. But they're covered. It's dealt with. And that's a great transaction that has taken place on Calvary.

Where the account on the one side and the other. There's our account with all our sin. And on the other side is Jesus' perfect righteousness.

And it's like God changes it over. And he puts all our sin onto Jesus' account. And he puts all Jesus' perfect righteousness to our account.

There we are. And in a sense we almost have a picture of this where Bartimaeus is saying this old cloak of mine is no use. I need the new covering.

Anyway, we find that Bartimaeus comes to Jesus and the order is he cried, Jesus called, he rose up, and he came. And Bartimaeus stands before Jesus.

[27 : 19] Jesus asks him a very simple question. And at one level you think to yourself, surely Jesus knew what Bartimaeus wanted because Jesus said to him, what do you want me to do for you?

Why did Jesus ask that? Because Jesus is wanting to hear from Bartimaeus' own mouth. And Bartimaeus tells him very, very, very clearly, Rabbi, he says, let me recover my sight.

And Jesus says to him, your faith has made you well. You see, this is a faith, this was a faith that took him to Jesus.

It was a faith that believed, it was a faith that saw, a faith that was persuaded. Jesus can heal me. Jesus can make me right. Do you have that belief in your heart tonight?

I hope you have. And you know, Jesus said, go your way. It's almost like Jesus said, right, on you go, you go your way.

[28 : 30] But what does Bartimaeus do? Bartimaeus followed him on the way. There was no chance of Bartimaeus heading back into the city.

he was now going to be with Jesus. You know, there are certain places and points in the Bible that I would say, I would love to be transported, transported in time, and just arrive at a particular scene.

Well, that's one of the scenes that I would love to arrive in, and to all of a sudden find myself right beside Bartimaeus as his sight has recovered.

Can you imagine the euphoria? You could almost see him dancing with joy and telling him, look at me, oh, wow. Imagine as he's looking around at the world.

When his eyes were opened, the very first person he saw, of course, was Jesus. And he was going to follow him, and that's how it is with every person of the Lord when he opens their eyes.

[29 : 32] They want to follow. It's the instinct. we might not see, and I don't believe anybody in here tonight is seeing as clearly as they want to see. Maybe tonight your vision is very blurred, but you know enough to say, I want to follow.

As Peter said, to whom else can we go? For you are the words of eternal life. My friends, tonight we are beside the light.

Do not go to sleep beside the light. I think I mentioned before, sometimes speaking to the young people in the morning, I remember a good number of years ago when I was on holiday in Scalpy, and a boat had gone on the rocks, a cargo boat.

Fairly recently when we arrived on holiday, I remember going out in a boat, and stuff was strewn all over in the boat, and nobody was hurt, everybody was taken off.

But that boat, cargo boat, was fast on the rocks. And as time has gone on, slowly it's broken up, disintegrated, and sunk. You can't, I don't think you can see it now.

[30 : 43] But you know what made that shipping accident quite extraordinary was that the rocks were right beside the lighthouse. And I would, I wouldn't exactly like to hear the skipper trying to explain to the owners what happened.

Because the lighthouse was flashing away its warning and its guiding light. And right beside it, this boat ploughs on to the rocks.

And you say, it's absolutely ridiculous. I don't know, maybe they had fallen asleep, I don't know what happened. But you know, in a sense, that's what's happening so often under the gospel.

That Jesus as the light is sending out his light of guidance and of warning. And people are falling asleep. And tragically, some are making shipwreck.

Please do not make shipwreck of your soul, but look to the one who is the light of the world. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we pray that we may see the light, that we may be transformed by that light, and that the light may shine in us and lead us home.

[32 : 08] We pray to bless us each one, and ask to part us now with thy blessing. Keep us and do us good, and forgive us our sin in Jesus' name. Amen.