

I Once Was Blind But Now I See

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] A very warm welcome this evening. Thank you for joining us for this service of worship. Again, we trust that the Lord will bless us as we come together in this way, and we're thankful for the way we can this way join together virtually, though we cannot be sadly together, understandably, physically, in our church buildings yet.

A couple of intimations I want to give you, first of all, before we begin the worship. First of all, there's a meeting on Wednesday of the WFM groups.

That's for all the WFM groups in the island. They're going to be joining over Zoom at 12 noon, because the meeting involves Marshal E. Campbell in Uganda, so the time is set for that.

Anyone who belongs to the WFM here is welcome to join as well. If you want details, we can't obviously put the login details for Zoom up publicly for security reasons, but if you want to join the meeting, you're welcome.

You just need to contact Donna here in the Vance, either text or email or phone, and you'll be given the login details for that. The other intimation I want to make is in relation to the vaccinations that took place today in the Caber Fae.

[1 : 20] We should not see this use of the Lord's Day as a threat or an erosion of the Lord's Day. Some people might see it that way, but I think we should look at it in another way altogether.

However, Jesus healed people on the Lord's Day, and when Jesus healed on the Lord's Day, many of these cases were not urgent cases, and yet he did this, much to the annoyance of the Pharisees, who had a legalistic view of the Sabbath as it was then.

And along with the healing, he declared, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. Vaccination against this virus, friends, is clearly a work of necessity and mercy, to use the words of Catechism number 60.

And the urgency of this COVID situation is absolutely clear to all of us. The sooner we get on top of this virus and overcome it, the better for all of us in the country, not alone in the island.

So far from being an erosion of the Lord's Day, we should really see this very much as in keeping with the mind of Christ to do good on the Lord's Day.

[2 : 30] And so we really thank the NHS for the way in which they're so efficiently rolling out these vaccines. I understand that today itself up to 500 people were vaccinated, which again shows you that doing it on a seven-day basis is really going to hopefully catch up with this virus and overcome it.

And we pray that God will indeed bless the vaccines and the efforts that are made for us to actually come to grips with our situation and get back to a more normal state as soon as possible.

We can begin our worship now. We're going to, first of all, sing to God's praise. And we're singing from Psalm 118. That's page 155. It's in St. Sam's. Psalm 118, verses 1 to 7.

We're going to sing to the tune Menzer. O thank the Lord for he is good. His steadfast love endures always. Now let the house of Israel say, His love will last through endless days.

We're going to sing verses 1 to 7. O thank the Lord for he is good. O thank the Lord for he is good.

[3 : 45] His steadfast love endures always. Now let the house of Israel say, His love will last through endless days.

And let the house of Aaron say, His love forever will endure.

Let those who fear the Lord declare, His love will stand forever sure.

I cried in anguish to the Lord. He answered me and set me free.

The Lord is with me. I'll not fear. What harm can people do to me?

[5 : 03] The Lord is with me constantly. He is the one who gives me aid.

I'll look at my hands upon my foes. I will not need to be afraid.

Now we turn to read God's word. And tonight we're reading in the Gospel of Mark. The Gospel of Mark and chapter 10.

We'll begin at verse 35 and read through to the end of the chapter. Mark 10 at verse 35. And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.

And he said to them, What do you want me to do for you? And they said to him, Grant us to sit one at your right hand and one at your left in your glory. Jesus said to them, You do not know what you are asking.

[6 : 16] Are you able to drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized? And they said to him, We are able. And Jesus said to them, The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized you will be baptized.

But to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.

And Jesus called them to him and said to them, You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them, but it shall not be so among you.

But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.

[7 : 29] 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. And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent.

But he cried out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stopped and said, Call him. And they called the blind man, saying to him, Take heart, get up, he is calling you.

And throwing off his cloak, he sprang and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, What do you want me to do for you? And the blind man said to him, Rabbi, let me recover my sight.

And Jesus said to him, Go your way, your faith has made you well. And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way. Again we pray that God would follow with his blessing of reading that portion of his own word.

Let's join together now in a word of prayer. Let's call upon the Lord together. Our gracious and eternal God, help us again to be filled with a sense of wonder as we read your word and as we have this privilege of coming before you and having communion with you through the Holy Spirit, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[8 : 50] Help us to be filled with a sense of wonder that we should actually have this privilege. That you have looked upon us in your great mercy as you looked in mercy upon that blind beggar so long ago.

We thank you, O Lord, that we are drawn into your presence when your Spirit brings us to come to confess our sin to you and our need of your salvation, your cleansing, your acceptance.

We do come, O Lord, tonight with that confession when we know that every day we live we have sinned to confess. And even those who know that their sin has been forgiven and they are made righteous through the blood of Jesus Christ, through faith in his name.

Yet, Lord, we confess that we come every day with our confession of sin, that we sin against you in our inward thoughts, in our speech and in our actions. We know, Lord, that our sin is far more serious than we ourselves can contemplate.

But it is in the teaching of your Word that we find that your sin has caused this great breach between human beings and God. And we thank you for the way that you have overcome this, the way that you have bridged that great gulf in the person of your Son, and for the way that as he came to reveal himself in this world and revealed your work as the Father of your people through him.

[10 : 16] Lord, our God, we thank you that we can look back using the teaching of your Word and the way in which you instruct our hearts to a work that is now accomplished, to an atonement that has been rendered, the price that has been paid for our sin has been given.

We thank you, Lord, that that needs no addition and that we take nothing from it. We thank you that it's on that basis we come before you tonight. O Lord, our God, we come like David and for your

steadfast love's sake to make a confession of sin and need before you.

Lord, we ask that you would elevate us and lift us up and help us, we pray, through your grace once again to see something in you of the beauty of God, the beauty of your holiness, the beauty of your forgiveness, the beauty of every aspect of your being that is brought before us in your Word, for you are perfect beauty, perfect truth.

We pray, O Lord, as we are confronted with our own defilement, our own sinfulness, and as we come to realise that this is very deep in our souls, help us to be thankful, O Lord, for your great promise that we confess our sin.

You are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We thank you that your people can say that they have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ, the righteous, that he is the propitiation for our sins.

[11 : 56] Help us, we pray, to worship you tonight with thankfulness, with a due dependence upon you and upon your provision. Help us, Lord, to be thankful for all that you have given us, for everything you continue to extend to us in your goodness day by day.

Lord, there are so many things in our daily lives that we realise are indeed of your mercy and of your gifting. We pray that you would help us to see that everything that benefits us is a gift of God, and especially the benefits we receive in the Gospel.

We thank you, Lord, tonight for those. We pray that we may make maximum use of them and of our time in relation to them. Bless us then, we pray, as we come together this way.

We thank you for the reaching out of the Gospel through online services that reach beyond this congregation itself. And Lord, we pray that many will be blessed as your word goes forth tonight from many places that you would bless the message, O Lord, to ourselves that comes from your word.

We ask your blessing to be with us in our homes and families, in our districts, and in all that we commend to you of our people at this critical time. We do give thanks, O Lord, for the increase in the number of vaccinations throughout our land and in our own locality as well.

[13 : 19] And we thank you for your goodness and for the skill that you have given to those who have produced these vaccines for us. And for those in the NHS now and others who help them to roll them out and to make them available increasingly throughout our land.

May this be a great blessing to us, O Lord. May we overcome this virus by your help and help us to cry out to you, realising that it is God we need most, even though vaccines are so important.

Help us, we pray, as we bring these things to you to remember those who have the virus and who are suffering with it.

Remember again, we pray that many people who have lost loved ones through it continue to bless each and every home and those in hospital and ICUs and in care homes.

Lord, we commend them to you once again and ask that you bless those who reside, those who are patients and those who are working in all of these places and asking, Lord, that you would provide for them and be gracious to them.

[14 : 24] We pray tonight for those who mourn the passing of loved ones, those that we know ourselves in our congregation over these past days and weeks and months. We commend them to you.

We pray tonight, Lord, for the Ramsey family and ask that as they mourn Norman's passing that you would bless his mother, Cathy, bless Jeanette and bless also John as they mourn the passing of their brother.

Be with them, Lord, we pray, and all connected to them at this time and graciously consider their need, O Lord, so as to extend your comfort to them.

We ask that you bless all others we know are recovering from surgery and those who are anticipating surgery in days to come. We pray for Sandra McKeever as she, Lord, looks forward to surgery later this week.

We pray for her, ask that you would bless her and keep her and make her strong and give to her, O Lord, your own strength and those of her loved ones too. We pray that you would continue to bless them through her as well at her witness.

[15 : 29] Grant your blessing to all, O Lord, tonight who in various parts of the world have increased difficulty through this virus. Remember those facing poverty, lack of work, further illness and complications, breakdown in family life, so many things, O Lord, that are compounded by this pandemic.

We live in a world of suffering, O Lord. We thank you that you came into it and you took our suffering to yourself and you, Lord, are aware of what human beings go through in this life where you have been tempted in all points like us we are, yet without sin. therefore you are able to help us in all our circumstances in life. Help us then, Lord, we pray. Look upon us now in your mercy. Continue with us and pardon our transgressions. For Jesus' sake. Amen. A word now to the children before we move on further. We've been looking at last time at the numbers in the Bible and tonight we're looking at the number 40. Number 40 is used quite a number of times in the Bible in different places. Now, sometimes we'll come across numbers in the Bible that in certain contexts don't really have a special meaning. [16:49] It just means a number that's mentioned. but very often numbers like 40 and 7 and 12 have a particular meaning in certain places in the Bible and the number 40 is significant many times.

When you look at Mark's Gospel in chapter 1 we can turn to that for one of the uses of the number 40 that's significant there and that's at verse 12.

The Spirit immediately drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he was in the wilderness 40 days being tempted by Satan and he was with the wild animals and the angels were ministering to him. And the number 40 is used there about Jesus that's very often in the Bible used in relation to testing or temptation mostly about testing. Jesus was being tempted but it was also a testing for him as he came into the world to serve the Father to serve God the Father who sent him in as his servant to live in this world for the time that he lived in it.

And the temptations from Satan especially were sometimes very obvious and sometimes not so obvious but there were always temptations that tried to get him to step out of the way of obedience to the Father.

[18:13] That's how Satan actually is towards ourselves as well. So the number 40 is often used of testing. Let me just mention a few contexts in the Bible a few parts of the Bible where the number is used and you can look up these yourself if you maybe just take a note if you've got a moment to take a note of the passage or the text.

First of all I'm going to think about Moses because Moses was actually in a number of places where the number 40 was mentioned about him. before he was leading the children of Israel out of Egypt he fled from Egypt to a place called Midian and he was in the land of Midian for 40 years.

That was a time of testing for Moses. It was a time of preparation as well because what we find as Christians is that when God tests us by various things we experience in life difficult things are testing for us.

he's not just testing us as to whether we'll keep obedient to God or not the testing itself as we come through it as we overcome it as we continue to trust in the Lord that's God's way of making us stronger because just when you break like when you break a bone and it's put back together again that bone in being mended at that spot is actually stronger than it ever was before and when you have a testing difficulty in your life and you keep trusting in God and praying to him you'll find out as your life goes on that that's one of the ways a main way by which God actually makes us stronger so don't think that testing is to make you weaker God's intention is that it makes us stronger and you remember when Moses spoke to Israel this is in Deuteronomy chapter 8 and in chapter 8 of Deuteronomy we find that

God spoke to Israel through Moses and he was saying to them there that they had to remember the way that God actually tested them in the wilderness chapter 8 and verse 2 you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these 40 years in the wilderness that he might humble you testing you to know what was in your heart whether you would keep his commandments or not and he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna you see how like that is to Jesus himself and he fed you with manna which you did not know so that you might know that man does not live by bread alone but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of God this was a time of testing for Israel 40 years going through the wilderness till they came to Canaan and here is Moses reminding them just as they were about to come into Canaan that these 40 years had been a time of testing and it was especially to test them whether they would remain obedient to

[21:22] God or not to know what was in their hearts and especially that man does not live by food alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God now you can find many other places in the Bible and show yourselves where the number 40 is used in relation to testing let me just think of

one or two of them in 1st Samuel chapter 17 and verse 16 you find a giant of a man taunting and challenging the armies of Israel I'm sure you know his name it's a famous story the story of David and Goliath this Goliath was a Philistine and for these 40 days he challenged Israel to come and fight him and nobody did until David came along and not only of course did he fight him but he actually killed him he slew him with the Lord's help and those 40 days were attesting for the people of Israel are they going to actually overcome this giant or just given

David of course won the battle with Goliath and so you find Elijah as well just one more example Elijah when he ran away from Jezebel this is in 1st Kings chapter 19 when Elijah ran away from Jezebel when she threatened to kill him he ran away into the wilderness and we read there that for 40 days God gave him some food which came by way of an angel but because of that he went 40 days until he came to Horeb the mountain of God and for these 40 days he was being tested because remember Elijah had gone away from serving God where God had placed him and sometimes this happens to ourselves we're going to find in fact in our study tonight in Mark chapter 10 one or two points related to that that sometimes we find ourselves disobedient to God sometimes we find our hearts getting cold in a spiritual way or backsliding as we call it and in that sort of way

Elijah is an example to us he made his way slowly for 40 days to the mount of God and there God met with him and put him back properly in place and told him to go back to serve God again where he was so every time we're conscious that we've been disobedient to God what is testing us in that way and really saying to us are you going to continue to love me or not are you going to leave me are you going to go somewhere else it's always a testing of our obedience we always have to say Lord to whom can we go there's eternal life nowhere else for us there's help nowhere else for us like it is in you so remember the number 40 these and other places is relating to our testing and one final text for you in verse 12 of James chapter 1 we read the following blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial but when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love them

I think that would be a really good verse for you to write out on a card maybe hold it up like you're doing sometimes for your for your twinnies and for your Sunday school work there's a really good verse to learn off by heart indeed just to write it out blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial under testing for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him now let's say the Lord's Prayer together now the Lord's Prayer is a prayer of course as you know when we're saying the Lord's Prayer we really should be praying the Lord's Prayer to God as a prayer that Christ has given his disciples to use as an example of prayer Amen if we turn back now briefly this evening to Mark chapter 10

I'd like to look at verses 46 to 52 Mark chapter 10 at verse 46 they came to Jericho and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd Bartimaeus a blind beggar the son of Timaeus was sitting by the roadside so on through to the end of the chapter this miracle that Jesus worked for this man to restore his sight he was blind he was sitting by the roadside he was dependent on people throwing things into his cup by way of money giving him things that helped him with his life he was a poor beggar usually just ignored as was the case with most and still is now last time we saw the challenge that faced those who wanted to take a paralysed man into the presence of Jesus in Mark chapter 2 remember that they couldn't get access to Jesus because of the huge crowd that was there something similar here but the problem for them then they couldn't get through the crowd the house was crowded so you remember what they did they took away some of the tiles of the roof and made a hole big enough to let the stretcher on which the paralysed man was sitting down into the very presence of

[27 : 19] Jesus and we saw what Jesus actually did on that occasion as well with the miracle and we're going to look at a similar thing here and also God willing next time because I want to look at these three miracles that are held together closely by this thread of difficulties in accessing Christ the difficulty there was as we said the size of the crowd the difficulty here is not just the size of the crowd but the words that rebuke this man for crying out after Jesus many rebuked him telling him to be silent that was something that he needed to overcome that was a challenge to his desire to come to Christ or for Christ to help him and for our next study Matthew 15 there's an even bigger test I think in a sense because not only as here the words of people are a test but in Mark 15 with the Syrophenician or the Canaanite woman who appealed to

Jesus to help her because her daughter had a demon it was the words of Jesus himself that proved a challenge to her that she had to overcome in order to keep on appealing to Jesus until finally Jesus turned and worked a miracle for her daughter so there are three miracles there that have that common theme of difficulty or testing in accessing Jesus getting to Jesus and we can just look at this one under the two headings just following these two sons speaks first about the son of Timaeus because that's what Bartimaeus means and it's explained then a blind beggar the son of Timaeus that's Bartimaeus that's just the Aramaic way of saying son of Timaeus that's the first son the son of Timaeus and that's an illustration of our need as human beings as sinful human beings the second son is the son of

David and that of course is Jesus himself this man cried out Jesus son of David have mercy on me and in the son of Timaeus we find an illustration of our need in the son of David we find a demonstration of his power and his power especially to meet that need that's illustrated by the son of Timaeus so the son of Timaeus first of all they came to Jericho and we read here as they were leaving Jericho this is what was facing them this blind beggar sitting by the roadside and the first thing first point to notice is that he heard about Jesus when he heard that it was Jesus he began to cry out and that's really significant this is a message that gave him hope here was a man who needed help he was a man who was looking for hope looking for light in his life looking for something that would raise him up out of his condition that would give him restoration of sight and therefore back properly into society and be able to make his own way about the way he wasn't at this stage so here is someone who all of this time all of these years had been depending on somebody throwing something into his cup and here is he heard at last that

Jesus was passing now he must have heard about Jesus before now probably heard about some of the other miracles that he'd done but in any case when he heard that it was Jesus he began to cry out and to say and that's really essentially what's happening in the gospel because what he was when he was told what was happening he began to cry out Jesus son of David have mercy upon me when you go to Luke's gospel you also find this in Luke's gospel and we're told that he was told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by similar to what you find here when he heard it was Jesus of Nazareth he began to cry out that's essentially what's happening in the gospel message of salvation Jesus is present in it this is not something tonight as I'm preaching this message from the Bible it's not something just about Jesus we are convinced that Jesus himself is found in the gospel that he is making his appeal through the gospel to people like you and I that is the voice of Jesus that you really want to hear and are hearing when you come to know him and when you come to realize that in the presence in the gospel there is that presence of

Jesus by which he makes himself known to you by which he reveals himself to you by which he assures you this in fact is myself and this man immediately cried out when he heard it was Jesus of Nazareth that he was passing by he was not going to let this moment pass this was his great advantage this was what he was looking for this is what he'd been waiting for this is something that really filled his mind now with hope and so he cried out after Jesus what is your own position what is my own position tonight whatever position we're in spiritually speaking or morally speaking in the gospel tonight Jesus is passing by he's walking past us we can find him in the gospel and his movements in the gospel and hear his voice in the gospel maybe tonight you haven't yet come to him and to know him as your own savior well here is your opportunity here is this illustration of your need in this man

[33 : 23] Bartimaeus and the son of Timaeus as soon as he heard Jesus he cried out after him you see the way that Mark is building such a wonderful evangelistic point into this because this man didn't say well he might come back tomorrow so I'll just wait and just hear him tomorrow maybe be less of a crowd tomorrow I'll just hope that he comes this way again if not tomorrow some other time I'll probably hear him again sometime tonight may be the very last opportunity you have of Jesus passing you by in the gospel don't waste it don't let Christ pass by without you crying out after him maybe tonight in my heart or your heart you know that you're backslidden you know that you're not right with God the way things used to be maybe you've got a coldness has set in maybe you've stepped out of the way a little bit you're not following Jesus closely well he's passing by right now in the gospel this is your opportunity to fix that to cry out after him to seek that he will put right what you know is wrong in your life what an opportunity what a

God-given advantage you have think of all those people tonight who don't hear the gospel who don't want to hear the gospel who don't want to hear anything about Jesus passing by their lives

about Jesus coming to face them and to confront them in the gospel you have the advantage friend don't waste that opportunity don't let it pass you by don't let Jesus pass you by be like the son of Timaeus that was a message that gave him hope and he acted on it but secondly there is a prayer here from the son of Timaeus a prayer that recognised Jesus Jesus son of David have mercy on me you see there is in this man something that the Pharisees actually lack he recognises in Jesus the promise of the Old Testament the promise of the prophets the promise of God through the Old Testament saying he's going to provide a saviour king who is going to be known as the son of David a descendant of David in the same kingly line as David and this is Jesus here is this man crying out in recognition of Jesus this is what he builds into his prayer

Jesus son of David have mercy on me however deeply he was able to go into the theology of it's not really the point the fact that he recognised him as the promised Messiah is really all he needed at that stage that's all he needed to place his faith in this Jesus this this was his moment of hope moment of opportunity this was what was going to change his life forevermore and he grasped it he didn't let it pass him by now of course Jesus working miracles was itself promised in the Old Testament scriptures it was the king that was promised the messianic king the Messiah the working of miracles was already mentioned in the Old Testament as something he would do for example Isaiah chapter 42 and you find that in verses 7 and 16 where the

Lord is saying that he would bring out the prisoners from the dungeon sending to open the eyes that are blind I am the Lord that is my name and then later on in that same chapter you find God saying something very similar in verse 16 where he says there in regard to the salvation that was to come I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know in paths that they have not known I will guide them and I will turn the darkness before them into light the rough places into level ground these are the things I do and I do not forsake them and that's now in reality what the son of Timaeus is seeing right before his eyes this Jesus as he comes to see him he's not seeing him at that moment but that's what the crowd is seeing this promise being fulfilled though many don't accept it yet that's really what he's seeing Jesus the son of David have mercy upon me and you know that word mercy is really precious because it's a word in the literal sense of it in the Bible in the New

Testament as well as the Old it's a word that really has to do with the idea of giving out alms or gifts or bread or food to a beggar it's what what's done when a beggar has his cry or her cry responded to by someone who takes pity on them and gives them something to alleviate their need their plight and of course when it comes to God that's exactly what mercy is because we are beggars we are spiritually empty of anything that will commend us to God it's not that God is going to pass us by and say I'm going to accept your good works I'm going to accept your righteousness I'm going to accept your good efforts I'm going to accept your sincerity and on the ground of that I'll forgive your sins he's coming and he's saying this is my mercy this is part of my goodness that I'm extending mercy you know if we deserved forgiveness it would not be through mercy it would be something that was due to us and the

[39 : 11] Bible all the way through makes it clear that forgiveness salvation is not due to us it's not something God is obliged to give because he sees that we deserve it it's something that comes as a gift of his grace it's it's something that's based on the grace that flows toward us in Christ when there's mercy have mercy on me and as we cry to God in our sense of need that God brings to us when we come to know our need through the gospel this is what we come to realize among many other things that we need God to actually come into our lives and meet our need forgive our sins bring us to know himself put us in a right relationship with himself and when we come to cry for mercy to God what we're really essentially saying based on the meaning of this word is

Lord I am a beggar please help me give me something to eat fill my soul with spiritual fruit there's the prayer that recognized Jesus and thirdly the son of Timaeus not only have you a message that gave him hope and used a prayer that recognized Jesus but also a rebuke that he needed to overcome many rebuked him telling him to be silent but he cried out all the more son of David have mercy on me that's a wonderful emphasis there that the more they were telling him to be silent and to stop his nonsense as people would say the more he actually cried out now there will be many influences in your experience and in my experience that will seek to prevent you reaching Christ that will stand in the way of your access to Christ will be a challenge to your accessing Christ previously it was the size of the crowd here is the words of these people who are saying rebuking him telling him to be silent and every single time you seek to draw near to Christ there will always be an evil influence on the devil's part or very often using things in your own in providence using

things in your own heart that will try and persuade you not to go that far or not to make such a fuss or not to take religion so seriously or your faith so seriously you don't actually need to go all the way as it were giving your life to God giving your life to Jesus trusting in Jesus following Jesus coming to confess Jesus coming to actually serve him in this world being openly one of his people will say to you influencers will say to you you don't really need to go that far let's be serious enough with your faith with your gospel faith or whatever and you don't need to really just take things all that seriously and here's a rebuke that this man needed to overcome and he did overcome this was his moment and he was not going to let anything actually stand in the way of him coming to meet with Jesus and Jesus helping him he cried out all the more the more they were trying to keep him silent you know in society today we face tremendous pressures to silence us for the Lord tremendous pressures that we must not give in to pressures to actually not actually specify things the Bible specifies in certain types of behavior in using such words as sin in regard to certain human traits and behavior in denouncing certain things that the Bible denounces now I'm not saying that our preaching of the gospel our Christian witness should be primarily a thing about denouncing it should be primarily commending Christ but you cannot commend Christ without having something or other to say about sin and what sin is and what the Bible calls sin and that's why here the attempts to silence this man you can translate that into modern society because you go out there and raise your voice for

God especially in the public square and you'll soon be aware of voices rebuking you telling you to be silent keep that at home make that something for yourself if you like it's private to yourself don't make it public don't try and influence us in our councils in our schools or whatever else by this religious stuff we have to say to that what God has commanded what God requires of us is what we comply with lovingly tactfully but obediently here's the man who had to overcome this attempt to silence him and he just kept on appealing to Christ the more they were trying to do this the more he cried out son of David have mercy on me so there's the son of Timaeus he heard a message that gave him hope just as you and I are hearing tonight in the gospel he voiced a prayer that recognized

[44 : 51] Jesus he cried out to him as the son of David and he met with a rebuke that tried to silence him and he overcame that because he was determined that as Jesus was passing by he needed to actually meet with him himself that's the son of Timaeus but secondly more importantly the son of David a demonstration of his power of Christ's power now there are four steps here I need to be quick because the time has passed more than I had anticipated for the first half of the sermon the son of David a demonstration of his power there are four points there on the way to the healing of the man and the four points are really important let me just briefly mention them first of all Jesus stopped see this is what happened in verse 49 in response to the cry of the son of Timaeus here Jesus the son of David stopped and that's always significant isn't it when you read that it's not just saying something literally happened there's a theology built into that there's something there that really is precious to you always significant when Jesus stops just like he stopped at the tree that

Zacchaeus had climbed into in the gospel of Luke he stopped there he looked up and he spoke to Zacchaeus he wasn't going to go further until Zacchaeus had responded to the voice of Jesus whenever Jesus stops the theology of that is that Jesus God hears the cry of a penitent sinner God hears the cry for help from any of us as we cry to God in faith and in hope just imagine how many times people had passed on this road passed this man sitting here at this spot for goodness knows how many years and most days he probably ended up with very little in his cup and very very few people would have stopped to actually take any notice of him except to maybe try and push him aside not Jesus not the son of David not the son of God not the saviour because this man was precious to Jesus he was noticed by

Jesus because he meant something to Jesus and you know there's a challenge in this for ourselves as well as we see around us many people who are spiritually blind and lost to what extent are we noticing them and as we notice them to what extent are we stopping over them and stopping to especially bring Jesus to them and to try and seek to address their problem their spiritual or moral problem and the answer to it being in Christ so Jesus stopped we can make a lot more of that but you follow that out yourselves and the importance of that theologically and spiritually secondly Jesus called him now he used people he used those who were here Jesus stopped and said call him and they called the blind man the crowd here those that were in the front of the crowd called

him and they said to him take heart get up he is calling you and the call of Jesus in the gospel is highly significant because he uses human agents like ourselves in order to address his voice or address his call to other people and to ourselves that's what essentially is the preaching of the gospel is or you could extend it into Christian witness as well it's the voice the call of Jesus that comes through the preaching of the gospel as we said earlier what you're hearing tonight I trust is not just James McKeever's voice you're hearing that literally it's a human voice but what I hope you're hearing and I pray you're hearing and you pray you're hearing is the call of Jesus the call of Christ calling you to himself calling you whatever your circumstances are to come into his presence to let him deal with your problem and you see what he's saying take heart get up he is calling you why would they be encouraged what is it that encourages you and I tonight more so than anything else to come to

Jesus isn't it this very fact that he is calling you I mean if you didn't know tonight that Jesus was calling you if he just went by the words of some human like myself that tried to persuade you of him be certain about it but here is the Bible telling you Jesus calls through the gospel and tonight he's calling you and that's your greatest encouragement whatever your circumstances even if you've been a Christian for many years your greatest encouragement to come to Jesus is that he's still calling you and you haven't yet come to him if you haven't yet come to know him as your saviour your greatest encouragement to night that all these lost years is not worth your while coming anymore to Christ now here's your great encouragement he is calling you he is addressing you he's reaching out to you and you see the result of this response of this man we're going through the points very quickly take heart they said take encouragement get up he's calling you and then [50 : 36] Mark really captures the excitement of this man where he says here in verse 50 throwing off his cloak he sprang up and came to Jesus see the words that Mark is using he was obviously familiar at first hand with the situation these are the words he's using he's capturing as the spirit led him to write this he's capturing the excitement of this moment for this man nothing in his life had been like this before he just threw off his cloak or his blanket you might say it served the purpose of both and he sprang up he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus many people are called by the gospel and they know that Christ is calling them through the gospel they never come to himself they don't get up from their lostness and come to him hope that's not the case with yourself or with myself and the third thing is that

Jesus made him ask he stopped over him he called him and then when he came to him he asked him what do you want me to do for you why is that important why is it important that Jesus made him speak that Jesus asked him and made him answer this question what do you want me to do for you well because Jesus will have us to come and speak to him and express our need to him as far as we are able he brings us to confession time he brings us we don't have to have any great phrases probably better if we don't but it's a big big moment in any human's experience when they come for the first time to confess their sin to Christ maybe it's taken a long time maybe it's not just been a great flash all of a sudden in providence blinding light nothing like that a Damascus road experience but in your life if you come to know the Lord you look back and tonight you can say you do remember the time that you first went on your knees and confessed your sin and asked Jesus to forgive you that is a hugely significant moment and that's a moment that gives us it's a reality that gives us great encouragement because nothing is more to a needy sinner like you and I than that you are able to express your heart to Christ just think about that you're able to tell himself about what's on your heart the way you can tell nobody else and that's the significant moment a significant moment indeed when you come to speak to Jesus and to draw near to him and to tell him what's on your heart and of course he said Rabbi let me recover my sight because that's really what kept him back at this moment doesn't mean that physical side of things was being made more important by himself or by

Jesus this was really the thing that hampered him getting on with his life and this is why he said Rabbi let me recover my sight and of course Jesus healed him go your way your faith has made interesting not sure what to make of this point but it's an interesting one miracles of healing the blind are found only in the gospels in the rest of the new testament there are other miracles mentioned too performed by some of the disciples and apostles but the miracle of healing the blind is found only in the gospels and you can see how immediate this was how instant it was when you look at the wonders of microsurgery that you find with microsurgery in people's eyes whether it's cataracts whatever but it's an amazing provision and yet it takes days sometimes even weeks or months for

full recovery depending on what the surgery has been about there is no time of recovery required for this man the son of

Timaeus as soon as Jesus speaks his blindness is gone there's total healing it's complete there's no recovery time it's instant you see that's Christ's creative word word that created the universe in the beginning creates sight for this blind man the same power the same God the same mercy here is the son of David curing the son of Timaeus and setting him on his way go your way your faith has made you well that has a double meaning in the new testament made you well the older translation has saved you well what you find here is really an illustration being made well physically as an illustration of being made well spiritually as well because here is something that you find elsewhere the salvation is looked at in terms of physical healing which really itself is an illustration as I said of salvation being healed from our sin guilt of sin but notice your faith has made you well it wasn't because of his faith it wasn't without his faith it's

[56 : 41] Jesus who healed him it's the power of Christ that did this but it wasn't accomplished without this man's faith even though it wasn't because of his faith it wasn't the ground of his healing but it was the means through which Jesus worked and that means for ourselves too our faith in Christ is so crucial our trust in him our acceptance of him and then he recovered his sight and followed Jesus in the way now just compare where he was at the beginning of this incident and where he now is at the end there he is sitting by the roadside blind dependent on people passing by now he's on his feet he sees and he's following Jesus on the way you see he has a new purpose in life previously purpose in life was just to get enough in his cup so as to see him through the day now his purpose in life is to follow

Jesus that's the most important thing now for him may God bless these thoughts on his word to us we're going to conclude by singing to God's praise and we're singing this time from psalm 146 and it's on page 191 and verses 6 to 10 saying to the tune Stuttgart he who made the earth and heaven and the seas and all their store he who keeps his every promise who is faithful evermore psalm 146 verses 6 to 10 he who made the earth and heaven and the seas will all restore he who keeps his every promise who is faithful ever more he delivers from all oppression and release the angliest pride he releases those in prison to the blind the

Lord gave sight those who are bowed down he raises God delights in righteousness he protects and cares for strangers widows and the fatherless he frustrates the wicked path so the Lord who endless days reigns to every generation praise your God oh Zion praise now may grace and mercy and peace from God the father the son and the holy spirit be your portion now and ever more amen let let me just express our thanks to you once again for joining in this service of worship we trust that it's been a time of blessing to you and that the blessing will continue with us in days to come please keep safe and look after yourselves and others in the days to come may God continue to bless you richly thank you for coming to you