

Jesus of Nazareth is Passing By

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[0 : 00] We will return with you now to the Gospel of Luke chapter 18 and we will look for a few minutes at verses 35 to 43.

The story of Bartimaeus. Luke 18 verses 35 to 43. We read there, as Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.

When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. He called out, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.

Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet. But he shouted all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me. Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him.

When he came near, Jesus asked him, what do you want me to do for you? Lord, I want to see. Jesus said to him, receive your sight.

[1 : 04] Your faith has healed you. Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

Now there are many people deep down who know that they are lacking something in their lives. And they don't know what it is.

Despite being outwardly content, they know there's something lacking. And they wouldn't admit, even to themselves, that a knowledge of Jesus Christ is the answer to their unrest.

They have a vague fear that the good things of the gospel that they hear about, and that they see in people's lives, that these things are not for them.

For some reason, that they're not for them. With the result that they busy themselves with the things of this world, and they take on a veneer of contentment, a veneer of confidence.

[2 : 12] It doesn't really matter. They're on the defensive all the time, although they maybe don't realize it. Trying their best to justify their own lives without Christ.

Well, these people are sad, and their heart goes out to them. Because their hearts are crying out. Because they don't really understand the truth about Jesus.

They lump the church and religion and everything up together, and maybe a bit of bad publicity or bad something in their lives. And they don't want to know.

They just don't know. The center of all existence. The most important part of your life and my life is their knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

These people don't really know that they need the comfort and the love and the joy and the companionship of the best friend they could ever have.

[3 : 25] That man from Galilee. Our Lord, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, this account of blind Bartimaeus and how Jesus treated him and gave him back his sight is full of encouragement to all who are on the highway of life alone.

We read about it here that Jesus was on his road to Jericho, through Jericho, with a large crowd following him. The usual crowd that followed Jesus.

He was a charismatic figure and people followed him. Friends, miracle watchers, enemies, people who were just curious, who maybe just wanted to see him watch the miracles that he was doing.

Bartimaeus was a blind man who sat by the wayside begging. He had probably been brought by friends to a good pitch beside the roadway there in order that many people who'd be passing by would give him arms and money because he depended on that.

He depended on the kindness of the passers-by. And this day began for Bartimaeus as every other day he could remember. He began in darkness and he was led to a place where he depended on the world's temporary sustenance.

[5 : 04] And as we look at that, is that not how it is and how we are when we are without Christ? Every day we look to the world to sustain us, to give us enough to exist, whether we are in a seat of

power in a successful company, or whether we are sitting by the roadside begging somewhere in the streets.

Ah, but in the mercy of God, this day was going to be a great day in the life of Bartimaeus. His wayside seat was going to be a church to him.

The crowd that was going by was going to preach him a sermon. In his lonely darkness and deep poverty he heard something.

Notice his eyes were blind, but his ears were all right. And he heard, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. What a sermon.

So simple, so plain, and yet so powerful that it went straight to the heart of Bartimaeus and it took complete control of him.

[6 : 23] The whole sermon was about Jesus Christ. Jesus of Nazareth is passing by and Bartimaeus hears this. Now there are only two ways of hearing the gospel message.

There's a hearing that leads to life and there's a hearing that leads to death. There's no other hearing, no other means of hearing. There's no neutral hearing.

There's no hearing that doesn't matter. There's no hearing to indifference. There's no in-between hearing. The hearing you do hear just now is either to life or to death.

You may say, oh, I'm here. I'll listen. But it doesn't really matter. It won't make any change in my life. My friend, it will.

It will. It will. And the difference is eternal life in heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ or eternal death in the pain and suffering of hell with other lost souls.

[7 : 40] Now, please, don't think that that is a scare mechanism to make you understand or believe. It's the truth as it is in the gospel and it's the truth coming to you closed in love because we don't want you to go there.

We want to hear you to hear this message in a saving way because the gospel message leaves no soul untouched.

No one here just now goes out in the same way as he or she came in. It has either softened our hearts towards Jesus and his saving work or it has hardened us to unbelief.

In here we do solemn, serious business with God. It is not just coming to church. It is not just to take up an attendance.

It is coming to deal with God. He is speaking personally to you and he wants you to hear and he wants to deal with you and my immortal souls.

[9 : 01] Bartimaeus' hearing led him to action and it roused him. He heard and he began to do something. that is a sure sign of right hearing.

Bartimaeus' heard Jesus was passing by and he calls out son of David have mercy on me. Well my friend the Holy Spirit of God is telling us that Jesus Christ is passing by now.

That where people are gathered in his name he is here. That he is walking amongst us and that he is looking at each one of us and that he is looking with longing at those people who are particularly ignored up to now.

For too long maybe our hearts and our minds have been full of other things. We work hard for an existence. We live decent honest lives.

Maybe we play play with all our heart. Maybe there is a house worries. Maybe it is a car. Maybe it is a garden. Maybe it is ambition.

[10 : 17] I put it to you my friend again not a scare mechanism. What will you be thinking? What will be for on your mind on your deathbed? That is a question.

For too long has Jesus and the gospel message and your destination in eternity been second place in your life sidelined by things concerning this world?

Temporal things ousting the spiritual things? It is serious. Thousands flock to different events, sporting events, shopping, etc.

And Jesus is passing by and nobody cares. These people are not wicked as in the world's eyes. They are living good lives, looking after their families, but there is this sin of the age which is indifference, not taking their final destination eternity seriously, not taking the gospel message seriously.

[11 : 29] When Jesus came to Golgotha, they hanged him on a tree, they drove great nails through hands and feet and made a calvary. They crowned him with a crown of thorns, red were his wounds and deep, for those were crude and cruel days and human life was cheap.

When Jesus came to Birmingham, they simply passed him by. They never heard a hair of him, they only let him die. For men had grown more tender and they would not give him pain, they only just passed down the street and left him in the rain.

And still Jesus cried, Father, forgive them, they know not what they do. And still it rained, a wintry rain, that drenched him through and through.

The crowd went home without a soul to see, and Jesus crouched against the wall and cried for calvary. Indifference, do you care that the Son of God willingly died on the cross?

Can you walk past and ignore that? And he's been passed down to us, given to us this evening in the gospel message. Bartimaeus heard, he heard that Jesus was passing by and immediately calls out.

[12 : 59] The message heard leads to prayer. The first thing that a lost sinner must hear, she must do, is pray.

the soul in danger must send an SOS to heaven, a cry for help, a distress signal. Notice the promptness of Bartimaeus' action.

He heard and he cried out. Immediately he heard, immediately he cried out. Oh, Jesus was walking. There was time to collect a lot of money because people were passing by.

There was time to collect. He could have said, yes, I'll collect for just a little while and then I'll shout loudly to Jesus and he'll hear me. Oh, but Bartimaeus, cry out, my friend.

Cry out now. Because if you don't cry out now, we know that you'll be forever in darkness. For Jesus of Nazareth will not pass that way again because he has an appointment to keep on the cross of Calvary.

[14 : 11] He has an appointment to keep on a cross at Calvary and he will not pass that way again. So cry out, Bartimaeus, and do it now.

None of us can say when Jesus is going to pass by us for the last time. When is he going to walk past you without even looking at you? He is stopping now and he is looking at each one of us and he wants us under the gospel message to respond.

Oh, my friends, don't let anything, don't let any of earth's considerations keep you from calling out to Jesus. You remember the story told about Satan, the devil, when he was carrying out an interview to send one of his demons down to earth.

And he asked the first demon that came in, what will you tell them if I send you? And he said, I will tell them there is no God. And the second one was asked the same question, and he said, I will tell them there is no hell.

And the third one was asked, what will you tell them if I send you down to earth? And he said, I will tell them there is no hurry. And he got the job.

[15 : 38] But he cries out in faith. He cried out in faith. He heard of an ordinary man, a carpenter passing by, a carpenter who came from an obscure village.

But Bartimaeus knew and Bartimaeus believed the man from Galilee was more, much more than a man, much more than a carpenter. He calls him Jesus, son of David, and he calls him Lord.

He cried out as he was to the Lord Jesus, as he was, a dust covered blind beggar by the roadside.

No pretense, no going to sort himself out or appear more respectable, just as I am on waiting not to rid my soul of one dark blot, to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

And notice the reaction of the crowd. Of course, there was a reaction, because never is there a knock at heaven's gift, but it heard in hell, and devils rush out to silence it.

We read those who led the way, rebuked him, and told him to be quiet. Oh, don't be surprised, my friend, if you have leanings towards the Lord Jesus Christ.

[17 : 12] Don't be surprised if these leanings should be counteracted by circumstances, or by people, or some other obstacle, because if you wish to come to the Lord Jesus Christ, you must show determination if necessary.

We can't just hope for salvation unless our mind is truly setting it. We can't be half hearted about this business at all, because a half-hearted attempt is soon dampened and muffled.

But if you must have mercy, then you will have mercy. If you realize and know the lossless and the price at stake, then you will have mercy, because Jesus Christ saves to the uttermost, and he never turns anyone away.

I will cast out no one who comes to me. there are many obstacles on the way to Jesus, but the main one really is our own pride.

We have our own thoughts, we have our own plans, we have our own excuses, we have our own everything made up in our own minds. We don't want to come down off our own man-made pedestal and say, Lord Jesus, I need you.

[18 : 39] we have our own pride, we have maybe a weakness, maybe we are a drug addict or maybe we are an alcoholic or maybe we are a gambler or a pornographer or whatever.

Maybe we have a weakness that we cannot overcome. Maybe we have friends that would stop us coming, like that they would deride us and that they, well we just don't want to upset them, we don't want to lose.

Our position amongst them. Our own family may come between us and making a profession for Christ, our own lifestyle. We have to change our very lifestyle.

Oh my friends, please recognize them and do what Bartimaeus did, he shouted all the more, see the obstacles and see them and use them as stepping stones to Jesus and you will never regret that day.

The very difficulties in a way should make us more determined. Jesus tells us exactly how things are. He's not a super slick salesman at all.

[19 : 53] He doesn't say come and draw up an easy chair. No, he says pick up your cross and follow me. if you will not bear a cross, you cannot wear a crown.

All the cause of Christ needs determined, single-minded Christians. Never did we need you as much as we need you now. The cause of Christ, all the cause of Christ will triumph.

But we ask in human terms for more help along the way, that our loved ones and people outside, and that the cause of Christ will reach out to people here and will prosper in our midst, and that the glory will be seen by the whole world.

Baltimore cried out and Jesus stopped. Jesus stood still. Ah, notice the concern of Jesus. our sinner.

There is on his way to Jerusalem, on his way for an appointment on the cross of Calvary, and he hears the cry of a poor, dust-covered, blind beggar by the roadside calling out to him, and Jesus stops, stands there, of proof where needed but acquired about Jesus' own motive for coming into this world.

[21 : 24] What is the reason for him leaving his happy home in heaven, leaving the love and adoration of a father and of angels? What made him leave and come down to stoop, to love and to care and to suffer for poor, lost creatures like us?

What made him do it? Then surely we find it in this stopping of Jesus, this standing still of Jesus, that he heard the cry of somebody calling out to him.

He heard his cry. In answer to Bartimaeus' cry, he stands still and deals with them. Do we not have his life's worth in miniature?

He has time for poor, lost sinners. He had time for me. He had time for a lot of people here. And he has time for you, my friend, if you're still without him.

Oh, he has time for you. And he will deal with you as if there was nobody else in the whole wide world but yourself. He has time for poor, lost souls.

[22 : 33] Because really, that's his work. Because his very name is Jesus. For he will save his people from their sins. That's what the name the Father gave him.

Gave him that name because of his work. Thou shall call his name Jesus, he says to Joseph. For he will save his people from their sins.

Here he is on the way to Calvary. Turmoil of mind, human weakness because he was truly human. And he's surrounded by people.

Some of them are his friends, some of them are his enemies, and he hears the cry of an unhappy beggar, and he stops, he stands still. Oh, yes, Jesus is consistent.

He always hears such cries. He's faithful. We read about the Lord in history, the history of the Bible, Sodom and Gomorrah.

[23 : 34] He waited till he could see even if there were five people found. Lot, he waited for them, the children of Israel, Red Sea, all of those things, he waited for people, he didn't rush things, he gave them a chance.

All responsibilities placed on the Lord Jesus Christ, countless children to be looked after throughout the world, in Africa, Korea, India, Australia, America, Britain, France, all of these, all these prayers going up from Christians all over the world, all of these things.

Isn't it amazing that with all that work going on, he has time to hear you this evening calling to him, and he has time to come down amongst us here, and he's standing still beside you now.

That's what we learn from the gospel. He deals with individuals by name. It's Moses, it's Elijah, it's Peter, it's James, it's John.

He calls you by your name, he knows you. How long, I ask, has he been standing still beside you, waiting for you to hear?

[25 : 05] How often have you heard the gospel message, and you've ignored it? where will you be a hundred years from now?

Jesus stopped and ordered Bartimaeus to be brought to him. He's still the same. That's what he says to his people, that's what he says to his ministers, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. If you hear that one text, my friend, that is sufficient. Because if you know the call of Christ, that one text will stand up against you at the judgment day and condemn you. Because it's all there, God's love, God's own giving of his own son, his own son coming, the cross at Calvary, the difference between being saved and being lost, it's all there in that one verse.

And he calls you now, because he loves you and he has time for you. And he tells his teachers and his people, tell them, tell them there is a crucified saviour for them.

[26 : 33] So I'm able to tell you without any fear of contradiction, without any embarrassment, whatsoever. There is a crucified saviour for you. Put away all your reasons, all your arguments, all your excuses, and everything else that holds you back.

There is a crucified saviour for you. You come to the cross at Calvary, bring your sins, every single one of them, pile them at the foot of the cross, and what will you get?

You'll get his robe of righteousness in return, which will take you directly into heaven, because we read from the word of God that when God looks at you, and when you come in the name of Jesus, he doesn't even remember anything that you did wrong.

Your sins and iniquities, he remembers no more. Forgetfulness, peace, and love. There is a crucified saviour for you.

And there is a crucified saviour within reach of you. And without a doubt, at a time of communion with the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ come and linger amongst his people, I can assure you he is standing still beside you now.

[27 : 58] And he has commanded me to call you. It's your call. No one else can answer it for you because it has your name on it.

My friend, I'm preaching to you. I'm not preaching into the empty air. I'm preaching to you as if there was nobody here but me and you and God.

And I tell you the truth as it is in Jesus that I'm preaching for eternity. Jesus is standing waiting for you.

He doesn't want you to be lost. He really doesn't want you to be lost. His love for you is like no other love.

He has the scars of Calvary's cross to prove it. The other gods were strong but you were weak. They rode but doubt is stumbled to a throne but to our wounds only God's wounds can speak.

[29 : 09] Another god has wounds but you alone. Bartimaeus heard. Bartimaeus cried out. Bartimaeus came, left everything behind him and he came straight away.

He came to Jesus and the Lord blessed him by giving him more than he asked for. And we read that Bartimaeus followed Jesus praising God and his example made others do the same.

All we pray that there will be many people who will hear the voice of Jesus and that it will work in their hearts and lives and that they will know the love of Jesus reaching out to them because his love is like no other love.

O Lord of heaven and earth we look to you and we pray that you would apply the message where it is necessary we ask Lord that your own people will be strengthened encouraged and comforted as they see and understand the glories of a saviour who reaches out to lost sinners.

And above everything tonight Lord especially we ask that you reach out to those who do not yet know you in a saving way. O Lord we pray for mercy we pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to touch their hearts and lives and may there be rejoicing in heaven over many souls who turn and cry out to you.

[30 : 56] May they see and understand that your love is like no other love. May they see and understand that they bring nothing but themselves to you and you will accept them.

We ask in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen.