

Lessons From a Blind Man

Mark 10:46-52

Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem. When Jesus arrives there, as He has repeatedly told His disciples, He will be rejected by the Jews, betrayed into the hands of the Gentiles and crucified on a Roman cross. Jesus is headed to His death at Calvary.

As He moves steadily in that direction, He is surrounded by people who cannot understand just Who He is. Most of the Jews are blind to Who He is, even though He has taught them by His words and demonstrated Who He is by His miracles. Even His disciples cannot see clearly Who He is and what He came to do, though He has told them repeatedly. They are like the blind man that Jesus had first partially healed. They believed He was the Christ, even the Son of God. But they could not grasp what that truly meant.

As Jesus makes His way to Jerusalem, He and His disciples pass through the city of Jericho. The name "Jericho" means *"To smell, or A place of fragrance."* It was a city that abounded in many fragrant plants like roses, balsam, and cypress. Honey was found there in abundance as well. Travelers passing through Jericho were surrounded by many fragrant smells. It was a city that lived up to its name.

There would be a fragrance in Jericho on this day that had never been there before. "The Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the Valley" was passing through. As He did, He demonstrated the great fragrance of His glory in the city of Jericho.

On this particular day, the roads of the city were probably jammed with pilgrims. Thousands were on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover, and the road through Jericho was one of the main routes to the Temple. People crowded along the roads to see Jesus as He passed through. The people might not have known exactly Who He was, but they knew He was someone special and they turned out to see Him as He passed by.

As I said, most people were blind to just Who Jesus was. Only a very few people in that great throng recognized the Son of God as He moved among men. But, there was one man in that crowd that received 20/20 spiritual vision that day. This is his story.

As we observe this encounter between Jesus and a blind man named Bartimaeus, I want you to look into your own heart. Let God speak to you and show you that what He did for this blind man, what He can do for everyone who will call on Him by faith.

46 Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.

47 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!"

48 Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

49 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."

50 And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

51 So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."

52 Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

We see here a picture of a man who was without sight, who heard about Jesus, and cried out for mercy.

I. Baritmaeus' Condition (10:46)

The first verse we look at v.46 tells us two things about the person we are speaking about. He is blind and he is a beggar.

A. He Was Blind

Bartimaeus was a blind man. Due to disease and poor sanitary conditions, blindness was very common in Israel in Bible times. Here is a man who could not see the beauty of God's creation. He could not see the faces of the people as they passed him by. Bartimaeus lived in a very narrow world. He lived in a world of darkness.

B. He was a Beggar

He is poor, he must depend on the alms which he begs to feed him. He probably had no friends of which he could turn for help. A blind beggar's friends are probably other helpless beggars. Bartimaeus lived a life of wretched poverty. His life seemed hopeless, there was no better for him.

II. Baritmaeus' Cry (10:47-48)

As Bartimaeus sat there begging that day, he heard the crowds pass by and he heard the excited voices of the people. Luke 18:36 tells us that "he asked what it meant", someone told him that it was Jesus and Bartimaeus began to cry out.

"Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." Why did he call out to Jesus? Surely Bartimaeus had heard some things about Jesus. He might have heard how Jesus had healed some lepers. He might have heard how Jesus delivered people from demon possession. He might have heard about how Jesus multiplied loaves and fishes and fed 5000. Of course, he probably heard about how Jesus had restored sight to other blind men.

I think that hope was beginning to build in the heart of Bartimaeus. Maybe he said, "If Jesus can do all the things I have heard about Him, maybe He can heal me too." So he cried out for healing.

His cry was:

A. It was a Passionate Cry.

Verse 48 says that many people tried to stop him, but he cried out even louder. This was his only hope and he knew it. He wasn't taking any chances. He wanted Jesus to help him.

One of the disciples may have heard him first. A voice crying out, they looked about to see who this was crying out. Maybe it's one of the priests, or some wealthy person who is very important. No it's only this beggar, ragged, dirty and he has no sight.

Another time they had seen a blind man and had asked, "who did sin this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" I would imagine, our natures being as they are, this time, the disciples may have thought, just a blind, dirty, sinful beggar looking to take advantage of the Lord's compassion.

The more they tried to quiet him, the louder he shouted. He felt he must get the attention of this man called Jesus.

B. It was a Particular Cry

The title he used for Jesus, "**Son of David**," had a significant meaning. The Messiah, long expected by the people of Israel was to come through the line of David.

Bartimaeus may have been blind, but he saw some things about Jesus that others with 20/20 vision did not see. Someone once bluntly asked blind and deaf Helen Keller: 'Isn't it terrible to be blind?', to which she responded, *'Better to be blind and see with your heart, than to have two good eyes and see nothing'*. She said on another occasion: *'The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision'*.

Bartimaeus had come to see that Jesus was the Messiah. That is why he called Him the "**Son of David**". Somehow, Bartimaeus had taken the things he had heard about Jesus and it all came together in his mind. He understood the truth that most people in that day missed. He saw the truth that Jesus was the Messiah! Since he believed that, he believed that Jesus could heal his blindness. Why? One of the signs of the Messiah would be that He would open the eyes of the blind. Isaiah 35:5 says, " **Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.**"

C. It was a Personal Cry

This blind beggar knew he must cry out. "**Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!**" Did you notice that Bartimaeus did not try to demand his "rights"? Bartimaeus knows that he is no position to demand anything. He is seeking "mercy". The word means "to bring help to the wretched." Bartimaeus knew that he needed something he could not provide and had no right to demand. He cried out to Jesus asking for help for his wretched condition!

The man He believes to be the Messiah is passing by, he must call out to him. He believed Jesus could help him and he wasn't going to allow Jesus to pass by without getting that help.

III. Baritmaeus' Cure (10:49-52)

Jesus cures Bartimaeus of his blindness. Notice how He does it:

A. Jesus Stood Still

Jesus heard the cry, of poor, blind Bartimaeus and He stopped in His tracks. He is on the way to the cross but He still takes time for one blind sinner! What a Savior!

A lost sheep is crying, will our Lord stop to hear his cry? Yes! He always hears when someone who cries out to Him in faith.

B. Jesus Called

Jesus stops and calls for the people to bring Bartimaeus to Him. Imagine how Bartimaeus must have felt. Day after day he sat by this road. The people pass by and most of them simply ignore him. Every now and then some kind soul will toss a coin his way. But today, he has caught the attention of the Lord!

Notice the wording used by the Holy Spirit, Jesus commanded that he be called. This isn't a hit and miss proposition, He sends forth a royal command, come.

Look at how he comes, Verse 50 says " **And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.**" Bartimaeus casts away his coat. A blind beggar may spread his coat on the ground so people could throw the coins onto it. Bartimaeus just left all he had on the roadside and came to Jesus.

When he gets to Jesus, then

C. Jesus asks a Question

"What do you want Me to do for you?" What is it that you desire Bartimaeus? Notice that this is the same question that Jesus had asked of James and John when they came to ask something of Him back in verse 36.

When James and John came to Jesus with their request for honor, He asked them, **"What do you want me to do for you?"** Exactly the same words! What was the trouble with these disciples? They were blind, were they not? They could not see what was involved. They wanted something but they did not see what was connected with it. They could not see the cup, the baptism, the hurt, the cross. They were blind. What was the matter with Bartimaeus? He was blind. Jesus asked, in both cases, "What do you want me to do for you?"

Doesn't that seem a silly question to ask a blind man, when you have the power, and he knows it, to restore his sight? But Jesus asked him this question. And it highlights for us the contrast between the glory seeking James and John, and the beggar, Bartimaeus.

And Bartimaeus put it so simply, "Lord, I want to see. Let me receive my sight."

D. Jesus Cures Him

Verse 52, " **Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.**"

The cure was immediate. Stop and think a moment here, do you think this mans life was changed? Do you think he came down to the highway the next day to sit and beg for a handout? His life was totally changed, a new life, it didn't even resemble his old life. He left his begging spot and followed Jesus on the way to Jerusalem.

Jesus said, **"Go your way."** His new way was to follow Jesus. He left his former life, he came to Jesus, and he follows Jesus. Isn't that just what Jesus says a disciple does? Can you imagine the testimony that his eyesight must have been as he told others the impact that Jesus had in his life?

A missionary, in a very isolated area of Africa, performed surgery on a poor blind man. The surgery was successful and his sight was restored. Several days after the operation the man disappeared from the hospital. Everyone was quite concerned for his well-being. Then, a few days later, the missionary opened his door and there stood the man who had been operated on. The man was holding a rope. On the other end of the rope were ten more blind people.

This blind man shows us a great picture of someone who is lost who comes to salvation.

Like poor Bartimaeus, every lost sinner spiritually blind, 2 Cor. 4:4 says **"the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."**

There are people all around us who see just fine with their physical eyes, but they cannot see with their spiritual eyes. According to the Bible, they are blind!

They cannot see the HORRORS OF SIN. They cannot see what their sin is doing to them. They cannot see that they are headed for death, destruction and damnation.

They cannot see THE BEAUTY OF THE SAVIOR. They do not see just how wonderful He is.

I am here today, worshiping Him because I was allowed to see His loveliness one day. Everywhere I look in the world, I see Him and His glory. I look around this room and I see where He has been working. I see the changed lives. I see His power on display and I praise His name for it. The lost person can't see the beauty of the Savior, because they are blind!

Not only are they blind; they are also beggars! Without Jesus, people are morally and spiritually bankrupt! The sinfulness of lost humanity has left them spiritual paupers in the sight of God. Without Jesus, you have nothing! Your life is like an empty pocket with a hole in it. Without Him, you have nothing. No matter what you might accumulate in this life, you will die without Jesus and you will go to Hell and have nothing to show for your life but spiritual blindness and spiritual poverty.

But the good news is that Jesus is passing by. He is passing by right here today. And He still stops and responds and heals spiritual blindness today. So, what's a poor, blind beggar to do? Exactly what Bartimaeus did. Call on Jesus today and trust Him to save your soul. Trust Him to wash away your sins. Trust Him to give you eternal life and to carry you to Heaven some day. Trust Him to change your life.

Is He passing by your heart today? Is He calling you to come to Him? He has been, hasn't He? Today is your day friend! Today is the day when Jesus is near. Today is the day of your salvation. Come to Him and come now!