

Mark 10:46-52

October 24 & 25, 2021

He wasn't much to look at. He was just another beggar on the side of the road. He was the type of person that you might have avoided even looking at. Even though he couldn't see you, you didn't want anyone else to know that you were looking at him. He was poor. He looked wretched. He looked just miserable and in desperate need of money. We don't know the hardships that he must have had in his life because of his blindness. There were no social programs or assistance to help him like there might be today. The only help he could get was relying on the kindness of a stranger. The hope of a few coins falling into his cup so he could buy some food to live from day to day. We are told that he was the **"son of Timaeus,"** for whatever that means. Even though he wasn't much to look at, he was listening to what he heard every day while sitting alongside the road. Even though he couldn't see anyone, he could hear the hurts, the frustrations, the fears, the disappointments of the people around him. He lived in a very dark world in many of ways.

When he woke up that morning, he had someone lead him to the road going to Jerusalem. He took up his usual spot and prayed that people would give him just a little something. Little did he know that this day was going to be different than any other day in his life. For his whole life, he hoped that somehow he would see the world that he could hear. On this day, he would see the solution for his blindness – his blindness in not just in his eyes but also within his heart.

Mark writes: **"When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"** He knew who Jesus was. He knew that he was much more than just a miracle worker. He knew that Jesus was much more than just a man from Nazareth. This was the promised man from King David's line, the Messiah, his Savior; the Savior who came to bring him mercy. Even though he had never been able to read a single word in the Bible, he had heard the promises written there as he listened. But on this day, for this blind beggar, things would be different. This day would be the day that changed the rest of his life, because on this day, Bartimaeus' suffering pointed him to **"Jesus, Son of David."** On this day, Bartimaeus discovered a new life.

He had nothing to lose and everything to gain. So, he cries out as loud as he can, **"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"** It was working. People were hearing his voice. Yet, this was much more than just a cry for help. This was a cry of faith. During the three years of his ministry, very few people called out to Jesus using his Messianic title. Before Palm Sunday this title is only spoken to Jesus by two other blind men and a woman from Canaan. By using this title, **"Son of David,"** it meant that Bartimaeus believed that Jesus was THE Messiah that had been promised to this world. There was not going to be anything that would stop him in crying out for mercy to HIS Messiah.

The crowd around Bartimaeus tried to stop him. **"Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"** He was not about to let the promised Messiah walk past him without hearing that prayer and keeping his promise of showing mercy to the people of this world. He was not about to let any obstacle get in his way to cry out to HIS Savior for mercy. He knew that he was a sinner. He knew that he didn't deserve to have Jesus show him mercy. Yet, there on that road to Jerusalem he saw His Savior. With all the commotion swirling around him, the noise of the crowd and voices, Jesus hears the cry of Bartimaeus for help. **"Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you."**

There we see our Savior. There is his love for a sinner, for a roadside beggar. There is his love for us as he calls us to come to him. There we see a compassionate God. There we see a Savior who stops and hears the voices of those who cry out for mercy. There we see a Savior who gives us his whole attention. There we see a Savior who is going to a cross to fulfill the promises he has made to this world; to fulfill the promise made to this beggar; to fulfill the promise made to each of us here today.

"Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus." It's just a little detail – **"throwing his coat aside."** Yet, that little detail shows the faith of a man who trusts Jesus to show him mercy. Maybe it was one of the only pieces of clothing this poor beggar owned. It was the coat he either sat on or covered himself with in hot or cold, in rain or not. He throws it aside. He was not going to need it anymore. He didn't need the coat of a beggar when he had the mercy of his Savior.

He stands up before Jesus with full confidence and trust in Him. **“What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”** What sight that must have been? Everyone in the crowd stopped. There they saw in this poor beggar a man who was filled with joy and peace. **“I want to see!”** The darkness over his eyes was gone. Suddenly, he could see the big picture. He could see the Savior of the world.

“Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Jesus is not saying that this man’s faith had caused Jesus to take away his blindness. Jesus is not saying that this somehow this man earned Jesus’ healing. A better translation of the words that Jesus says to this man would be: *“Go, your faith has rescued you, your faith has delivered you.”* He isn’t telling him that he isn’t going to have any more struggles in this world. But he is saying that through the eyes of faith his perspective of this world will change. He now has meaning and purpose in Jesus. He now sees a Savior who came to give light to a sin-darkened world. He has come to give light to you. Even when we might fall back into that darkness of sin, we throw ourselves at the feet of our Savior and hear his words that he says to us: *I have forgiven you. You’re mine. Go. It will be okay.*

What does Bartimaeus do? He goes. **“Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.”** Having thrown his cloak aside, he goes with Jesus. His name is never spoken again in Scripture. We don’t know what happens after that day that changed his life. Maybe, it’s really not all that important for us to know. What we do know is that on that road to Jerusalem we see a Savior – a Savior who gives us sight. There we see a Savior who loves this beggar and us and made us redeemed children of God. May the Lord help all of us to live our lives for Him. Amen.