

33- The Desire for Sight Mark 10:46-52

Mark 10:46-52 *And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. 47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. 48 And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. 49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. 50 And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. 51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. 52 And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.*

Most of us can only imagine what it like to live in the world of blindness, physical blindness. And most of us would do well to remember how it was when we lived in the world of spiritual blindness. It should move us to praise God for sight.

The Scriptures speak of someone who cannot see spiritually as blind. In *Matthew 23:16-26* Jesus refers to the Pharisees as blind six times. He said to them in *Matthew 23:24* *Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel... 26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.* Jesus told us in *Luke 6:39* *And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?*

The great announcement of Jesus of His purpose recorded *Luke 4:18* *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised...* This was not physical blindness but also spiritual blindness. This purpose is clear as evidenced by *John 9:39* *And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.*

I- The Blind Man:

Mark 10:46 *And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.*

In the parallel account in Matthew (*Matthew 20:29-34*) we are told that there were two men, both unnamed in this account. Mark gives us the name of one of these, Bartimaeus. Luke records it as well making it appear in all three synopsis gospels.

Jesus is on His way to Passover in Jerusalem and passes through Jericho some 15 miles from His destination.

One thing that you never have to do to someone who is physically blind is to convince them they cannot see. Spiritual blindness however is another story. Many blind men can never grasp that they cannot see when they are totally blind.

Speaking on the significance of Jericho Barclay says in the Daily Study Bible:

Jericho had one special characteristic. There were attached to the Temple over 20,000 priests and as many levites. Obviously they could not all serve at the one time. They were therefore divided into twenty-six courses which served in rotation. Very many of these priests and levites resided in Jericho when they were not on actual temple duty. There must have been many of them in the crowd that day. At the Passover all were on duty for all were needed. It was one of the rare occasions when all did serve. But many would not have started yet. They would be doubly eager to see this rebel who was about to invade Jerusalem. There would be many cold and bleak and hostile eyes in the crowd that day, because it was clear that if Jesus was right, the whole Temple worship was one vast irrelevancy.

Many are blind, many by their own ambitions, many by pride, and many by a refusal to see the urgency of time thinking they have forever.

II- The Cry for Mercy:

Mark 10:47 *And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.*

The cry for mercy comes as a cry of faith, a cry that reached from a desperation that is born of one who is ready to trust totally in the Lord. It reminds me of the cry of the publican in the story of *Luke 18:13* *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*

This blind man is causing a scene as he cries out. He was probably an embarrassment for the righteous folk of the day. This happened to the point that they rebuked him for crying out. Perhaps it was some of these priest and Pharisees that rebuked this man. **Mark 10:48** *And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.*

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

He still cried out even louder, have mercy on me. Of significance also was that he called Christ the Son of David which was a messianic name, a title for Messiah. Perhaps this was why they tried to shut him up.

III- The Calling of the Blind:

Mark 10:49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, *Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.* **50** And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

This man did not hesitate when called by the Master. He cast off his garment, which many see and casting off the old man, and goes to the Master. I suspect as quickly as possible.

Oh, the calling of the Master into the heart of blind men is one that is a precious thing to witness. When someone who has been blind for years suddenly has their eyes open to their need of salvation and responds to their need it is one of the most marvelous miracles we can witness.

Christ is calling the blind to sight every time the gospel is preached, the witness is given by a saint, the good news is shared anywhere. Thank God that He is still calling the blind.

IV- The Request for Sight:

Mark 10:51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, *What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.* **52** And Jesus said unto him, *Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.*

This man had one thing in mind, he knew he needed sight. I suspect that there was a deeper healing than just the physical sight. We have already talked about him calling Jesus by a messianic name. May I be so bold as to suggest that Jesus also gave him spiritual sight?

What is the greatest need for men? It is not to be healed physically but spiritually. To be made whole on the inside not just the outside, to be healed in the soul not just the body.

The faith of this man healed him physically. He could not bring anything but faith, nor did he need to do so. Notice what the Bible says about coming to Christ by faith.

Romans 3:28 *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*

Romans 4:5 *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*

Romans 5:1-2 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Ephesians 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

So we come, having nothing but blindness and a need, to faith in Christ who gives sight. What a picture of man's need, a blind man who simply come in faith and receives his sight.

V- The Witness:

After this man is healed he does the natural thing for a believer who is truly changed. He followed Him.

Mark

10:52b *And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.*

It is the prelude to the great events in Jerusalem, His presentation as King, rejection, suffering and death. The miracle of Jericho holds the same place in the three Gospels. Israel's condition is easily seen in Bartimaeus' blindness. The Son of David had come to give sight to the blind and in Jericho (the place of curse) He shows His gracious Power. Bartimaeus followed Him as the blessed witness of His power. Gaebelin

I remember the story of the blind man that was healed recorded in John 9. Jesus healed him and then there is a great debate and inquiry by the Pharisees. They call the parents of the man that was healed into ask them question and intimidate them. They said that their son was old enough to be asked himself. Notice the narrative in **John 9:24-27** *Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. 25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. 26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? 27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?*

Can you bear witness that you once were blind but now you see? Have you realized that seeing you are blind without Jesus and need to be given sight? Do you have the desire for sight?