

## Bartimaeus Healed by Jesus

Mark 10:46-52

**46** Now they [Jesus and His disciples] 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.

Jesus Christ with His disciples departed Galilee (where they were in ch.9) “and came to the region of Judea” (10:1) while “going up to Jerusalem” (10:32). The account presently before us commences with these words (10:46): “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. ...”

This account involving Jesus and Bartimaeus is not only a beautiful story, but also an instructive lesson. (See parallel accounts in Matthew 20:29-34 & Luke 18:35-43).

**I. Bartimaeus was a pathetic man** (v.46). And the things that made him pathetic *physically* made us pathetic *spiritually*.

1. *He was blind.* Of the five physical senses, sight is by far the hardest to live without. Blindness makes one dependent on the kindness of the considerate, and susceptible to the mischief of the inconsiderate.

All of us are by nature spiritually blind. In our native state we are “those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (2 Corinthians 4:4). As physical blindness made a Levite unfit for the priesthood (Leviticus 21:18), so does spiritual blindness make one unfit for service to God (Isaiah 56:10f). “And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch” (Matthew 15:14).

2. *He was impoverished* – which is why he “sat by the road begging”. It was not uncommon for the blind to be beggars, for their infirmity hindered employment and generally resulted in impoverishment. Being unable to provide for themselves, they sat beside roads begging for whatever

passersby would give.

All of us by nature are impoverished, devoid of spiritual good. The Holy Spirit says of us, “Surely these are poor. They are foolish; for they do not know the way of Jehovah, the judgment of their God” (Jeremiah 5:4). And we sit by Religion Road begging for morsels of hope from passersby.

3. *He resided in a futile place.* The name *Jericho* derives from either a root word meaning “fragrant” or another meaning “moon”. Jericho was indeed a *fragrant* city because of the sweet-smelling trees abounding in that vicinity. Jericho was associated with the *moon* because it was the center of Canaanite moon-worship. But neither a fragrance nor a false god can cure physical blindness.

The same is true in the spiritual realm. Manmade religion smells good, for Babylon is noted for its “cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense” (Revelation 18:13). And manmade religion is noted for its worthless gods. (Note also that our English word *lunacy* derives from the Latin word for “moon”, *luna*.)

**II. Bartimaeus was nevertheless “the son of honor”** (v.46) – for that is the meaning of his name (*bar* = “son” & *timaios* = “honorable”). Bartimaeus’ name seemed to mock him, for this “son of honor” was a blind beggar in a place where no hope for his healing could be found. But he was soon to be healed by the Great Physician. And his healing would manifest him to be a son of God – “the son of honor” in the highest sense.

The same is true of all God’s children. Jesus assures them, “If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor” (John 12:26).

**III. Jesus went to the place of Bartimaeus** (v.46). Bartimaeus could not come to Jesus; so Jesus went to Bartimaeus. As in the case of Zacchaeus, another Jerichoite saved by Jesus, “the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). As “He needed to go through Samaria” (John 4:4) in order to save His people there, so here He needed to go through Jericho.

The same is true of all God’s children. We all are by nature incapable of coming to Jesus for healing. He tells us that in and of ourselves “No one can come to Me” (John 6:44, 65) – despite the objections of freewillers to the contrary. We have no hope of coming to Christ unless He first comes to us.

**IV. Bartimaeus recognized Jesus for whom He is** (v.47). Luke’s parallel account (Luke 18:36f) informs us: “And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.” Mark here continues the narrative: “And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David ....’” They who identified Him as “Jesus of Nazareth” may have acknowledged Him as a mere man from that place. But Bartimaeus recognized Him as “Jesus, Son of David”:

• *Jesus* means “Jehovah Is Salvation” and declares Him to

be the Savior of His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21);  
• *Son of David* declares Jesus' Messiahship, for it was well known "that the Christ is the Son of David" (Matthew 12:35; 22:42; cp. Isaiah 9:6f; Jeremiah 23:5f).

Bartimaeus also recognized Jesus by:

- the Hebrew title *Rabboni* (v.51, pronounced *rab-bon-ee'*, translated *Lord* in KJV) or "My Great Master" – greater in rank than a Rabbi;
- the Greek title *Kurios* (Matthew 20:33, pronounced *koo'-ree-os*) or "Lord", which expresses Bartimaeus' belief in Jesus' deity (as in John 20:28).

Good things are bound to happen to one recognizing this passerby as Son of Man and Son of God, Son and Lord of David, Master and Savior of sinners.

**V. *Bartimaeus begged from Jesus what he could not obtain from others*** (v.47): "Have mercy on me!" He begged for alms from others. But he begs for healing and salvation from Jesus. Perhaps he remembered the prophecy of Messiah's coming that promised "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (Isaiah 35:5f).

**VI. "Then many warned him to be quiet"** (v.48). Think of it! Here is a blind man begging for mercy from the One who was already known for healing the blind (e.g., Luke 7:21f). But his fellow townsmen try to silence him. No reason is given for their attempt to do so. But it is likely that they objected to Him whom they acknowledged as "Jesus of Nazareth" being addressed as the "Son of David" and therefore the *Messiah*. Folks in manmade religion give lip service to Jesus the Man, but they object to Him being acknowledged for all that He truly is. Some things never change.

**VII. *Bartimaeus more fervently cried for mercy*** (v.48): "but he cried out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'" A blind beggar will not be silenced when He realizes the only One who can save Him is present.

**VIII. *Jesus mercifully responded to Bartimaeus' cry*** (v.49): "So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called." Jesus never turns a deaf ear to the sincere cry for mercy. When He stood still, so did the crowd following Him. The resulting silence surely encouraged the mercy-seeking beggar, giving hope that Jesus was not deserting him. His encouragement was heightened when he heard the voice that "commanded him to be called". If Jesus commands one to be called to Him, surely He will not refuse the one called. We may assume Jesus' command was given to "His disciples" (see v.46), not to those who "warned Bartimaeus to be quiet" (v.48). Jesus' disciples delight in calling the afflicted to their Lord and Savior. This is true of me!

**IX. *Bartimaeus was dutifully called to come to Jesus*** (v.49):

"Then they [assumedly Jesus' disciples] called the blind man, saying to him, 'Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.'" When Jesus calls one to Him, the called one has every reason to be cheerful and rise to come to Him. This was true of me!

**X. *Bartimaeus dutifully responded to Jesus' call*** (vv.50f): "And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. 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.'" Note these particulars of Bartimaeus' response:

1. *He discarded his outer garment of tattered rags.* He would let nothing retard his speed in coming to Jesus. Sinners today coming to Jesus must rid themselves of their "filthy rags" of self-righteousness (Isaiah 64:6). They prevent one from coming.

2. *He rose.* The Greek word is the same as that used of Jesus when He "rose from the dead" (Acts 10:41; et.al.). And that was what Bartimaeus did! And that is what is done by all who are regenerated by the effectual call of Jesus Christ. "Therefore He says: 'Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light'" (Ephesians 5:14) – so you can see!

3. *He came to Jesus.* To whom else can a man go to receive mercy? Christ Himself is the Mercy of God (Luke 1:72).

4. *He prayed to receive his sight.* For what else would he beg from Jesus? He wants to behold His Lord and Savior!

**XI. *Bartimaeus by faith was healed*** (v.52): "Then Jesus said to him, 'Go your way; your faith has made you well.'" Faith in Christ does what cannot be done by works of self or keeping of law or duties of religion.

**XII. *Bartimaeus' "way" was afterward "Jesus"*** (v.52): "And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road". Note that Jesus told Bartimaeus to "Go your way" and that in response "he followed Jesus." All who are healed by Jesus Christ consider Him their Way (as in John 14:6)! He leads all the way to the heavenly Father, where every follower is proven to be a Bartimaeus, "Son of Honor". Are you following Jesus?

– Daniel E. Parks