

Twas Blind but Now I See

Text: Mark 10:46-52

Introduction:

1. The context: Christ and the disciples are journeying to Jerusalem and pass through Jericho (new Jericho built by Herod the Great about 1.6 km's from site of the O.T. Jericho). They were now on the last stage of the journey to Jerusalem, Jericho being about 15 miles (24 km) northeast of Jerusalem. They are joined by a great number of people making their way to Jerusalem for the Passover.
2. Christ has just taught the disciples a lesson in servant hood, pointing to himself as the supreme example (Vs. 45). This miracle is an example of the very truth Christ had just taught the disciples. We see the Lord of glory, serving a blind beggar by healing him.
3. This is the last miracle of healing recorded in Mark's Gospel. It presents a powerful picture of salvation and of Christian discipleship. We will study this miracle under 4 headings.

I. His Darkness (Vs. 46)

A. He was Blind (46a)

1. "blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus" = only Mark preserves the man's name. Possibly it was because he was well known to the early church.
2. Blindness was a common condition amongst people of that time. A Common belief was that blindness indicated a person was under the condemnation of God. Note question of the disciples concerning man blind from his birth in John 9:2 *"And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"*
3. Our hearts are darkened due to spiritual blindness (Rom. 1:21; Eph. 4:18).
 - a. There is religious blindness: Christ rebuked the Pharisees of His day for their spiritual blindness (John 9:39-41; Matt. 15:14)
 - b. There is Satanic blindness: 2 Cor 4:4 *"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*
 - c. Spurgeon: "We are all by nature blind and poor. It is true we account ourselves able enough to see; but this is but one phase of our blindness. Our blindness is of such a kind that it makes us think our vision perfect; whereas, when we are enlightened by

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the Holy Spirit, we discover our previous sight to have been blindness indeed.”

B. He was a Beggar (46b)

1. This man was poor and hopeless. Without Christ, we are spiritual paupers.
2. Spurgeon: “We are also by nature poor. Our father Adam spent our birthright, lost our estates...blindness and beggary are the lot of all men after a spiritual fashion, till Jesus visits them in love.”

II. His Desire (Vs. 47-48)

A. The Stimulation of his desire (Vs. 47a)

1. “when he heard that it was Jesus” = the mention of Jesus’ presence ignited hope and faith in this man’s heart. Luke 18:36-37 “And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.”
2. This man had not seen Christ but had evidently heard of Him prior to this point in time and had come to believe He was the Messiah and able to heal him. *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* (Rom. 10:17) You don’t have to see Christ to come to faith! Hearing the truth about Him is enough!
3. This was a pivotal moment in the life of Bartimaeus. Maclaren writes, “Jesus Christ was passing by. He was never to be in Jericho any more. If Bartimaeus did not get his sight then he would be blind all his days. Christ and His salvation are offered to thee now. Perhaps if you let Him pass, you will never hear Him call again and may abide in the darkness for ever.”
4. **Challenge:** There comes a time in each of our lives where we are confronted with Christ and his claims and must answer the question, “What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?” (Matt. 27:22) We come to a point of decision to either stay in our spiritual blindness or accept His healing touch. Perhaps today, this message is that very moment for you!

B. The Proclamation of his desire (Vs. 47b)

1. “began to cry out” = he shouted loudly so as to be heard. It was a loud and urgent cry.
2. “Jesus, thou Son of David” = a title of the Messiah. Reveals that this man understood who Jesus was. Messiah would come from the line of David (Matt. 1:1). It was an open confession of Jesus’ Messiahship. “I am the root and offspring of David...” (Rev. 22:16)
3. The O.T. prophesied that the Messiah would heal the blind: Isaiah 35:5-6 ***“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.”***

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4. “have mercy on me” = he knew he needed Christ’s mercy and it was a plea bound to be answered because mercy is an Attribute of God. It is in His nature to show mercy. Micah 7:18 *“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because **he delighteth in mercy.**”* “On the mount of crucifixion fountains opened deep and wide; through the floodgates of God’s mercy flowed a vast and gracious tide. Grace and love, like mighty rivers, poured incessant from above, and heav’n’s peace and perfect justice kissed a guilty world in love.”

C. The Opposition to his desire (Vs. 48a)

1. “many charged him” = the word ‘charged’ means to rebuke or censure severely (Wuest).
2. “hold his peace” = to be silent. Reason not given but likely they thought this man to be of too low a standing to warrant the Lord’s attention. After all, according to the popular view of the day, he was just suffering God’s judgment because of his sin.
3. Challenge: A large chorus of voices attempted to silence the man and to prevent him coming to Christ. What voices are hindering you from coming to Christ?
4. The good news is that Jesus Christ came to save broken, sinful people:
 - a. Luke 4:18 Jesus said, *“**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,**”*
 - b. Romans 5:6-8 *“For when we were yet without strength...”*
 - c. 1 Timothy 1:15 *“This is a faithful saying...”*

D. The Determination of his desire (Vs. 48b)

1. “cried the more a great deal” = the opposition only strengthened his resolve to get the Lord’s attention. What made him so determined to continue seeking Christ? He was evidently convinced of two truths:
 - a. His condition. He knew he was a blind begger and he was in no doubt as to his need.
 - b. Christ’s cure. He was in no doubt as to who Jesus was and knew He had the power to help him. This reveals the strength of this man’s faith.
5. “thou Son of David, have mercy on me” = he repeats the same plea for mercy.

III. His Deliverance (Vs. 49-52a)

A. Jesus Heard (Vs. 49-50)

1. “Jesus stood still” = the cry of a helpless sinner, stopped the Lord of glory, God manifest in the flesh, the Creator of the universe, in His

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tracks. And Christ still responds to the cry of sinners for mercy. Oh how the loving heart of the Saviour is moved towards sinners (John 3:16-17).

2. “commanded him to be called” = a rebuke to those opposing this man.
3. “he casting away his garment” = “a large, heavy, outer garment. The poor often slept wrapped up in such a cloak.” (Phillips) It pictures his earnestness to respond to the call of Christ. He ran to Christ and cast aside anything that would hinder him from getting to Him. “You have to abandon something if you are to go to Christ to be healed...there is something that entangles your legs and keeps you from finding your way to Him.” (Maclaren)

B. Jesus Helped (Vs. 51)

1. “What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?” Christ questions this man to draw out a specific request. He had issued a general call for mercy but Christ wanted him to express his need more precisely.
2. Question: If Christ asked you this question, what would your answer be? What do you desire Christ to do for you? It is important that we understand what we are coming to Christ for. This man had a clear view of his need, to receive his sight. So, when we come to Christ for salvation, we need to have a clear understanding of what we are coming to be saved from.
3. ‘Lord’ = Same word used by Mary Magdalene when she saw the risen Christ in John 20:16. A title of deep reverence.

C. Jesus Healed (Vs. 52a)

1. Jesus had compassion on this man – “*So Jesus had **compassion** on them...*” (Matt. 20:34)
2. Jesus touched his eyes (Matt. 20:34).
3. Jesus pronounced him whole – “thy faith hath made thee whole”
 - a. “made whole” = comes from word most often translated ‘save’ in the N.T. (93 times).
 - i. He was made whole (saved) physically.
 - ii. He was made whole (saved) spiritually. The same phrase is expressed in Luke’s account as “thy faith hath saved thee.” (Lk. 18:42)
 - iii. Maclaren: “Faith was the path by which Christ’s mercy rushed into the man’s soul...My faith is the hand that grasps His; it is His hand, not mine, that holds me up. My faith lays hold of the rope; it is the rope and the Person above who holds it, that lift me out of “the horrible pit and the miry clay.”
 - iv. Note: The word is in the perfect tense indicating a permanent condition. He was changed forever!

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- b. Healing was instantaneous – “immediately” (one of Mark’s favourite words). Salvation takes place in a moment of time.

IV. His Discipleship (Vs. 52b; Luke 18:43)

A. He had a new Path (Vs. 52b)

1. “followed Jesus in the way” = he became a follower of Christ. He had a new attachment to the Lord.
2. Spurgeon: “There is but one thing the poor blind man now longs for – it is that he may always see the man who has opened his eyes. What a beautiful picture of the true convert this is. The moment his sins are forgiven, the one thing he wants to do is to serve Christ.”
3. Note: Observe the order. He was first saved by faith, then he became a follower of Christ. The modern, watered down, 21st century Gospel often tells people to “follow Jesus” but fails to emphasise that they must first be saved!
4. It is said of the 144 thousand in Revelation 14:4 “*These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.*”
5. The Christian life is described in the Book of Acts as “this way” We are called to a whole new life as followers of Christ. We no longer walk the broad road of destruction, having entered salvation through Christ the door/gate, we walk the narrow road. We no longer live autonomous, selfish lives. Our direction and destiny are in the hands of our new Master. His instructions are our new code for living. This is life, not legalism!

B. He had a new Praise (Luke 18:43)

Luke 18:43 “*And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.*”

1. Christ receives glory from the man himself.
2. Christ receives glory from those who witness the miracle.
3. Psalm 40:1-3 “*I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: **many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.***”
4. Thanksgiving is to be a prominent part of our Christian walk: Col. 1:12-14 “Giving thanks unto the Father...”

Conclusion: Sinner, Christ has drawn near to you this day. Will you come to Him for salvation from your sinful condition? Saint, are you living the life of a disciple? Are we living in obedience to Christ and His Word?