

THE SCROLLS

Meeting The Messiah | Mark 10:46-52

Life Lesson

Bartimaeus shows that true discipleship is marked by faith, humility, and persistence. While others sought glory, he sought mercy. His loud cry for Jesus, his bold faith, his willingness to cast aside everything, and his immediate decision to follow reveal a heart entirely devoted to Christ. True sight comes when we recognize who Jesus is and choose to follow Him in faith, wherever He leads.

Examine Scripture

46 They came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus (the son of Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting by the road. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 48 Many warned him to keep quiet, but he was crying out all the more, "Have mercy on me, Son of David!" 49 Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called the blind man and said to him, "Have courage! Get up; he's calling for you." 50 He threw off his coat, jumped up, and came to Jesus. 51 Then Jesus answered him, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Rabboni," the blind man said to him, "I want to see." 52 Jesus said to him, "Go, your faith has saved you." Immediately he could see and began to follow Jesus on the road.

- Circle "Jericho" in v. 46.

Make a Wish

Each evangelist wrote their Gospels with specific intentions to effectively communicate the Good News to their audiences. Notably, Mark arranged his Gospel geographically. As he presented the teaching and ministry of Jesus, Mark traced the path from Galilee to Jerusalem, deliberately directing the narrative toward the cross. Now, we see Jesus and the Disciples traveling through Jericho, where Jesus performs the last recorded miracle in The Gospel of Mark.

It is interesting to note that this week's text contrasts sharply with last week's. Last week, we read about James and John wanting to sit at Jesus's right and left when He comes into His kingdom. Jesus asked the brothers, "What do you want me to do for you?" (v. 36). They responded with a plea for position and power. In this passage, Jesus asks a blind man, Bartimaeus, the same question: "What do you want me to do for you?" (v. 51). Bartimaeus responds simply, "Rabboni, I want to see" (v. 51). It's the same question from Jesus, but very different responses.

James and John sought more; Bartimaeus sought mercy. James and John craved glory; Bartimaeus longed for grace. James and John wanted recognition; Bartimaeus simply wanted to see. Jesus rebuked James and John; He responded immediately to Bartimaeus. Wanting something from Jesus is not necessarily wrong. In fact, He asks the same question of all of us. It all depends on how we respond. Do we seek something from Jesus that will bring glory to us or to Him?

V. 46

Jesus and the Disciples are getting closer to Jerusalem. As they pass through Jericho, before starting the steep climb into Jerusalem, Jesus meets a blind man named Bartimaeus, or rather, Bartimaeus meets Jesus. Bartimaeus is sitting by the road begging, which was common for those with disabilities because they depended on the kindness and charity of others. This was a good opportunity for Bartimaeus and other beggars because there were crowds heading to Jerusalem for Passover. Pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover would likely be

- Circle “Bartimaeus” in v. 46. Write “Matt. 9:27-31; Luke 18:35-43” above it and read the corresponding accounts.
- Underline “Jesus of Nazareth” and “Son of David” in v. 47. Write “His humanity” above “Jesus of Nazareth” and “His deity” above “Son of David.”
- Bracket “have mercy on me” in v. 47-48 and “your faith has saved you” in v. 52. Write “ultimate grace and mercy= salvation.”
- Underline “immediately,” “could see,” and “follow Jesus” in v. 52. Draw a line connecting these phrases to show how quickly Jesus healed and Bartimaeus followed.

Personal Notes

even more generous to the poor and needy. During a time of celebrating deliverance from slavery, Bartimaeus was about to celebrate his own deliverance from blindness.

It is interesting to observe the specific details in Mark’s account of Jesus healing Bartimaeus. In Matthew’s Gospel, we learn that there were actually two blind men (Matt. 20:29-33). There is no reason to see this as a contradiction; beggars likely helped and relied on each other. Yet, Mark chose to focus on Bartimaeus. Similarly, Luke presents the same account as Mark but does not name the blind man. So, why did Mark ensure we knew Bartimaeus’ name? Any explanation is speculation at best, but one explanation fits well. Remember, Mark’s purpose in his Gospel is to demonstrate true discipleship. As one commentator explains: “The account serves well as an example of what discipleship involves and thus is an excellent conclusion to 8:22–10:52, which emphasizes the requirements of Christian discipleship.” Bartimaeus is likely named because he immediately began to follow Jesus. As we will see in (v. 52), Bartimaeus followed Jesus “in the way.” Since Bartimaeus is the only person healed by Jesus that Mark names, it is probable he was known in the early Church, and Mark wanted to use Bartimaeus as an example of what it means to faithfully serve and follow Jesus.

Vs. 47-48

Bartimaeus must have heard the rumbles of the crowd that Jesus was approaching. Again, we see how expansive Jesus’ reputation was. Not only were the crowds humming with excitement, but Bartimaeus knew that this Jesus of Nazareth was the famed Jesus that was able to perform miraculous healings. So, when he heard Jesus was near, Bartimaeus began “to cry out” (v. 47). The word for “cry out” is “krazo” which means to “croak like a raven; to scream; to shriek excitedly.” Mark even uses this word in the description of the demon possessed (Mark 5). In other words, Bartimaeus was not just calling out; he was yelling, screaming, doing whatever he could to draw Jesus’ attention.

Mark is careful to not only describe how Bartimaeus was crying out, but what he was crying out: “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” First, Bartimaeus calls out “Jesus” which means “Jehovah saves.” However, Bartimaeus adds intensity to his cry by placing on Jesus the Messianic promise of the Son of David that would restore Israel and free its people from all oppression. Son of David is synonymous with the title of Messiah or Christ. Here and its repetition in (v. 48) are the only occurrences of this title in Mark. As Jerusalem and the cross approach, Mark is emphasizing the divine nature of Jesus.

Interestingly, despite such a beautiful Christological declaration, the crowds tried to silence Bartimaeus. Perhaps his shrieks and outbursts were considered disrespectful during the heightened

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spiritual moment of the upcoming Passover. Some might have disliked him giving the title of Messiah to Jesus. Others simply wanted Jesus to focus on them instead of Bartimaeus. Still, others might have been showing prejudice against the disabled, as they were seen as being as low as lepers. Whatever their reasons, the crowd aimed to silence Bartimaeus. And what was his response? He shouted “all the more” (v. 48). His desire for healing, his desire to meet Jesus, and his wish to be free from darkness outweighed any concern about others or what they thought. Jesus was all that mattered to him. When others try to silence your faith and worship, how do you respond? We can learn a lot from Bartimaeus!

Vs. 49-50

In (v. 49), we read the most encouraging words: “Jesus stopped.” As we have journeyed through the Gospel of Mark, we have seen the compassion of God demonstrated through Jesus. Jesus is compassion personified; at every turn, in every moment, He showed compassion toward others. In this moment, His compassion caused Him to stop. Jesus stopped and turned to Bartimaeus.

As we have already seen, Jesus was deeply focused on Jerusalem, walking the steep road to the cross with thoughts of enduring suffering and death for mankind's salvation. Yet, even with that focus and determination, Jesus still “stopped.” Don’t overlook this without careful thought. As He approached the most important moment of His earthly ministry—the very purpose of His incarnation—Jesus took time to pause and show compassion to a beggar! In the same way, you are not forgotten or insignificant. Even while holding the universe together, Jesus still stops for you!

Jesus commanded that Bartimaeus be called to Him. Notice the change in the people's tone. The very ones trying to silence Bartimaeus were now saying, “Have courage! Get up; he’s calling for you” (v. 49). Jesus' compassion has the power to soften even the hardest hearts. In response, Bartimaeus threw off his coat and ran to Jesus. His coat was likely laid out in front of him to collect alms from the pilgrims.

Interestingly, the riches of the rich young ruler kept him from following Jesus; yet, the rags of this blind man, his source of income, were quickly thrown off, and he immediately jumped up to run to Jesus. Nothing—not the appeals of the people, his blindness, nor his coat—was going to stop him from running to Jesus.

V. 51

Now, Jesus asks Bartimaeus the same question He asked James and John: “What do you want me to do for you?” (v. 52). James and John answered, saying, “We want you to elevate us. We want seats of power and authority. We want more!” In contrast, Bartimaeus, who is blind,

Personal Reflection

1. When Jesus asks, “What do you want me to do for you?” how would you honestly respond to Him today?
2. What obstacles or voices in your life try to silence your faith, and how do you usually respond?
3. What “coat” might you need to set aside to follow Jesus fully? What comforts, habits, possessions, or relationships could prevent you from truly following Him?
4. Do you recognize moments when “Jesus stops” for you?
5. How does Bartimaeus’ faith challenge your view of what it means to truly follow Christ?

Commentaries

Exalting Jesus in Mark by Daniel Akin

MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Mark 9-16 by John MacArthur

BECNT: Mark by Robert Stein

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says, “I want to see” (v. 51). Such a humble request. Bartimaeus knew his greatest need, and he did not miss the chance to have that need fulfilled. James and John wanted to be seen; Bartimaeus wanted to see.

Notice how humble Bartimaeus was by referring to Jesus as “Rabboni.” It is a heightened form of “Rabbi,” meaning “my rabbi, my master.” In (Luke 18), he even says, “Lord, Lord.” To Bartimaeus, Jesus was not just a rabbi; Jesus was his rabbi and master. What faith! Before even being healed, Bartimaeus already expresses complete devotion to Jesus. It is easy for one to express this type of devotion once they receive from Jesus, but a greater faith expresses devotion without receiving anything from Him. Bartimaeus expressed strong faith in Jesus, not just to heal him, but to be worthy to be followed.

V. 52

Notice Jesus’ response: “Go, your faith has saved you” (v. 52). Bartimaeus’ faith moves Jesus. Again, it is more than just faith in being healed; it is a faith in who Jesus is: the Son of David, the Messiah, the Christ, Lord, and Master. Jesus said, “Your faith saved you.” Now, this could refer to his faith healing his blindness, but that is not the word used. Healing in this sense has a particular word: “iaomai.” Here, Jesus uses the word “sōzō,” which means “saved,” not healed. Bartimaeus was healed of his blindness, but in a much greater and better way, he was saved. As a result, Bartimaeus “could see.” He gained physical sight, but also spiritual sight. The faith he expressed in blindness became tangible in his newly found sight.

After immediately gaining his sight, Bartimaeus “began to follow Jesus on the road” (v. 52). Unlike the rich young ruler, he left everything behind and followed Jesus. Some translations even render this moment as: “he followed Him in the way.” Mark’s intent is clear from mentioning Bartimaeus and noting his immediate following of Jesus; Mark is again illustrating true discipleship. One commentator, Robert Stein, writes, “The account also serves to teach what Christian discipleship involves. To truly ‘see’ involves faith to understand that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of David. The action of Bartimaeus is a paradigmatic example of what it means to be a Christian. Like Simon and Andrew, he follows Jesus in the way of the cross.” For a blind man, Bartimaeus had clear sight. He knew who Jesus was and what it meant to be His disciple.