

Love That Calls People Out of Darkness

Class Objectives

- **When the opportunity comes to help someone find the light of the gospel, we must respond. The needs of others must not be ignored.**

Bartimaeus did not bother Jesus when he called out for Him as Jesus was walking toward Jerusalem. Jesus stopped, called for him, and personally interacted with Bartimaeus, inquiring about his need and the moving to meet that need, Mark 10.49-51.

- **We must respond in the spirit of mercy and love, being moved by someone else's desperation, to do what we can. The spirit with which we respond matters.**

Bartimaeus' situation was dire and desperate. He had no life. His main desire was to be relieved of his problem. Jesus cared, took time to listen, and did what he could to meet the man's need, Mark 10.51-52.

- **We bring people what they desperately need, ... a way out of their sin and an escape from judgment. The message of hope we carry matters.**

We must be looking for ways to steer our conversations toward Jesus. As a person confronts his or her sin problem, some of those conversations may not always be pleasant. But we must never forget our mission and purpose, i.e., we have each been called to a *ministry of reconciliation*, 2 Corinthians 5.18.

Think About It

1. Imagine that you cannot see. Take a few moments and write down what that might be like. How would being blind make you feel? *What emotional toll* would blindness hold over you?
2. Describe some of your frustrations and fears when you have been lost. How can you relate these feelings to someone who is spiritually lost?
3. What are you presently doing to call the lost out of darkness? Would you describe your present concern and activity as passive or aggressive? What are some things you can do to increase your own sense of urgency in helping the lost gain their spiritual sight?

What the Savior Said

Mark 10:46–52 (CSB)

A BLIND MAN HEALED

⁴⁶They 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. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁸Many warned him to keep quiet, but he was crying out all the more, “Have mercy on me, Son of David!”

⁴⁹Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”

So they called the blind man and said to him, “Have courage! Get up; he’s calling for you.” ⁵⁰He threw off his coat, jumped up, and came to Jesus.

⁵¹Then Jesus answered him, “What do you want me to do for you?”

“*Rabboni*,” the blind man said to him, “I want to see.”

⁵²Jesus said to him, “Go, your faith has saved you.” Immediately he could see and began to follow Jesus on the road.

Blindness was common in Jesus’ day, usually caused by an injury, birth defect, or disease. One of the most common causes was due to a highly contagious infection that could affect people of all ages, but especially children. It was carried about by large flies that would settle upon a person’s eyes, especially sleeping infants. Sometimes blindness was caused by high fevers. Other factors included blowing dust and sand, along with the intense glare of the sun. Along with everyone else who had a disability, blind people were social outcasts and often reduced to begging. Many believed their malady came as the judgment of God, John 9.1-2.

Blindness caused a man to be prohibited in serving in the priesthood, and blind animals were prevented from being used as a sacrifice. Blindness and poverty often went together. There were provisions in the law, Leviticus 19.14, for people to care for them. Mistreatment of the blind would cause a person to be accursed, Deuteronomy 27.18.⁵

Despite the directives in the law, Bartimaeus would have very much been a marginalized person of his day. It would have been a very natural thing for a blind beggar to be sitting along the side of the road at a time when so many individuals were on their way to Jerusalem.

When Bartimaeus hears it is Jesus he *began to cry out*, 10.47. This is not a casual *hey Jesus*, . . . it’s a “cry out, scream, or shriek.” BDAG describes it as a “vehement outcry, . . . like that of mentally disturbed

⁵ Harrison, R. K. with Macalister A. “Blindness.” Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised*. Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979–1988, Vol. 1, p. 525.

persons, epileptics, or the cry of a woman in childbirth.”⁶ The wording here goes on to say that he continued to do so, repeating himself over and over again. His pitiful condition and repeated cries bring him no mercy from the crowd who *warned him to be quiet*, 10.48. To them he is just a nuisance who needed to be quiet. He doesn’t care. He was undeterred and with unrestrained voice he *was crying out all the more*, “*Have mercy on me, Son of David!*” The sheer desperation of his situation is propelling him.

4. Read Mark 10.49. What does Jesus do in response to Bartimaeus’ desperate call? Is there any hesitation in Jesus’ voice? Does Jesus appear to be bothered by this man’s problem?
5. How did Jesus respond in loving mercy to this man’s problem?
6. How does this passage challenge us to see the desperation others are in and do what we can to help them receive spiritual sight?
7. What priorities do you need to change so you can more adequately fulfill the mission to which you have been called?

A Passage to Explore

2 Corinthians 5:18–6:2 (CSB)

¹⁸Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. ¹⁹That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us.

⁶ Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000, p. 563.

²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God." ²¹He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6 Working together with him, we also appeal to you, "Don't receive the grace of God in vain." ²For he says:

**At an acceptable time I listened to you,
and in the day of salvation I helped you.'**

See, now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation!

8. What is the ministry of reconciliation Paul mentions in verse 18?

9. What is the message we have been called to share in verse 19? (See 5.20-21)

10. How urgent is the message? (6.1-2)

11. Why is it so urgent that we get the message out?

Life Application

This week, make some time each day to spend a few moments alone with God. Every day, we will consider how we can demonstrate our love by engaging in the ministry of reconciliation to which we have been called. Take your time with each passage(s) so you can concentrate on what is being said. Use the questions as a springboard for your positive thoughts throughout your day.

Monday

12. Read Colossians 1.13-14. What are three things we find in these verses for which to be thankful? What does it mean to you that these have been accomplished for you?

13. As you speak to someone about Jesus, how can these three things be included in your message of reconciliation?

Tuesday

14. Read 1 Peter 2.9-10. Describe your newfound identity in Christ. What do each of the 4 descriptions Peter lists at the beginning of 1.9 mean for you personally?

15. What is your *mission* or *purpose* as described in the second half of 1.9?

16. Verse 10 describes your status as a child of God. The message that “we matter” is very powerful today as more and more people look at the world as a very impersonal product of evolution. As we come upon those who are struggling with the meaning of life do you find verses 9-10 as a source of help in finding “meaning” in life?

Wednesday

17. Read Ephesians 5.13-17. Why is it so important we walk wisely in this world? What will happen to those who are “unwise?”

18. What is the true state of the lost as described in v. 14? Why is this important for them to understand ... and why is it important for us to keep this in mind as we look at the world around us?
19. Why is there a sense of urgency connected to these verses? Why must this be connected to the message we share with those who are lost?

Thursday

20. Read John 8.12. How does Jesus identify Himself here? Is there any different source of light (spiritual truth) in our world?
21. What are the two results of following Jesus? What does it mean to “follow” Jesus?

Friday

22. Read 1 John 1.5-7. What does it mean to walk in darkness?
23. What does it mean to walk in the light?
24. What is the result of walking in the light? How can this message be attractive to the one lost in sin?