

Jesus vs. Isolation

Mark 10:46-52

He was born into a world that underestimated the pain that dominated his life. He wasn't the last was he? Most of us were born into the same world. So many people live in pain. There's a lot of hurt. Charles Spurgeon used to say preach like there's a broken heart on every pew. Now there are probably 20 broken hearts on every pew. It's time for us to really come together as Christians. We do not have the luxury of arguing over petty issues anymore. We must unite at the foot of the cross, the promise of Easter, and keep proclaiming the simple Gospel.

Loneliness and isolation are the great epidemic of our period of history. The feeling that no one will help, listen, or care. A heavy sadness settles over the soul, leading to severe anxiety and alarming suicide rates, which are now at their highest levels since World War II.

We are the most 'connected' generation in human history, yet we are the most isolated. We have followers and friends on social media, but no one to hold our hand in the dark. We live in a world that is loud, fast, and often indifferent—a world that tells the hurting to 'keep it down' so as not to interrupt the parade.

The story of blind Bartimaeus highlights the isolation that characterizes our world but is transformed by Jesus. Sitting outside the city limits as a beggar. He represents a marginalized, “invisible” figure, separated from society and the crowd, yet he persists in breaking through his loneliness to reach Jesus. Bartimaeus' social distance was measured not in feet, but in silence. He was an 'inconvenience' on the curb. He was the shadow that the sunlight forgot. To the crowd, he was just a landmark of misery; to the religious, he was a problem to be solved; but to himself, he was a man screaming into a void that never responded.

The thing about this story that is so captivating is the fact that it represents an individual who had been pushed aside by the rest of society as they passed by him on the side of the road many, many times. Perhaps you find yourself feeling like some opportunities have passed you by and some relationships have moved on without you. You just feel like you're damaged goods, not good enough.

You feel like you just sit as people go by and continue to do and experience great things. Many times in books of antiquity, including the scriptures, if you were a beggar, or you were blind or lame or a leper, you were simply known as that. You were not named by your name. So it's very interesting that he was actually called by his name, Bartimaeus.

No one bothered to stop for him and really connect with him, but Jesus, the God of the Universe did. Maybe you think no one really cares what you're going through. Jesus Christ cares, and He knows, and He stops today to get right in the middle of your mess so that He can work a miracle in your life. He knows your need, and He stops in the middle of your need and meets you right where you are. I love that about Jesus.

His isolation included:

- Physical Isolation: Bartimaeus sat by the roadside, outside the city of Jericho, placing him on the margins of society.
- Social Marginalization: As a blind beggar, he was considered “invisible” to most, lacking status and social connection.
- Attempts to Silence Him: The crowd tried to keep him in his place (isolated) by telling him to be quiet, yet he persisted.
- His Cry For Help: Bartimaeus's cry for mercy is seen as a desperate, final attempt to bridge his isolation, turning his situation into a moment of divine encounter, after which he immediately follows Jesus.
- The Meaning of the Cloak: His cloak, which he used to collect alms, represented his old life of isolation, dependency, and survival.

Today, you might feel like Bartimaeus. You might feel that your coat of loneliness and isolation is the only thing keeping you warm. You might feel that the 'Jesus of the Crowd' is too busy for you. Through the noise of your isolation, there is a rhythm of grace approaching. The King of Glory is about to stop the entire parade... just for you.

When the Lord Jesus came into this world 2000 years ago, He came for the purpose of going to Calvary to die on the cross for our sins. But, along the way, as Jesus made His journey to the cross, He went about doing good. Acts 10:38 says, *“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.”* In a real sense every trip that the Lord Jesus made was a goodwill trip. As He made His way to the cross to do the wonderful good of dying on that cross for our sins, along the way He was helping hurting people.

On this particular goodwill tour, Jesus comes to the little city of Jericho. Jericho was a very beautiful resort town. It was east of Jerusalem toward the Dead Sea. People would go there for vacations. It was filled with palm trees and rose gardens. The name Jericho means “fragrance.” They manufactured a variety of fragrant smelling substances. It was a fragrant day when the One who is the Rose of Sharon and the One who is the Lily of the Valley came to the city of Jericho.

Jesus was leaving Jericho headed to Jerusalem. He was headed to Jerusalem at this time for the celebration of the Passover Feast. This would be His last Passover meal, subsequently known in the scriptures as the Last Supper, that He would have before He was betrayed by one of His own, Judas, and then arrested, falsely accused, beaten, and ultimately crucified. That's where He was headed. This was His mission, where He was going, but for a moment, God redirects His steps.

Jesus is on the way out of the city of Jericho and there was a blind man sitting along the highway known as blind Bartimaeus. Jesus healed people from a variety of diseases. There were people who were paralyzed, and Jesus Christ healed them. There were people who were lame and could not walk, and Jesus healed them. There were people who were lepers, and Jesus Christ cured them.

Bar-Timaeus meant he was the son of Timaeus, and he was going to be somebody. Those parents were going to have their baby, and they have all these dreams and aspirations for what he would do. Then Bartimaeus was born, and he was blind, and in that culture, all of a sudden he's damaged goods. He's never going to be what they fully intended or hoped or dreamed, so there's disappointment. Maybe you can relate. Maybe you feel like you're a disappointment to one of your parents, maybe to a friend or another distant relative, maybe to a co-worker or a boss. You find yourself struggling to find your value because when you feel like you've let people down, and you begin to devalue yourself. We begin to think, “If I just arrive at this success, then I'll have value. If I've got this brand new phone, then I'm somebody. If I wear these types of clothes, then I'll be somebody. If I have that kind of house, or this kind of car, then I'll have value.” The only thing that we can actually truly find value in is what God says about us in His Word. Value is an important part of this story.

5-6 times Jesus healed people who were blind. The most familiar of them all is blind Bartimaeus. We know that these miracles in the physical realm illustrate to us what the Lord Jesus is able to do in the spiritual realm. Just as Jesus Christ was able to give sight to blinded eyes physically, Jesus Christ today is able to give sight to blinded souls.

What Bartimaeus Teaches Us:

1. You Don't Have To Have Sight To Be Seen.

“Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging.” Mark 10:46

The journey to find your miracle always begins with God. He's the only one who can work a miracle. He's the only source of miracles -- God intervening into our mess to give us a miracle. Bartimaeus was a mess, but he was about to experience a miracle.

- He was a blind man.

In oriental days, it was a very common thing to see people who were blind. In the Middle East blindness, is a very common problem. So it was not unusual in those days to see blind people all along the way. Some people believe that Timaeus himself was blind. If that be true then we have a double tragedy. Bartimaeus would have been a blind son of a blind father. He could not see.

Can you imagine the world of those who cannot see? Have you thanked God lately for your physical sight? Close your eyes and imagine for a few moments that you do not have your physical sight. Think about Bartimaeus. He's blind. He never saw a sunrise or a sunset. He never saw a tree. He never saw a flower. He never saw a river. He never saw the face of a loved one. Because he was born blind, he had no mental images of those things.

In his day, they didn't have seeing-eye dogs, so blindness would be a very dangerous. Can you imagine the danger a blind man would be in? Think about a blind man moving toward a precipice. He is just walking along, and he cannot see. He can get right to the very edge, but he doesn't know the danger he is in. One more step, and he's gone.

The Bible tells us that there is more to blindness than just physical blindness. There are more kinds of blindness than that caused by the optic nerve or the retina. The Bible talks about spiritual blindness.

2 Corinthians 4:4 says, *“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”*

There is mental blindness also. There are some people who cannot see mentally. The Lord Jesus said that we must be born again. When you get born again, that means you receive a new spiritual life. Sin has damaged man in every area of his being. The mind of man is damaged by sin. Because of our moral and mental blindness, it is necessary for us to get spiritual eyes.

You see some things as a believer that many people in this world do not see. It doesn't mean you are more brilliant than others. It just simply means that when you came to Christ, you got a set of spiritual eyes. You see more things. The tragedy of people in our world this morning who are mentally blind. They just do not see it.

Ephesians 4:18 says, *“They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.”*

The Bible talks about not only mental blindness, but moral blindness. You know why we are going through such debates in America on moral issues, why some things that are so morally clear-cut to us, and why some issues are so very right and wrong and black and white morally to us, and yet there are people in this world who do not see it? It's because they are morally blind. Bartimaeus was blind physically, but people today are blind morally and spiritually.

The Bible talks about an eternal darkness. The Bible talks about a blindness that is forever. If people die without Jesus Christ, never having seen mentally and morally and never having received the new birth and their spiritual eyes, then the Bible says their future is darkness forever.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:6, *“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.”*

Just like God spoke this world into existence, you need Him to shine His light in your heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. You need to be made to see. You need to see Jesus Christ.

Blind people can't see the danger of sin. Blind people can't see the foolishness of sin. Blind people can't see the loveliness of Christ. But if you will come to the Lord Jesus today and receive Him into your heart and life, you will see things in a brand new dimension.

- He Was A Begging Man.

This is not common today, but when I was a boy it was very common. In the little town where I was brought up, it was not unusual to see blind people on the little square in our county town begging. Blindness had turned Bartimaeus into a beggar. It put him on the poverty line. That is exactly what happens to people spiritually. There is also a spiritual poverty line. There is not only poverty in terms of physical things, there is poverty in terms of moral things.

There are many who are spiritually poor. Probably will have a good meal. Probably have an automobile to ride in. Probably have a good bed to sleep in. You are not on the poverty level physically, but you may be spiritually poor.

In Revelation 3 the Lord writes to the church in Laodicea and says, *“You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.”* Revelation 3:17-18

It is possible for this world to fill our pockets with material things and for the soul to be empty. That's what sin does to a person. Sin strips us of all worth and value and fills us with holes. Bartimaeus is sitting by the roadside. He cannot see. He has none of the basic pleasures of life.

2. You Don't Have To Have Ability To Be Healed.

“When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’” Mark 10:47

“When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth.” He couldn't see with his eyes, but he could hear very well with his ears. He had heard about Jesus. He had probably heard what Jesus had done for the crippled man. He had heard about Jesus curing the leper. On the other side of Jericho, there were two blind men that had already been healed by the Lord Jesus. He had probably heard what Jesus had already done for those blind people. There was some hope in his heart. He had heard what Jesus had done for others.

Have you heard what Jesus has done for anybody else? Do you know anybody else Jesus has changed? Do you know someone's life that has been made better by an encounter with Jesus Christ? What Jesus has done for somebody else, he can do for you. I think he heard Jesus was on the way.

Bartimaeus realized he had an opportunity. Do you think he thought maybe the coming of Jesus might mean something to him? He heard the wonderful announcement – “Jesus is passing this way!” Jesus is passing this way this morning. Jesus Christ is here. Do you sense His presence? Take your opportunity. Jesus is coming. The same Jesus that raises the dead and heals the sick is with us.

- Bartimaeus Saw His Opportunity.

As Jesus gets closer and closer, Bartimaeus begins to cry. He cried out, *“Jesus son of David, have mercy on me.”* That's a very interesting statement for a blind man to make. He calls Jesus the Son of David.

“Son of David” is a specific, prophetic phrase. It was used in those days to refer to the Messiah Himself. The Messiah was going to be the Son of David. When he uses the name, Son of David, it tells you that Bartimaeus has some spiritual understanding. He is seeing more than some people who could see physically were able to see. He began to see who Jesus is, and he understood that he is the Son of David.

There were predictions made in the Old Testament that the Messiah would open up the eyes of the blind. (Psalm 146:8, Psalm 35:5, Psalm 42:7) When John the Baptist was beginning to fill with doubts whether or not Jesus was indeed the predicted Messiah, he sent word and Jesus sent back to John the Baptist and said, *“Go tell John that the blind are receiving their sight.”* (Matthew 11:4-6, Luke 7:22).

Blind Bartimaeus, blind as he was, really knew what he needed was mercy. A lot of people don't know that's what

they really need. We are living in the day of rights. Everybody wants their rights. Women want their rights. Races want to have their rights. Seniors want their rights. I don't really want my rights. If I got my rights, I'd go to hell. That's what I'd get. I don't need what I deserve. What I need is what I do not deserve. That's what mercy is.

How are you standing before the Lord? Are you standing before the Lord in your own righteousness? I know me, and I know I don't want what I deserve. I'd like to have mercy.

A father was upset one time because I didn't hire their child for a job. I didn't know the man, but he drove down to Goldsboro and told me how upset he was. When he got ready to leave, he told me he was going to find out every bit of dirt there was on me, and he would bury me if it was the last thing he ever did. I told him to go ahead, but I needed him to know before he started that what I know about me already is a lot worse than what he will ever find out about me. What I know is, I don't want what I deserve. What I need is mercy. Mercy is not getting what we deserve. Blind Bartimaeus said, "*Have mercy on me.*"

God specializes in the very thing we are in need of. Ephesians 2:4 says, "*He is rich in mercy.*" Titus 3:5 says, "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy has saved us.*" That's what it means to be saved. It means God doesn't give us what we deserve. God gives us what we do not deserve. I deserve hell, and God gives me heaven. I deserve wrath, and God gives me joy. I deserve doom, and God gives me glory. "*Have mercy on me, Lord.*"

The next verse says, "*Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'*" Luke 10:48

They didn't get many celebrities coming through Jericho. They were saying, "Be quiet, blind man. Don't interrupt. You're embarrassing us. This is special. You're embarrassing yourself and all of Jericho, so sit down and be quiet."

What did he do? He just yelled louder. When you start honoring God, you stop trying to please everyone else. When you start honoring God, you stop worrying about what everyone else is thinking about you. Anytime a person gets interested in spiritual things, there will be voices that will try to silence them. The minute you get really interested in coming to know the Lord, the devil is going to try to shut you up. The devil is going to try to stop that longing. If deep in your heart you have a desire to be saved and to be forgiven and to have the deepest needs of your life met, the devil is going to say, "Don't you pay any attention to that."

When you get interested in being different and surrendering to the Lord, the crowd you run with will try to mock you and try to shut you up. You get interested in your soul, and they will try to drown that out. If you're young, your school buddies will try to do something to stifle that. The group you party with will start making fun of you. They will try to silence you. But they couldn't stop blind Bartimaeus. The Bible says, "*but he shouted all the more.*" One translation says, "He yelled louder and louder." If you want to know God today, don't let anything stop you. If you need to know Christ as your Savior, don't let anybody keep you from coming to the Lord.

Maybe you have a dream. There will always be people who will try to crush that dream. Maybe you have an ambition, but there will always be people to discourage that ambition. They are going to always tell you all the reasons why you can't do something. He said, "This is my opportunity, and I will not let it pass by this time."

Maybe you don't know if He will save you, just cry out a little bit louder. You don't know if folks will make fun of you. Cry out a little bit louder. You don't know if it will really work or not. Cry a little bit louder. Here was a man who saw his opportunity and took his chance while he had it. Take your opportunity while you have a chance.

You can stop worrying about what everyone else is thinking about you because everyone else is not thinking about you. They're thinking about what everyone else is thinking about themselves. When you focus on God and honor God, you stop worrying about what everyone else is thinking about you. Start calling on Jesus and honor Him, and He'll give you the desire of your heart.

We are living in an uncertain world. How do you know that before the day is over that there won't be just one little beat in your heart that will stop and it will be over. This may be your opportunity. This may be your chance.

- Bartimaeus Seized His Opportunity.

There are opportunities that come that you must not let them pass by you. You have to seize the moment that God has set in front of you.

Bartimaeus seized the opportunity and said, “*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.*” Bartimaeus was in the worst physical position to receive a miracle. He was in the worst location to receive a miracle. He was in the back of the crowd. He couldn't see how to get to the front of the crowd. He just knew Jesus was coming through and everyone was crowding around Jesus, but he was in the perfect place spiritually, the perfect position spiritually to receive his miracle more than anyone else in the crowd that day. Why? He positioned his heart.

3. You Doesn't Have To Have It All Together To Have Value.

“*Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.'*” Mark 10:49

Jesus stops along the side of the road for someone. That doesn't seem to happen much today. The King James version says, “*And Jesus stood still.*” Isn't that an amazing statement? Jesus is in a big parade, hundreds of people around Him with all kinds of noise and commotion going on, but there is the voice of one poor old blind beggar along the side of the road. He cries to the Lord Jesus, and verse 49 says, “*and Jesus stood still.*” The cry for mercy stops the Son of God in His tracks.

Right now, if you have any interest in your heart in coming to know the Lord and changing your life, all of heaven is interested in you right now. All of heaven is interested in our service today. All of heaven is looking on to see what happens in the lives of people.

1 Peter 1:12 says, “*When they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.*”

Jesus stops. Jesus stands still. He said, “Call him.”

- Heaven calls.

Isn't that beautiful? I believe in the call of Jesus. I believe Jesus still calls people today. I believe Jesus still speaks to people's hearts today. Has Jesus spoken to you? Has He spoken to you in some sweet song? Has Jesus spoken to you in the words of a friend? Has Jesus spoken to you through some circumstance, through some trouble, some trial, some difficulty of your life? Jesus is trying to speak to you.

The most basic need of life is still our spiritual need. You have guilt, and you need someone who can remove that guilt from your heart. You have sin, and you need someone to forgive that sin. You need hope for the future, but you need someone to give you that hope.

Jesus is calling you today. He is the cure. Jesus can give you forgiveness today and save you and open your eyes.

“*So they called to the blind man, 'Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you.'*” Mark 10:49

It was the very people that were rebuking him and telling him to be quiet. Jesus stopped and told them, “*Bring him here.*” Now all of a sudden they're having to deliver Bartimaeus to Him. So they lead him up to Jesus.

“Cheer up!” Mark 10:49

He's getting some good news. He's got something to shout about. Things are about to change for him, and he doesn't know it.

"Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus." Mark 10:50

It's interesting that he had to throw something away to get to Jesus. You don't just come to Jesus and live in your sin. That's not what the Bible teaches. The Bible says you have to turn your back on sin. You have to reject your sin. When the prodigal son came out of the hog pen, he left where he was to come to the father's house.

There was a little boy who got his hand caught in a vase. They did everything they could to get that boy's hand out of the vase, but they couldn't get it out. Finally, at great risk to the boy's hand, they had to crack the vase. When they did, they found the little boy had his fist doubled up and in that hand he held on to a quarter. He wouldn't let go of the quarter, so he couldn't get out of the vase. There are some of us holding on to the quarters of this old life and aren't willing to let them go.

Blind Bartimaeus knows what he needs, and he casts away his garment. He rises and comes to Jesus.

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. Mark 10:51

"I want to see." It was a prayer for a miracle. He was praying to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for a miracle. If Jesus asked you that this morning, could you put into words what you need? What would you say? Do you need to experience freedom from a drinking problem? Do one of your children need a miracle? Do you need deliverance from depression? Do you need healing in your marriage? Do you need to overcome fear? Do you have a habit you can't break? What do you need to throw off?

What is the miracle you need most, that burden that you carry that you brought in with you today? Bartimaeus could have said: "I'm poor. I need some money," or "I'm homeless. I need a home," or "I'm out of work. I need a job," or "I have no friends. I need a friend." But he said, "I want to see." That was the miracle he needed most.

"The blind man said, 'Rabboni, I want to see.'" Mark 10:51

Every one of us is really desperate for God to meet our needs. It's just that most people don't realize how desperate they really are. We're so totally dependent upon God for our every breath, but it's just that many times we don't realize how desperate we are. But this blind beggar, he knew where he was. He admitted where he was. He was in a place of desperation. He was in a place of darkness. He was in a place of great need.

The word "Rabboni" means "my Master, my Savior." It is a highly respectful, personal, and intimate title. It appears only twice in the New Testament (John 20:16, Mark 10:51), used by Mary Magdalene and here by blind Bartimaeus.

Before he'd been saying, "Jesus, Son of David." That was a national Messianic title given to Jesus, but this was different. This word is very different. It's only uttered one other time in the gospel accounts by anyone, and it was Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb when she had seen the risen Christ. She said, "My Master." When Bartimaeus says this, it's personal. It's "My Master, my Lord." What he was saying is, Jesus I belong to you!

Our value comes from who we belong to. The value of an object is simply what someone is willing to pay for it. That means we're all pretty valuable. Because you were worth the price of Christ's blood upon the cross as a sacrifice for your sin and my sin so that we could be made right.

Bartimaeus, even in his blind state could see better than many of us today. When you understand who you are in Christ and what you can be, you operate and function very differently. You find a sense of value that comes from somewhere else. My Master. Jesus then says to him, "Go, your faith has healed you." He knew exactly what he needed. He needed sight. He just happens to be in the presence of someone who specializes in giving sight to blinded eyes. I don't know what you need today, but Jesus is a specialist in your case.

“Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.”
Mark 10:52

The word, faith, is the hand that receives what grace gives. Grace is the hand that extends salvation. Faith is the hand that receives salvation. It is by faith you can receive the Lord Jesus into your heart today.

“And immediately...” This is so characteristic of the way Mark writes in his Gospel. Right on the spot. That very moment. He said, *“I want to see.”* Jesus said, “Your faith has healed you.” In that moment, sight came into darkened sockets. In that moment, light flooded into blinded eyes. In that moment, he was able to see!

The first person he saw was Jesus. His eyes got a good look at Jesus. If you come to Jesus by faith this morning, He will become precious to you. He will become lovely to you.

“He followed Jesus along the road.” Mark 10:52

Experiencing Jesus always redirects you. Experiencing Jesus takes you from a place where you're going the wrong direction and will bring you to a place of going the right direction. Experiencing Jesus takes you from a place where you're stuck to a place of freedom and forgiveness. Experiencing Jesus takes you from a place of staleness to a place of new and fresh. Miracles never leave you where they find you.

I bet he was excited to tell somebody else about Jesus. There was a missionary who performed surgery on a blind man on a mission field. When the blind man got better, one day he disappeared from the missionary hospital. The doctor thought it was rather ungrateful of the man to have received his sight and just walk away and not even thank him for operating him and helping him receive his sight. A few days later the missionary doctor heard a knock on the door and there was that cured blind man. He had a rope, and on that rope he had brought ten other blind men. There were others who needed the same cure. We live in a world where so many need Jesus. We can follow Him, and we can tell others about Him.

If you have had your eyes opened, you ought to get a rope and go get others who are blind that need to be saved.

Can't you see blind Bartimaeus? He has his eyes, and he's able to see. He's following Jesus in that celebration march. He's in that goodwill tour. He's walking along in that line and he's just shouting, “You see that man at the front of the line? That's Jesus. I was a blind man along the road one day, and that man gave me my sight. I'm going to follow Him all the days of my life.”