



"What Did Jesus Say About Helping Others"

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Mark 10: 46-52

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9:15 AM Service

Mark 10:46-52 (NIV)

46 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. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

48 Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

49 Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."

So, they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." 50 Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

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

The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."

52 "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Have you ever been in a dark place that is so dark you cannot see anything? Like a tunnel or cave? Have you any idea how dark it can be in those places? A long time ago I visited a place in one of the tourist cities in Colombia, "Cartagena de Indians". And inside the walls of the old city exist several castles that were built by the revolutionaries to protect themselves from the conquerors of Spain. And one of them is settled on the top of a mountain; and that castle is connected by a tunnel 3 miles long to another castle in case they needed to escape. Let's say, it's some 350 feet under the surface of the earth, and you would be impressed with the beautiful rock formations down below. Sometimes, with the help of colored spotlights, you can admire those unique and fascinating rock structures. But there is one point of the tunnel that you cannot breathe and it is too dark. There is a good chance that the guide may ask you to stand still for a moment while he turns off the lights. And as you stand there in total darkness, he may explain to you that this darkness is 40% darker than the darkest night ever experienced on the surface of the earth.

You may have heard the expression, 'I couldn't see my hand in front of my face'. Well, it will give you a pretty helpless feeling as you stand there in that tunnel with such deep and total darkness!

And that is also the helpless condition in which we find Bartimaeus in the Scripture reading today. It was not likely that he was blind by his own choice. Perhaps he was born that way. But Bartimaeus could not participate

in the regular activities of life — because he was blind.

So, I found three points of discussion on the sermon: **What did Jesus say about how to help others?**

1. Bartimaeus, in his blindness, calls on Jesus.

But in the meantime, Bartimaeus is sitting along the roadside. The Bible tells us that he was a beggar. We may safely assume that 'begging' is the most humiliating way of making a livelihood. A beggar is totally dependent on others. Bartimaeus was also blind, which made him even more helpless. He completely depended on the kindness and mercy of other people. Day after day he would sit along the road calling out, *"Please, sir, remember the beggar, please sir, please!"* Perhaps, from time to time, he would receive something and say, *"Thank you, thank you!"* Then he would have to ask again, *"Please sir, remember the beggar!"*

But that day was going to be a good day for Bartimaeus because the Passover Feast was going to be held in Jerusalem. Thousands of people were on their way to this great feast. Large crowds would walk past the spot where Bartimaeus was sitting. And you know how it goes: when people are going to a festival, they are usually in a good or generous mood. And furthermore...the more people coming by, the greater the chance that Bartimaeus would collect some money, right? Yes, Bartimaeus expected to have a good day! But... Bartimaeus was blind!

To be blind is to live in total darkness. Not to be able to see the movements of the clouds, the trees, the plants and the people walking back and forth. Not to be able to see flowers in spring, the colors of the leaves in this season or the colored feathers of birds. Not to be able to see the joy or the smile of another person or the tenderness in the tears in the eyes, etc.

Oh, certainly, we can play hide & seek or we can cover our eyes but we still know where Wesley Café or the upper narthex or the back door is. That is not real blindness. But Bartimaeus was really totally blind! That is to say, he was physically, totally blind. ***But he was not totally 'spiritually' blind.*** When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was nearby, all kinds of thoughts came to his mind. He had heard about different miracles. Jesus had healed lepers and crippled people. He had even raised people from the dead! And... this was important for Bartimaeus. . . Jesus had even given sight to the blind!

And so, Bartimaeus shouted, *"Rabbi, Son of David, have mercy on me!"* It was not a simple expression of faith; it was an expression of personal faith. That word moved Jesus to heal Bartimaeus. "Son of David" was a national messianic title but the title "Rabbi" means Master. But this phrase is found in the book of Psalms, in Psalm 4, in Psalm 6, in Psalm 41, in Psalm 51, in Psalm 109, and in Psalm 123. Bartimaeus called on Jesus to do something for him. Bartimaeus believed that Jesus could do something for him. It was only a simple cry, but Bartimaeus, in his helplessness, now calls on Jesus to help him! Have you ever felt so helpless that you called on Jesus to help you? Bartimaeus' faith may have been small, but what he had, he used to call on the Lord Jesus.

We sometimes wonder how many other people there were in those days who cried to Jesus to help them. We may also wonder how many dying souls there are today, still calling on Jesus for mercy. How many people still have enough of that spiritual breath left? Do you know any among your neighbors, your friends or perhaps among your relatives?

But Bartimaeus continues his calling. He was very persistent. This is the chance of his LIFE! It's now or never. A decision has to be taken! There may never be another time or another person who would be able to lead him out of his darkness into light. And so, Bartimaeus calls on Jesus in spite of what people tell him, in spite of all the noise around. ***But note that, in spite of all that arguing and noise, Jesus hears him!*** YES, Jesus always hears people when they call on Him. No matter where they are or where you are: at home, on the job, in the car, walking...He always hears you.

2. Jesus tells His disciples to call Bartimaeus.

But did you notice that, in spite of the fact that Bartimaeus calls directly on Jesus, that Jesus does not answer him back directly. Note how Jesus tells His disciples to go and call him. Jesus could have spoken directly and personally to Bartimaeus

Himself. That was no problem. But Jesus has His own way of doing things. He had a reason for that. He chose to involve His disciples because it would be better for them to get involved. It is better for His followers — for you and me, too. And so, Jesus uses His disciples as a means to call the blind beggar to Him. Jesus still does the same today.

The disciples encourage Bartimaeus and tell him, "Cheer up. He is calling you!" Bartimaeus jumps to his feet, throws his mantle to the side and while the people step aside making room for the disciples — one of them possibly holding Bartimaeus by the hand — they make their way to Jesus.

But God chooses to do things His own way. He could have led Israel out of Egypt in a much faster and easier way. He could have prevented Job from making that horrifying tumble from being a multi-millionaire to that shameful person sitting on the junkyard. He could also have prevented Bartimaeus from having been born blind. But God does things for a purpose and He often uses natural things and regular people to help bring about His will. Isn't that a wonderful thought that the Almighty God uses people like you and me to work for Him?

Perhaps you may be inclined to walk or drive home a little more slowly after the service, whichever way you go home today. You may start looking for some local Bartimaeus. But let me tell you that you probably won't find any. At least not the kind of Bartimaeus as was sitting near the roadside of Jericho. Jesus says to His disciples, "*You go and call him.*" That means that you and I are not calling people to follow us. We don't call those people to ourselves. We invite them to come to Jesus, Who, in the first place, called us. We may tell them that Jesus can do something for them--something that you and I cannot do. All we have to do is to tell them that Jesus is calling them.

Perhaps there are many, many people in nursing homes, in hospitals, in your neighborhood who would love to have someone bring a little sunshine in their lives. There may be children who need affection such as a hug in your neighborhood or here today. You can likely think of many other needs.

3. Jesus (The Light) vs. Bartimaeus (The darkness)

Here we have one of the greatest confrontations possible. On the one hand Jesus, the source of Light and Life. . . and on the other hand, possibly on his knees, blind

Bartimaeus.

The all-seeing God and the nothing seeing man.

The all-powerful, majestic Being (Jesus) and the helpless unfortunate human being (Bartimaeus).

Total Light and total darkness.

It is Jesus Who is the first One to speak. He asks, "What do you want Me to do for you?" Just imagine: Jesus Himself asking you, "*What do you want Me to do for you?*"

Bartimaeus was used to getting pennies and nickels and dimes in answer to his call for mercy. Most of the time he got nothing. Sometimes he became the object of foul play. Not many people would ever ask him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And now, imagine this, not just anybody, but Jesus Himself asks him, "What do you want me to do for you?" All he had to do is ask for it!

It is difficult to imagine the emotion, the tremble that must have run through his body, the lump in his throat, the tremble in his voice! Perhaps a tear in his blind eyes. This was it— now or never! And so from the bottom of his heart and from the depths of his soul he cries out, *"Rabbi, I want to see!"* Verse 51.

We don't know how old Bartimaeus was - twenty? thirty? forty-five or sixty? But all he wanted was his eyesight! Jesus was moved with compassion when He heard Bartimaeus cry out like this. Yes, He was acquainted with the misery of the sick, the lame and the poor. He had seen so much of it in His three-year ministry.

Then He spoke to Bartimaeus, *"Go, your faith has healed you"*. Those words must have been like an electric shock to Bartimaeus. Matthew tells us that Jesus touched his eyes and he immediately received his sight and followed Jesus on the way. What a joy it must have been for this man to receive his sight!

CONCLUSION

Today, we identified two kinds of people who are blind: physically blind and spiritually blind. You may know someone who is in any of these conditions or with other types of needs.

Therefore, what will be the question from us to them? Probably they are in that spiritual blindness and all that they see is darkness around them and because spiritual darkness is separation from God, this means: no hope, no light, and no life.

What you are going to do? What will be your question to them?

"What do you want Me to do for you?"

Remember the three basic steps on what Jesus say about help others....

1. Stay alert and listen.
2. Obey when Jesus calls you to do something.
3. Jesus wants us to move into an action.