

**Mark 10: 46-52; “Your Faith has Made you Well”, Sermon # 89 in the series –
“Astonished at His Teaching”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on February 3rd, 2019, for those gathered
at Premier Estates Nursing Home.**

The story of Blind Bartimaeus is the story of faith in exercise. Faith in Jesus Christ which is put into fervent exercise will always obtain what it is seeking for; if it is according to the will of God. So this afternoon we want to look together at this man’s exercise of faith which is so very commendable. And we want to ask ourselves if we have this kind of faith in exercise. If we do, we shall indeed find salvation and eternal life, and many other blessings besides. Our faith will make us well, and it will make us well over and over again all the way to heaven. There are 3 double acts of faith which Bartimaeus exhibits for us here in his seeking and finding of this great miracle from Jesus. 1st of all – We will think about his begging and his crying. Then, 2nd – We will look at his rising and his throwing off. And then 3rd – We will think about his receiving and his following Jesus.

1st of all – Let’s think about the faith of Bartimaeus in his begging and crying. (verses 46 and 47)

Bartimaeus was unable to see, and he had apparently been in this condition since he was born. He was also poor. He was a beggar who had for many years been forced to sit and beg alms from people passing by. When it comes to the condition of all men, whether they like to admit it or not; they too, are blind from birth in regard to spiritual things. As Jesus says in John Chapter 3, verse 3, “Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” He cannot perceive it spiritually. He cannot see, or understand, or discern spiritual things. He does not have the spiritual faculty of sight to do so. The sin which was committed by our first forefather Adam in the garden of Eden has affected all men in their nature. His sin has robbed us of our sight. The eye of the body is that faculty which takes in the images of the real world around us and is able to transfer those images to the brain, so that in our understanding, real comprehension of what exists around us, takes place. A blind man cannot do this except in some way by grouping and feeling; his other senses still intact.

Turn with me over to 1st Corinthians chapter 2, verse 14. “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” The natural man is the man without Christ, and since he is without Christ, he is without the Holy Spirit of God’s working in his mind which alone can give him sight. Once a person has believed in Christ, they have the Spirit. They have spiritual sight. They have the spiritual faculty of eyes in their heart, and because of this, the Spirit continues to help that person to discern spiritual things clearly. Notice that the things of the Spirit are foolishness to him, nor can he know them. He is blind to these realities and as such they seem foolish and strange to him.

Remember this, dear believer when you see people in the world acting foolishly and scoffing at the true religion of the Bible. They are blind. You should not so much grow angry with them as you should pity them and pray for them. They do not see the kingdom of God. Dear ones who listen to me this afternoon. Ask yourself if you are able to see spiritual things? Do you pray to God and ask Him to open your eyes so that you might see wonderful things from His law; His blessed word the Bible. When you are in a service of worship, are you praying to God in your spirit that you would behold His beauty and glory in the sanctuary? Bartimaeus, because he was also poor, was forced to become a beggar to people around him. He could not see to provide for his own needs, and so he needed to beg for his living.

Spiritual blindness results in people being poor, spiritually speaking, as well. They are not spiritually rich toward God. They do not give themselves to God to work in their hearts to change them to be the kind of people who would please Him; those who could begin to keep His commandments. This spiritual blindness is willful in them, and it is so bad, that they will not lower themselves to beg of other people to give them the gospel so that they might receive their sight. In many cases, it almost has to be forced upon them. And so, because of their blindness they do not know how to discern the difference between right and wrong. They do not know how to discern the difference between truth and error. And because they are willfully blind, and they have been so from birth, they do not seem to mind at all that this blindness continues on all the way through their life. They will not beg of God to be given their sight.

However, it will also be good for me to say and to acknowledge that there are some people who are blind, who are to be highly commended for their working hard to try to do what they can, to work with their disability. Some blind people have great self-motivation. I once knew a man, when I was going to college years ago, who was blind. And every morning he would bath himself, dress himself, and take up his long walking stick, and go off to class. I once asked him how he knew where he was going? He said to me, "I count all of my steps to each of my classes, and count them in relation to every place that I desire to go on my own." "And then I carefully walk the path counting the steps and I arrive at my desired destination." This indeed is very commendable and shows a good determination to do what he could to overcome his disability.

But the spiritually blind person thinks that they can make the best of their blind situation by not desiring any help, and not counting their own steps. They still want to believe that they will arrive at the desired destination of heaven by willfully holding on to their blindness. They actually think that it is something that is good and desirable for them to have. But as Job says in Job 31: 4, "Does God not see my ways, and count all my steps?" Yes He does, and He is the great judge and evaluator of our lives. He counts all of our steps even when we don't. And He will see to it that we will arrive to our desired destination if it is His good will. But if the unrighteous person does not ask for help and guidance from Christians in relation to the meaning of life. They do not consider how they should then live, or what will happen to them when they die, and all this is so, because they are spiritually blind.

Often, unfortunately, they will look to be helped from those who are also spiritually blind. They will take their cues on the meaning of life from others who are themselves spiritually blind and worldly-minded. And the Lord Jesus says of them, "If the blind lead the blind, will they not both fall into a pit?" In the context, when Jesus said these words, He was speaking of the Pharisees and those people who listened to them. In John Chapter 9 after Jesus healed a blind man, born that way from birth, he said to him, and to the Pharisees who were standing by, who did not approve of Jesus' healing him – "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind." Then it says that some of the Pharisees who were with Him when they heard these words, they said to Him, 'Are we blind also?' And Jesus had to say to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.'" "Therefore your sin remains."

People without grace, who try to be religious without the faculty of spiritual sight being given to them, often will strenuously assert that they do see, when really they do not see. Only Christ and His touch, giving them sight, will bring them to a true sight of their own sinfulness and their inability to discern things spiritually. There are so many things that you cannot do well when you cannot see. You cannot see if you look all right when you put your clothes on in the morning, and you cannot see at all to see if you look right after you have put them on. You have no ability to look into the mirror to comb your hair, or see if your clothes are arranged right on you, or not. You depend totally upon your sense of touch to do those things.

So it is, also, that people who do not have Christ, people who do not have grace, cannot do many things well, or many things right, either. They do not see what they are like before God or before other spiritually discerning people. They do not see their short-comings, their weaknesses, or their sinful failures to do God's will. They have no real ability to straighten these things out in their life without help. They really need to be given their spiritual sight, but they cannot do this on their own. Someone else must help them. The only one who can give you spiritual sight is the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me ask each one here this afternoon if you have consciously begged mercy from Christ to be able to see spiritually? This is surely one of the ways that you can tell if you have grace at work in your heart or not. Are you willing to beg God to send Christ to your blinded mind and clouded heart to "open the eyes of your heart" so that you can see? Are willing to cry out to Christ who is passing by in the preaching of the word here today, so that you might have your sight? This is what this man; blind Bartimaeus did.

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. He heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth who was passing by. He had heard before this, that Jesus was able to heal the sick and give the blind their sight. He prayed the right kind of prayer to have the Lord Jesus consider his plight. He cried out and he said, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" In this prayer he showed that he believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Son of David who had been promised in the Scriptures, and that he personally needed to be shown mercy. He needed to be shown mercy to have his sins forgiven, and he needed mercy to hopefully receive the gift of sight, when he got Jesus' attention.

This leads me to say that there are many people who tend to think that they ought to be forgiven of their sins without ever asking to be shown mercy. But if this is so, they really have not seen how unworthy they are of the least of God's mercies. Some people think that they deserve to be shown these mercies. But they do not see the depth of their sinfulness and their unworthiness before God. Sometimes, I am saying, you have to cry out when others think that you ought to cease crying out to God. But true faith; sincere faith; will keep crying out until it has Christ's attention. Will you not remember this?

2nd – Let's think about Bartimaeus' faith in his rising and his throwing off his cloak. (verses 48-50)

"So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called." "Then they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Be of good cheer.'" "Rise, He is calling you." "And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus." This is such a fine picture of the love of Jesus Christ. He is surrounded by His disciples, with a great multitude of people following Him out of Jericho, and it says, "He stood still". Jesus will, for the fervent cry of one needy person, stand still. And Jesus, now, having all power in heaven and earth at His disposal, He has the wonderful ability to "stand still" and consider you now; to consider your cries and prayers to Him for mercy. It is "through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not." "They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness." (Lamentations 3, verses 22 and 23) The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail," it says in another translation.

The disciples who stood by now, tried to encourage Bartimaeus with what he could not see; Jesus' standing still for him. "Be of good cheer," they say to him, "He is calling you." The faith of a person who is praying that the Lord would save them or help them should be encouraged by those who realize what is going on. Those who know the promises of the Lord Jesus, should relate them to the one who is seeking Christ, and they should assure them to be of good cheer. If they have not found Christ yet, and they do not have that assurance yet; certainly they shall if they will trust in His promises. Matthew 11: 28 – "Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls." John 6: 37 – "All that the

Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.” Be of good cheer, for Christ stands still for you to save you and to do what only He can for you, when you believe in the promises.

Let us who are believers and disciples, encourage the hearts of seekers with Christ’s promises of mercy. Bartimaeus rose to these words of Christ’s disciples and he believed that Christ would show mercy to him and hear his request. It says that “he threw aside his garment, rose and came to Jesus”. This garment was his beggar’s cloak. It was the thing that he trusted would show people that he was in need, and that they should give to him, to help him. But Bartimaeus cast it away. He cast away his own worthiness, his own righteousness, and every obstacle which might come to his mind, as to why Jesus should not answer him. He rose and came to Jesus.

Dear listener who is near to the kingdom of God: Do you see that you cannot find eternal and everlasting life and have the assurance of it unless you cast away everything related to your Old nature’s trying to justify you before God? That garment of self-sufficiency that you wear, which represents all that you are able to do to provide for yourself, and save yourself from the predicament of being blind and poor; even that must be cast aside, so that you might come and have Christ. Come to Christ and receive a better righteousness than your own, and eyes to see the glory of His grace and His salvation. Will you not do this? Come to Christ and He will give you sight. He will give you better spiritual garments to wear than the cloak of your own efforts and righteousness.

And then 3rd – Let’s think about Bartimaeus’ faith in his receiving and his following Jesus. (verses 51 and 52)

“So Jesus answered and said to him, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ “The blind man said to Him, ‘Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.’ “Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your faith has made you well.’ “And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.” Jesus knew what this man was asking for when He stood still and considered his cries. But that didn’t mean that He did not want to hear it from the man himself. It is just so with your prayers and mine. Jesus knows everything that is in your heart at any given time, and yet He still wants to hear your requests from your own lips. The prayer of the upright is His delight. Why does He command prayer of us when He already knows what we need before we ask? It is because He loves to hear your voice. He loves to be in relationship to you and to have fellowship with you.

Remember this beloved, for Jesus loves to hear and answer prayer. If you do not know if you know Him as your Savior, will you not pray the prayer of Bartimaeus? “Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.” “My Great One”, for that is how it is translated in the margin, “let me receive my sight.” And so Jesus gave it to him, along with this word: “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” Let us see from this incident that Jesus gives the greatest of blessing in relation to the exercise of faith. Faith is the opposite of fear. There may be many reasons that we can think of, as to why the Lord might not want to bless us, or to answer our prayers. There may be many doubts and fears that come upon us when we think of how far short we have fallen in the way that we have lived our lives. But let us learn to be of good cheer. The Lord can forgive all of our sins, and He can allay all of your fears. Your exercising your faith in Him will make you well.

The Lord is also calling to you who have not believed in the gospel. He will stand still and look to save you if you will only believe. When you exercise your faith in the Lord Jesus, he is well able to forgive all of your sins and to make you well. The most important part of wellness is not the body, but the soul. Remember the promises of God and be strengthened in your heart to continue to trust in Christ for everything related to life and godliness. Believe that He is full of mercy and full of goodness. He is asking you, even now – “What do you want Me to do for you?” Tell him what you would like Him to do for you; to heal your soul, and to make you well. And

then remember what He has called you to. He has called you to follow Him based upon the grace which He supplies. May your response be worthy of His call.