

[bart seen some]

:: mark 10.46-52 ::

The classic sitcom *I Dream Of Jeannie* ran for five years on NBC to compete with ABC's wildly popular *Bewitched* series.

The comic draw of a joke or a movie or a television show about a Genie is obvious because we know that anytime you make a wish to a Genie, things don't turn out the way you were hoping they would. There's always some catch, some interpretation, some mishap that leaves the wisher worse off than before.

There a question I'd like to pose each of us this morning.

What do you want Jesus to do for you?

It's an interesting question that we can ask ourselves, because it should bring out two things from our lives.

First, it should reveal what we know about Jesus Christ and how we think about God. Sometimes we have a tendency to think of Him more like a Genie than who He really is. It's easy to approach Him as a sort of supernatural vending machine as opposed to who He really is.

But, beyond that, answering that question will expose what our minds and thoughts are focused on and the direction which our life is going. The Bible says that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, which is why it's so important to pose spiritual questions to ourselves as we seek to move forward in our faith.

What do you want Jesus to do for you?

It is incredible to read that, at various times, Jesus would be talking to a person and He would pose this very question. Can you imagine, for a moment, what that would be like? The Creator of heaven and earth pausing to speak with you and inviting you to petition Him!

In our text this morning we'll take a look at one of those situations and see how that interaction can have a huge impact on our lives today. We will see that the King of heaven and earth has paused to speak to us and ask each of us, "What do you want me to do for you?"

The passage we're going to look at is Mark, chapter 10, verses 46 through 52. You can follow along as I read it aloud. Starting in verse 46 we read:

Mark 10.46-52 -Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

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.

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.

There are a lot of great characters in this text. It's interesting to think of these sorts of stories like this: If this passage was made into a one-act play, which character would you be cast as? How does your life line up to the various groups or individuals?

This morning we want to focus the most on blind Bartimaeus. He is an incredible example to us of not only how we can call out to God, but also what God wants to do in our lives.

Because, in Mark chapter 10, we discover that God's desire is to give us vision. Whether you are a Christian here this morning or not, see yourself as blind Bartimaeus and understand that Jesus Christ is here, offering Himself to you and asking *you* the question: “What do you want Me to do for you?”

So, beginning in verse 46, we read:

Mark 10.46 - Now they (speaking of Jesus and His disciples) came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.

Jericho is such an intriguing place in the Bible. When you get a chance, do a search on YouVersion or E-Sword of the word *Jericho* and you'll read some very fascinating passages. Specifically, we remember that Jericho was the first stop for the Children of Israel in their conquest of Canaan. Most famously, we think of the walls of Jericho that came tumbling down. But also we remember Rahab, the Canaanite woman, who hid the spies of Israel, turned to God, received His mercy and salvation and even became part of the lineage of Jesus Christ.

In Mark 10 we read about Jesus, on His way to Jerusalem, just days away from laying down His life for the sins of the world on a Roman cross, yet He pauses to reach out to this poor, blind man sitting by the road.

In either case, Jericho serves as a wonderful reminder of God's mercy and His love for the people of the earth. Though He is perfect and must judge sin, He must deal with the corruption that we brought into the world, even still He is willing to extend His mercy and His grace to anyone who would call upon Him. People like Rahab, like Bartimaeus, like you and me. Our God is a God of mercy and compassion that moves on behalf of the people of this earth. He has a plan for redemption and restoration and He is carrying it out all over the earth.

I find it interesting that not only is Bartimaeus' name recorded, but also we're given the name of his father. Not every person who Jesus healed has their name recorded in the Gospels. There were many, many multitudes that He touched and cured and revived, but often they are nameless as we read about how the Lord healed them. The woman with a chronic hemorrhage. The 10 lepers who Jesus cleansed. The man with the shriveled hand healed on the Sabbath.

But here, as the Holy Spirit inspired Mark, we're given Bartimaeus' name and his dad's name. It illustrates the point that God, that Jesus, knew exactly who this guy was and what was going on in his life.

As a blind man in the first century city of Jericho, Bartimaeus would have no choice but to beg for food and money to survive. There was no Judaeon Disabilities Act. No work programs. No help other than the charity of others. Yet, God knew exactly who he was. Who his family was. This poor man who could perhaps survive physically day to day, yet had no real future hope. He was destitute and bound by his affliction, trapped by the bondage that sin has brought into the world.

But this, seemingly hopeless, socially worthless man, was known by God. And his life was about to be changed forever. Because our God is a personal God. He's not up in heaven, building earth like it's SimCity. Sometimes, in our frustration or weakness we may think of Him as distant, but, as revealed in the Scriptures, we find that He is a God who is present and passionate and personal. He is mindful of you and your current situation and His desire is that you draw near to Him and enjoy a living relationship with Him.

Here's what happened to our man Bartimaeus:

Mark 10.47 - And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

This is such a heart-breaking scene. Understand that Bartimaeus was a man who, before this particular moment, had no hope. At some point before this specific day he had heard some rumors that there was a prophet in Nazareth, a Rabbi, who was teaching and confounding the religious leaders of Israel. He eventually heard the stories of how this Man had healed a blind man in Bethsaida. There were whispers about the lame made to walk and the dead raised up again. Then other stories started rolling in as more of His teachings and exploits had spread around the region and through Jericho.

Somewhere along the line Bartimaeus understood that this Man everyone was talking about *must* be the Messiah they were all waiting for, the Son of David that had been prophesied, who would make right what mankind had set wrong. One who could heal the broken and even open the eyes of the blind.

Now, this Jesus had actually come to Jericho! He was here! But, as it seems, Bartimaeus lived on the wrong side of town! Jesus and His followers didn't get to him until they were *leaving* Jericho. And, as Bartimaeus sat there by the road, as he did each day, hoping to receive enough money or food to survive another night, the noise started to grow. Soon, he found himself in the midst of many people. And finally, someone explained to him that Jesus of Nazareth was there, *RIGHT THERE* and was passing by.

And in that moment, Bartimaeus knew that his only hope was to call out to God for mercy. He called out asking for the help that only a Messiah could give. There was nothing else for him.

But then, something unthinkable happened.

Mark 10.48 - Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

He believed Jesus to be the Messiah and didn't want this opportunity to pass him by. From his heart, he called out to God, asking for mercy. But the people around him tried to hold him back. They tried to keep him quiet. They assumed that Jesus had no time or interest in a person like him.

But Bartimaeus understood that in this one instant, in this one Man was His chance to receive God's mercy and so he did all that he could to call out to the Lord.

Mark 10.49 - 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.”

Now, remember, the Bible says that Jesus had firmly set His gaze on Jerusalem. He was intent on His mission to die on the cross for our sins, paying our debt and making a way that we might be saved. Immediately after this passage, Jesus would enter Jerusalem in what is known as the Triumphal Entry, as people lined the streets, laying their clothes and palm branches on the road before Him. His death was what He came to earth to do.

But, in spite of all of that, our God was willing to pause and stand still and do business with one blind beggar, who had this one opportunity to speak face to face with the Messiah.

And what a remarkable thing it is to see demonstrated here what is true for each and every one of us. The God who created heaven and earth, the God who holds the atoms of existence together, the eternal God, who is accomplishing His will throughout human history all over the earth, has paused and called out to you. Called out to me. Knows me by name. Knows my father and my mother, my wife and my son. Knows exactly what is going on in my life and says, “You. Come talk to me. I want to speak to you. I want you to know Me like I know you.” He is a God of opportunity.

We have nothing to offer God. Nothing within ourselves that is worthy of His presence. Yet, to each one of us He has sent a call and He awaits our response.

The Lord stood still to engage a blind beggar, whose life was about to change.

Mark 10.50 - And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

Bartimaeus knew something was going to happen because He knew who Jesus was and he cast away his cloak, hurrying to stand before the Lord.

Mark 10.51-52 - 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.

How the crowd must have gone silent. First, confused by the fact that Jesus would dare to take the time to interact with a person of such low stature, but also waiting to see what would happen.

In this moment, Bartimaeus asked for mercy and for vision. But he got much more than that. He did receive the Lord’s mercy. He did receive his sight, but for the first time, his life had hope. He had a future. He suddenly had a life that he never had before, a life in Christ. And he immediately followed Jesus on the road. One moment he was a destitute beggar, the next he was a disciple going with Jesus toward Jerusalem, made well by the power of God.

In this situation we learn a lot of things about the Lord. Remember, Jesus knew the hearts of men. He knew what Bartimaeus needed and He knew what he wanted. So why the question? Why not just throw some healing as He walked by?

The answer is because God is a God of opportunity, He is a God of relationship and He is a God who respects our choices. He does not force Himself upon us. The Bible goes on record and says, “God has bigger plans for your life than you can imagine! You have some wants, you have some needs, but you can’t *believe* what Jesus Christ intends to do in and through your life.”

God wants more for us than for a few of our wishes to be granted. He’s not a Genie. He wants to give us something whole and complete and bigger than ourselves but He will not force us to receive the life and the redemption and the gifts that He has for us.

We also learn from this text that God is mindful of our situations and circumstances here on the earth. When Bartimaeus asked that he be healed of his blindness, Jesus didn’t say, “Well, one day in heaven you’ll be able to see, so don’t bother me with that.”

Our God is a God who acts in our lives today. Does that mean we will always be healed of every affliction? No. Does that mean that we can petition Him and He must do whatever we wish? No. He’s not a Genie in a bottle. He is the Master, we are not. The goal of life is not to be healthy and wealthy. Nor is that guaranteed to followers of Christ. God allows suffering in our lives is part of His sovereign will. However, He is also mindful of our affliction, mindful of difficulty and He cares about those things.

Often, if we feel that we’re struggling in life it is because we are failing to receive the spiritual help God has for us. The wisdom and the endurance and the grace that He’s made available. If we feel a lack of peace or effectiveness in our lives, we need to understand that in Jesus Christ God has offered us a complete package. Those heavenly blessings that we read about throughout the Bible, those gifts of the Spirit, those sureties and strengths. And, often, we receive not because we ask not. We receive not because we lack the kind of action that we see demonstrated in Bartimaeus.

Bible commentator H.A. Ironside said regarding this passage:

“Faith like that of Bartimaeus never pleads in vain.”

So how do we apply these things? How does this passage become more than just a story and make a difference in our lives?

The first thing to understand is that on some level we are blind. Every one of us.

The Bible declares that those who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are blind and in darkness, destined for an eternity in hell. That is the result of sin. However, God desires to remedy that blindness.

Acts 26.18 - ...to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.

If you are not a Christian here this morning, understand that you are like blind Bartimaeus. A poor beggar with no hope in your future. Maybe you can scrape by enough to survive today, but your life is lost without Jesus Christ. The good news is that God has come to town and He's made Himself known to you. He *wants* to bring you out of darkness and into His marvelous light.

All you need to do is call out to Him. Call out for His mercy, His grace that will wash you from your sins and save you for all eternity. He will give you a life to follow and a completion that is not possible aside from Him.

Romans 10.9 - if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

You may be thinking, “Well, mercy is all well and good, but what I need is help in my marriage,” or “help at my job,” or “help with this terrible trial I am facing.”

But God already knows about those things. He knows you. He knows your family. He sees you and loves you. And His mercy is the complete package for your future.

1 Chronicles 21.13 declares that God's mercy saves us from distress.

Nehemiah 9.19 and 27 declares that God's mercy delivers us and will not forsake us.

Psalms 25 declares that God's mercy is tender and full of loving kindness.

Lamentations 3 declares that God's mercy is compassionate and moves on our behalf.

God's mercy brings you something complete. Not just one answer, but a redeemed life that has a future hope. Bartimaeus received more than eyesight. Jesus said “Your faith has made you well.” The King James version translates that statement as, “thy faith hath made thee whole.”

All of us need to understand that God's desire is to make us whole. Not grant a wish or two that will get us out of a jam until something worse happens. But to complete us until the day of Christ Jesus where we are united with Him in heaven.

If you're not a Christian here this morning, if you've never called out for God's mercy, you can do it today and begin a life that is more than you could ask or imagine.

But Christians, too, can have spiritually impaired vision.

1 Corinthians 13.12 - Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity.

As believers, we're not completely finished yet. We still require the Lord's mercy because we still have many situations and struggles and circumstances that we encounter in life. Meeting Jesus Christ is not a one-time introduction. And He's not a spiritual convenient store. Knowing Jesus means receiving Him and then following Him where He goes, just like Bartimaeus did.

The first question is: **Are we following?** Are we moving forward in our walk with the Lord like Bartimaeus did, or have we made the mistake of the 9 lepers in Luke 17 who, having received new life from Jesus, failed to follow Him? They just went their way.

Matthew 10.38-39 - And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

That is a powerful statement that we need to think through.

I know each Christian here desires to follow God as a disciple. But that isn't something that happens on its own. The Christian life doesn't just 'happen.' We have to participate. We have to choose to follow. Choose to lay down self. Choose to sacrifice. Choose to go and move forward with the Lord.

As we go, it's important to remember that we still need God's vision. We need Him to give us daily wisdom, daily direction because we still see through a glass dimly.

When God appeared to Solomon and said, "what do you want Me to do for you?" Solomon understood that what he needed was wisdom. He needed guidance. He needed spiritual vision in order to live out the life that God prepared for him.

That's what we want God to do for us. Because when we lose our heavenly vision, we find ourselves in all sorts of trouble.

It's something that God warns us about in a number of places.

Revelation 3.17 - Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, BLIND, and naked.

2 Peter 1.5-9 - But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to

perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to BLINDNESS, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

As we seek to live out this life and love the Lord, we must understand that what we really want in life is what He wants. He wants greater things for us than we could ever ask or imagine. And even if that wasn't enough, He wants to live life *with* us.

Revelation 3.20 - Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

That's what God wants. And we want what God wants.

God is not far. He is near. He is at the very door of your heart, wanting to come in and accomplish all of His desire in your life.

If you're experiencing a time of difficulty right now, if you feel like you can't really see the light at the end of the tunnel, if you're struggling in some way, remember God's mercy, which is available for you. And call out to God for vision, that you might see Him and what He wants for you.

Luke 11.9 - So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

This is how we have our lives transformed. By being spiritual Bartimaeuses. Believing in the power of Jesus Christ, calling out for His mercy and His vision, casting aside the garment of worldliness and anything else that would hinder us in drawing near to the Lord and then following after Him actively and purposefully.

This is the Christian life. Anything less is missing out on what God desires for us. And that's not what we want.

One last thought as we close.

Perhaps this morning you're not in a terrible time of difficulty or confusion. You are a Christian who is working to follow after the Lord. You love Him, you trust Him, you are walking with Him as a disciple.

The question for you is: **Who are you bringing to Jesus?**

Bartimaeus didn't stand before Jesus without help. Someone in that multitude had compassion on him, took him by the hand and brought him before the Lord.

Who are we bringing to God? Who are we showing compassion to? Who are we leading by the hand that they might receive the sight and the life and the hope that we receive? Some will try to keep those people from finding God. Some will try to shut them up or hold them back. We can lift them up and set them before the Messiah, who brings redemption and completion.

Be a Christian of faith and action. Don't let the world or people around you hold you back from the presence of the Lord. Call out to God each day, for His mercies are new every morning. Ask for His vision so that you can keep pace with our Jesus and see others who are still in darkness.