

Bartimaeus **Mark 10:46-52** (parallel: Luke 18:35-43)

⁴⁶ Then they *came to **Jericho**. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named **Bartimaeus**, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, **he began to cry out** and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁸ Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he **kept crying out** all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁹ And Jesus **stopped** and said, “**Call him here.**” So they *called the blind man, saying to him, “Take courage, stand up! **He is calling for you.**” ⁵⁰ Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹ And answering him, Jesus said, “**What do you want Me to do for you?**” And the blind man said to Him, “Rabboni, I want to **regain my sight!**” ⁵² And Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” **Immediately** he regained his sight and **began following** Him on the road.

Introduction

This morning, once again we are on the road following Jesus. As always, He is leading His 12 disciples and a large crowd through a town named Jericho. A little background on Jericho.

Content

Jericho is one of the oldest towns in the world. It is about 15 miles northeast of Jerusalem. About the same distance as that between Barnegat Light and Manahawkin. The whole town is less than half the size of Stafford Township, however, it has almost the same number of residents: 20,000 people in 2006. (cf. Stafford 23,000 in 2019). This gives you a general picture.

It was one of the enemy cities in the Promised Land that were conquered by the Israelites. In fact, it was conquered without one single arrow shot. The LORD commanded the Israelites to march around the city wall once a day with silence, six days in a row. On the seventh day, after marching around the city seven times, the priests blew the trumpets, the Israelites shouted, and the wall tumbled flat (Joshua 6:1-20). You also heard about this town in the story of Zacchaeus the chief tax collector who met Jesus in the tree (Luke 19:1 ff). It also appears in the parable of the Good Samaritan (the story happens on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho). (Invite the congregation to follow along in the Scripture lesson in the bulletin).

v. 46: Then they *came to **Jericho**. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named **Bartimaeus**, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road.

The blind beggar Bartimaeus: As we walk alongside Jesus, we see a blind man sitting by the road and *begging*—the original Greek verb ‘to beg’ is in imperfect tense, meaning of *habitual action. Repeated daily.* So, the man did beg every day. On the same spot, likely. People called him: Bar-timaeus: a hybrid name from Aramaic **bar** = "son," and Greek **timaios** = "honorable." The son of honorable. He might have been born in a noble family (or possibly Gentile root).

Imagine. This ‘son of the honorable’ would go out to the same place on the streets every day begging for money saying, “Spare a coin for a blind beggar! Spare a coin.” Although he was blind, he had good hearing. Through the grapevine, he heard about Jesus and all the miracles He has done, including opening the eyes of the blind. *Oh, Bartimaeus wished, I wish He would stop by in my town.* That day Bartimaeus noticed something different in the crowd: the size was bigger, and they were louder than usual. He could tell by the sound of footsteps and ground rumbling. He asked what was going on, and some people answered that Jesus the Nazarene was passing through town.

v. 47: *When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, **he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”***

Jesus?! Did I hear correctly? He is here. Bartimaeus had no time to lose. It is Now or Never! He began to shout on top of his lungs. “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

v. 48: **Many** were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he **kept crying out** all the more, *“Son of David, have mercy on me!”*

As soon as he shouted, **many** folks turned to him and rebuked him, saying, “Sheesh. Be quiet! You make too much of a noise!” The wail of poor Bartimaeus continued, though. He kept crying out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” until Jesus noticed. By then, I bet, Bartimaeus cried out at least several times. Finally, he got Jesus’ attention, because Jesus stopped walking.

v. 49: *And Jesus **stopped** and said, “**Call him here.**” So they *called the blind man, saying to him, “Take courage, stand up! **He is calling for you.**”*

Interesting. A few moments ago, many rebuked him for the noise he was making. Now, as soon as Jesus recognized and called Bartimaeus, the crowd changed their attitude and became so friendly to him. “Take courage, He is calling for you.” Anyway, with Jesus’ calling,

v. 50: *Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus. When he was standing before Jesus,*

v. 51: *And answering him, Jesus said, “**What do you want Me to do for you?**” And the blind man said to Him, “Rabboni, I want to **regain my sight!**”*

Once again, we are impressed with the words Bartimaeus just spoke. *My teacher, I want to see!* Remember, make your prayer short, sweet and to the point!

v. 52: *And Jesus said to him, “Go; **your faith has made you well.**” Immediately he regained his sight and **began following** Him on the road.*

Now, let’s keep that in mind, Jesus particularly pointed out, **your faith** has made you well. Bartimaeus’s faith brought forth a divine healing. Here, we see faith playing a very important part in healing. Do you get it? Divine healing involves two parties: God and us. Divine power of deliverance and our faith must meet in the middle. When we cry out to Jesus for healing, would Jesus say to us the same thing as He did to Bartimaeus? *Your faith has made you well?* Do you unite your faith to your prayer?

Three Lessons: *Implore God’s Mercy. Persist. Follow Jesus.*

Have mercy on me (v. 47, 48). This is an attention clencher in prayer, especially when we don’t know what to say to God. In fact, I use this sentence often on my prayer requests that have not been answered for a long time. I don’t understand why it takes so long or don’t know what else to say, but I cry out to the Lord, *Have mercy on me* (or on so *and so*). *Have mercy, O God.*

When we say to God, *Have mercy on me*, we implore the mercy of the Heavenly Father (Job 9:15). Mercy opens the door to God’s throne room. We approach God based not on our own goodness but on His great mercy and compassion. Some folks treat God as if He owes them something. No, He doesn’t. Rather, we owe Him everything. We need His mercy. Approach God in humility.

Once God’s heart is touched with our plea for His mercy, He looks at our afflictions and restores us (Lamentations 3:19, Jeremiah 33:26, Ezekiel 39:25). He cannot ignore our prayers for mercy, because mercy is a built-in nature of God: the LORD is rich in *mercy* (Ephesians 2:4). He does righteousness and shows *mercy* to His people (Daniel 4:27). He is the God of justice, *mercy*, and faithfulness (Matthew 23:23). When you pray, implore God’s mercy on you. He will help you, remembering His own mercy (Luke 1:54).

Persistent Cry to the Lord (v. 48). When you pray, be persistent like Bartimaeus. Have you noticed how much he was determined to be heard and healed by Jesus? He was rebuked by the crowd several times. Of course, that discouraged him. Yet, he persevered until Jesus heard his request. I hope you see the pattern: *discouragement, perseverance, and*

answer. The crowd repeatedly rebuked Bartimaeus saying, Don't bother the Master. He is too busy to listen to your petty needs. Jesus has no time for you.

Put yourself in his shoes. It is one thing that one person rebukes you, but it is quite another when multiple people do so, not for once but for several times. Yet, Bartimaeus didn't give up. He kept on crying out to the Lord until he got Jesus' attention. Perseverance in prayer surely pays off when it comes down to getting God's attention. E.g., Harry Lee was a believer in Christ. He was born and raised in China. Due to his faith in Christ, he was imprisoned for many years. After he came out of prison, with the help from some friends in America, he submitted his visa application to come to the US. Believe or not, his request was turned down by the American Embassy over twenty times. Yet, he never gave up, because he knew what God wanted him to do. Finally, on his 27th attempt, he received a visa from the consul. Once you know what God's will is for you, never give up. Keep on pushing until His will is done.

He followed Jesus. Although Jesus commanded him to go his way (v. 52), after he regained his eyesight, Bartimaeus began following Jesus. He was different from some folks who would take advantage of Jesus in their troubles. They are only interested in getting what they want from Jesus. As soon as their trouble is over, they leave Jesus. Sometimes, they don't even say thanks. Not Bartimaeus.

He followed Jesus through and through. He didn't quit following Him on the next day. How do I know? Here is why I believe so: the Greek word 'to follow' is in *Imperfect tense*. *Once again, it is used for an action that starts and repeats. Continued action.* So, not only did Bartimaeus start following Jesus on the day of healing, but he continued on. For your information, there are other accounts of Jesus' healing the blind in the New Testament. E.g. Matthew 9:27, the two blind men. Matthew 20:30-31, two blind men. Mark 8:22, a blind man in Bethsaida. Five different blind men altogether. However, none of the names of those five men were recorded in the gospel stories. Only Bartimaeus was recognized and recorded in the Gospel of Mark, all because he kept following Jesus until the end. Following Jesus is not a one-time action. It is an ongoing lifestyle.

Conclusion

When you pray and don't know where to start, begin your prayer with: *Have mercy on me, God. Have mercy on my loved one.* Also, when you pray, don't get discouraged with delayed answers. Remember Bartimaeus. Keep crying out to the Lord until you get His attention. Keep on praying until something happens (PUSH). Finally, when God grants your wish, don't drop away from following Jesus. Experiencing God's miracle is just the

beginning of discipleship (following Jesus). Follow Him all the days of your life, and God will recognize your name as He did with Bartimaeus. Let's pray.