

**Introduction**

1. Daniel Akin recounts, “On Thursday, October 20, 2011, a little two-year-old girl named Yue Yue was struck by a van in a hit-and-run accident in China. Then at least 18 people passed by, some going out of their way to avoid her. She was then struck by a second van that also did not stop. She was finally helped by a trash collector. It was, tragically, too late. She was declared brain-dead at a local hospital and declared dead early the next day. The whole incident was caught on video, shocking the moral sensibilities of the world and bringing shame to the proud Chinese nation” (Daniel Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Mark*, 236).
  - a. What a tragic story and a pathetic human response.
  - b. We hope that we would have responded with more compassion had we been there.
  - c. However, how often do we ignore or fail to hear the cries of those who are hurting or in need?
2. Jesus, the son of God, heard the cry of blind Bartimaeus and took time out from His important final journey to Jerusalem, where give would His life as “a ransom for many,” in order to provide care for this needy, hurting man.
3. **Read Mk 10:46-52.**

**A. At Jericho (46a)**

1. “Then they came to Jericho . . .”
2. Jesus’ final journey to Jerusalem was almost complete.
  - a. The healing of blind Bartimaeus on His way to Jerusalem is the last miracle performed by Jesus according to the Gospel of Mark. Warren Wiersbe agrees, “This is the last healing miracle recorded in Mark, and it certainly fits into Mark’s ‘Servant’ theme. We see Jesus Christ, God’s Suffering Servant, on His way to the cross, and yet He stops to serve two blind beggars! What love, what mercy, and what grace!” (Wiersbe, *Be Diligent*, 128)
  - b. James Brooks insightfully adds regarding this miracle that “Just as the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (8:22-26) introduces the second major division, so the healing of the blind Bartimaeus at Jericho concludes it. Note how both contain exact geographical references—something that is unusual in Mark. Bracketing the division as they do, the two accounts suggest that a major purpose of the division is to show how Jesus gave not only physical sight but spiritual insight to his disciples. In this division the disciples began to realize who Jesus was and what was involved in following him as disciples” (James Brooks, *Mark*, 172).
3. This important story is found in all three synoptic gospels (cf, Mt 20:29-34, Mk 10:46-52; Lk 18:35-43).
  - a. What is different among the three synoptic accounts?
    - 1) Matthew says that two blind men, not just one blind man, received sight.
      - a) We don’t like conflicts or seeming contradictions in the synoptic accounts.
      - b) Mark and Luke focus on just one man who was perhaps “. . . the more vocal of the two” (Wiersbe, 127).
    - 2) Matthew also says that these events happened as Jesus left Jericho. Mark and Luke say they happened as He approached Jericho.
      - a) Again, how can we perhaps explain this seeming contradiction in these accounts?
      - b) Warren Wiersbe writes, “There were actually two cities named Jericho: the old city in ruins, and the new city a mile away, where Herod the Great and his successors built a lavish winter palace. This may help explain the seeming contradiction between Mark 10:46 and Luke 18:35” (Wiersbe, 127).
    - 3) Only Luke records the crowd’s response to the healing.
    - 4) Only Mark gives the name of the blind beggar as Bartimaeus.
    - 5) The accounts of Mark and Luke are the closest on the details.
  - b. What is the same in the three synoptic accounts?
    - 1) This encounter comes just after Jesus’ third prediction of His death/resurrection. Luke omits the request of James and John after the prediction.
    - 2) The cry for help is the same in all three accounts: “Son of David, have mercy . . .”
    - 3) The blind receive sight and follow Jesus.
    - 4) Faith as the key for healing.

## B. A Cry for Mercy (46b-50)

### 1. Step 1: Become Aware of Help (46b)

- a. Bartimaeus was blind and sat by the road begging, which was his source of income (46b).
  - 1) His name means “son of Timaheus.”
  - 2) Some commentators believe his name is recorded, which is an unusual detail for Mark, because he became a follower of Jesus and may have been a known member of the early church.
  - 3) His location was good since the busy road was filled with pilgrims going up with joy to worship in Jerusalem. Perhaps they gave alms to the poor as part of their holy journey?
- b. In the midst of an ordinary day of begging, Bartimaeus became aware that something unusual was happening. He had lost sight, but his other senses were keen.
- c. What was all this commotion? Who was it—the king, a dignitary?
- d. Then Bartimaeus heard that it was “Jesus of Nazareth.” That was a name that he and most likely every other blind Jew would have known. Jesus’ reputation preceded Him.

### 2. Step 2: Ask for Help (47)

- a. Identify the best source: “Jesus, Son of David, . . .”
  - 1) Identifying Jesus as “Son of David” was an implied acknowledgement of Him as the Messiah, David’s heir. However, we should not put too much emphasis on this point since, as William Lane notes, “. . . it is, perhaps, better to find in ‘Son of David’ a respectful form of address colored by the vivid Davidic associations of Jerusalem but informed by the conviction that Jesus was the instrument of God for bringing healing and blessing to the land” (William Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 388).
  - 2) Many of Jesus’ followers and other Jews now agreed with Peter’s first open confession that Jesus was the Messiah (cf, Mk 8:31).
  - 3) However, the full meaning of being Messiah (i.e., suffering, dying, rising) was still not comprehended by His followers.
- b. Ask for help: “. . . have mercy on me!”
  - 1) Bartimaeus asked for “mercy” (Gk. *eleason*) which was the normal cry of a beggar asking for alms, but he may have had healing rather than money based on Jesus’ healing reputation.
  - 2) After all, as Messiah, healing the blind was part of what Jesus did.
  - 3) It was Isaiah who put these words in the mouth of Messiah: “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the blind” (Isa 61:1).
  - 4) Surely, Bartimaeus thought, Jesus would hear him and heal him.

## C. Obtaining Mercy (48-52)

### 1. Step 1: Overcome Obstacles

- a. “Many rebuked (Gk., *epetimon*) him and told him to be quiet (Gk., *siopese*).” (48a)
  - 1) Jesus had rebuked a worldly thinking Peter (cf, Mk 8:33).
  - 2) Jesus had commanded a raging sea to be quiet (cf, Mk 4:39).
  - 3) Now the crowd rebuked this man in need and called for him to be quiet.
- b. But Bartimaeus shouted even louder, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” (48b)
- c. He would not be silent because he knew that help was near.

### 2. Step 2: Receive Help

- a. Jesus said, “Call him.” (49a)
  - 1) Jesus had heard Bartimaeus’ cry and paused in His important journey to minister to a seemingly unimportant man.
  - 2) The crowd brought the good news to Bartimaeus, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” (49b)
    - a) Bartimaeus did not hesitate. He threw (Gk, *apobalon*) his cloak aside and jumped to his feet (Gk., *anapedesas*) and came to Jesus.
    - b) Brooks notes “The cloak or outer garment may also have served as a pallet; and by recording such a trivial thing. Mark may have wanted to symbolize the casting off of illness and other disability. Alternatively, Bartimaeus’s action recalls Jesus’ instructions for disciples on mission (6:9). Certainly he to emphasize immediate and ideal response” (Brooks, 173).

- c) Bartimaeus moved with reckless abandon to his source of help—Jesus! He left clothing and coins behind. He had heard the master’s voice and ran to it.
- b. Jesus asked the critical question: “What do you want me to do for you?” (51)
  - 1) Wiersbe notes, “(It was the same question He had asked James, John, and Salome, Mark 10:36.) But Jesus wanted to give the man opportunity to express himself and give evidence of his own faith. What did he really believe Jesus *could* do for him?” (Wiersbe, 128).
  - 2) James/John asked selfishly for glory/honor, but Bartimaeus asked in faith for a need to be met.
  - 3) As James Edwards well said, “The Sons of Thunder asked for extraordinary glory, Bartimaeus asked only for ordinary health” (James Edwards, *Mark*, 330).
- c. Bartimaeus asked humbly and simply, “Rabbi (Gk., *rabbouni* – “my lord”), I want to see.” (51)
- d. Jesus knew that this man had faith, and faith is what healed him.
  - 1) Faith had healed the paralytic (cf, Mk 2:5), the woman with an issue of blood (cf, Mk 5:25-34), and the demon possessed daughter of the Syrophenician woman (cf, Mk 7:24-30).
  - 2) James would later write “You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures” (Jm 4:2b-3).
  - 3) Bartimaeus asked in faith to be made whole. He did not ask selfishly or with wrong motives.
  - 4) Healing came through his faith in Jesus not just by the boldness of his request.
  - 5) The Lord heard and answered his cry made in faith.
- 3. Step 3: Respond with Thankfulness – This step is often overlooked or omitted!
  - a. Jesus told Bartimaeus to “Go. Your faith (Gk. *pistis*) has healed (Gk., *sesoken*) you.” (52a)
    - 1) Not only was Bartimaeus physically healed but was also saved spiritually by his faith in Jesus as Messiah.
    - 2) As we have often seen in Mark’s gospel, spiritual healing and physical healing go hand-in-hand.
  - b. Two things happened “Immediately” (Gk. *euthus*) to Bartimaeus. (52b)
    - 1) “he received his sight.”
    - 2) “he . . . followed Jesus along the road.”
  - c. Bartimaeus’s life had been changed, and now he too followed Jesus.
    - 1) Brooks observes, “The contrast between his sitting beside the road (v. 46) and his following Jesus on the road (v. 51) serves as a graphic picture of conversion” (Brooks, 174).
    - 2) Luke adds that “When all the people saw it, they also praised God” (Lk 18:43).

#### D. Questions for Reflection

1. There are people all around us crying out for help. Which one will you stop and help this week?
  - a. Is where we are going and what we are about to do more important than the need of the one we encounter on the way? It never is for Jesus. We must follow His example.
  - b. Have you ever wanted someone in need to be quiet and go away? God never sends us away or silences us when we are in need.
  - c. Akin concludes, “Like Jesus, Christians should avoid getting so caught up with the masses that we miss the one. *Pray* for one at a time. *Evangelize* one at a time. *Feed* one at a time. *Clothe* one at a time. *Disciple* one at a time. *Adopt* one at a time. *Love* one at a time. There is always one who needs our help. Do you see that one? Do you hear that one?” (Akin, 238)
2. What do you say in response when Jesus asks, “What do you want me to do for you?”
  - a. Do you ask Him humbly with unselfish faith?
  - b. Will you be persistent in calling upon Jesus even when others tell you to be quiet and give up?
  - c. Will you respond with thankfulness whatever answer, which will be the best one, that the Lord gives especially when it is not the one that you asked for or want?
3. Remember: Jesus always hears our cry of faith and is there when we need Him.
4. Do you give God praise for His grace and salvation providentially multiplied in your life even when you don’t ask or may even be unaware of it?
5. Are you following Jesus in faith and lifting praise to Him each day in the living of your life to His glory?
6. What things has God done for which you will give Him praise right now?