

Blind Bartimaeus

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[0 : 00] As we shall be enabled, words you will find in the passage of scripture we read together. The gospel according to Mark chapter 10.

And we shall read again at verse 46.

And they came to Jericho. And as he went out of Jericho with his disciples, and a great number of people, blind Bartimus, the son of Timius, sat by the wayside, begging.

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

And so on. It would seem that Jericho has the honor of being one of those places where many of the miracles of Jesus were performed.

[1 : 48] Miracles both physical and moral. And this displays the fact that Jericho was a cursed city.

Joshua cursed it. And said, whosoever would build it again would place foundation in his firstborn. That is, the death of the firstborn of the founder of Jericho. The one who would rebuild it was predicted. And it seemed to have that association with the curse from the time that the Israelites came into the land of Cain.

But nevertheless, we find it a spot where the Lord is pleased to make known his power again and again.

And may not this be symbolic. The place that was cursed above all others, in the sense we have already indicated, is a place chosen by him to show that this was his mission, to take away the curse by being made a curse.

[3 : 30] Be that as it may, we find at this time, as Jesus and his disciples, with a great number of people, had gone out of Jericho, there was a man by the wayside, begging, Bartimaeus by name, the son of Timaeus.

Now, no one could say that the plight of this man was an enviable one. And if the question arises, as it arose in the case of another, why was this man blind?

We are confronted with the same difficulties and with the same answer. The answer of the Lord, that this blindness was to be made the occasion of that marvelous exercise of power and compassion, in which the Redeemer delighted.

He sat by the wayside, begging. Apparently, apparently he had none to help him. Apparently, he had no private resources.

So he was cast for the mercy of the world, for his daily sustenance. And we know that the mercy of the world is called the kindnesses of the wicked that cruel.

[5 : 22] But he had no other option. And then the apolousal position was he hadn't the means of improving it.

He hadn't the means of rectifying it. He had either to do this or to die. That these were the two alternatives that confronted him.

And thus we find it when others are enjoying the light of the day, when they are able to go wheresoever they will.

He has to keep his place. Sit by the wayside. Begging. Dependent upon the compassion of his fellow creature.

But, though he was blind, he wasn't deaf. And, he has this to commend him, that he made use of the faculties he had.

[6 : 45] He heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. He was aware of a certain commotion.

And he knew that something unusual was going on. Then, having heard, he most probably asked, what this was?

And he was told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And as he made use of his hearing, he also made use of his voice.

He was not deaf, nor was he dumb, in any sense of the term. And he used his voice.

And used it to some effect. He cried out, Jesus, Jesus, though son of David, have mercy on me.

[8 : 04] Instead of feeling sorry for himself, and acquiescing in what many would have thought the inevitable, he used what power he had.

He put his faculties to good use. and in his cry, there are two points, or two characteristics of his cry, demand attention.

And these are two points, are his view of the person of the Lord, and his estimate of his character.

His view of his person, and his estimate of his character. His view of his person was this, that he was the son of David.

And his estimate of his character was, that he was both able and willing. At least he could put this to the test. That he was able, he knew.

[9 : 30] And he wanted to ascertain whether he was willing to have compassion on him. Whether the Lord was willing to have compassion on him in his low estate.

He addresses him then as the son of David. This was the name by which the Messiah, or one of the names by which the Messiah was known to the Jews.

they might disagree on many things concerning the Messiah. But there was one thing on which they were agreed, that he was to be the son of David.

We find that, of course, good beyond any doubt when the wise men God said, of them Israel were asked by the king where the Christ should be born.

They replied that he was to be born of the line of David, and in the city where David was. They had no doubt about that.

[10 : 56] That was firmly fixed in their minds. And when Bartimaeus addresses the Lord under this title, Son of David, it is a confession of faith in his Messiahship.

he was convinced that this indeed was the Messiah promised to Israel, the Messiah looked for by the prophets, the Messiah which was to accomplish such marvelous things, to do such marvelous works.

Jesus, thou son of David. He had no doubt in his own mind but he was addressing his request to the right quarter.

He had no doubt that if there was help for him it would have to come from Jesus. But the question still remained.

The question that a certain leper brings to the fore when he says Lord if thou art willing thou art able to make me clean.

[12 : 40] Was the Messiah to take notice of a person leper does what is time to be used in ministering to their needs?

That was the question and that is the question that is noted to the test. Thou son of David have mercy on me.

this is all he could ask. But he could ask this. Now in a way this is what he was looking for from all who passed by as he sat by the wayside begging.

he was appealing to the mercy of his fellow people. With what success we have not told.

But this was his business in life we might say to appeal to mercy. He spent his days in doing this.

[13 : 59] But he never addressed any of them as a son of David. And the type of mercy he expected from his fellow creature was different in kind from the mercy he was now appealing for from the son of David.

Different in kind. All he could expect from his fellow creature was a piece of money or something to relieve his needs.

But it would seem that that is not what he is looking for now. His petitions take a new direction is because they are focused on a new object.

He is asking for something different from what he had asked before because he is now addressing a different type of person.

and the nature of the request is governed like the view he has of the person whom he addresses.

[15 : 29] He would expect little of those who had little but he is now expecting much expecting something for which he had never asked before.

he is asking for the restoration of the sight that he should be given sight. Whether restored or given to him for the first time we don't know.

That is we don't know whether he was born blind or lost sight later in life. But he is asking for something new. And the very fact that he is asking for it shows the estimate he had of Christ's person and character.

Now whether he had heard that Jesus had mercy on others like him we do not know and therefore we are not permitted to speculate.

But we do know that according to psychological laws his request is governed by his inner thoughts and his inner thoughts of the one of whom he asks the request.

[16:59] Jesus though son of day have mercy on me me and he doesn't identify himself any further than this.

Why? His identification was in his cry and what a blessed thing that is that that was so and is so. It is our cry that identifies us. perhaps more than anything else. It is this which showed the man. It is this very cry that expressed his inner thoughts concerning Jesus and concerning himself. And our thoughts concerning Jesus and ourselves are our inner thoughts our most important thoughts on me.

[18:14] Have mercy. Have mercy on me. And he meant this cry to be heard.

Whatever was to happen he was to make perfectly certain that the cry was heard. He didn't take refuge in the idea that he cried and that therefore nothing more was required of him.

Thousands do take refuge in that idea. it is very congenial to our nature to take rest in that and say well we did all we could and even if we can't go as far as that we often say at least we think well we prayed and nothing happened as if prayer were anything in and of itself.

This man was not concerned with what he did himself. He wasn't to take refuge in anything that he did or could do. His great question was this what would Jesus do?

What would he do? That was the part of the crux of the whole matter and his crying was a means and better means to an end.

[20:08] The end he had in knew was what reaction would the Lord take to his cry. this he wants to know.

And this is the point he wants to know. And this is what causes the anxious thought. the mode of making himself hurt or the mode of drawing attention to himself didn't find failure with the multitude. immediately he began to cry there was opposition and far went out of opposition those that went and that was a huge crowd those that followed Jesus charged him saying hold thy peace hold thy peace as if they had said to him that he was disturbing the peace he was a nuisance and the people who wanted to enjoy their own wide circle found fault with him he was an intrusion hold thy peace peace but that is something he wasn't prepared to do that was asking him more than he had any intention of complying with they had their thoughts and certainly his kind didn't fit in with their thoughts at all but he wasn't concerned with their thoughts he happened to have thoughts of his own and his conduct was dictated by his own thoughts not by what they thought of it and surely one of the natural and inevitable signs of being in earnest is this that one must have thoughts of one's own one must have a purpose and that purpose must dictate his action his conduct and according to the strength and steadfastness of the purpose he is not going to be turned from it because of the opinion of others this is true universally but it is most certainly true and true in a peculiar sense in the spiritual sphere if anyone is in earnest he is bound to come into conflict with the opinions of the code whether the code is following

Jesus ostensibly or not and this is part of the cost that has to be reckoned with the opposition of the code and I'm sure Bartimius knew humanity sufficiently well not at all to be surprised and certainly not to be disconcerted at the reaction of the crowd he could have been pretty certain from the beginning that this was to be the reaction so when he did come he wasn't at all disappointed at least not disappointed to the extent of complying with the request addressed to him while he did the very opposite he cried all the more a great ill the exaltation had a different effect from that which was intended it would have it certainly had an effect but it was the very opposite of what it was intended to have he cried so much the more opposition called for more energy opposition made it plain that this man had a purpose from which he was not to be turned aside in other words opposition made it plain that this man was in earnest in dead earnest how could it be anything else entertaining such views of the person of the one who was passing by and knowing his own condition surely these two combined to fix a purpose in his mind from which he couldn't be turned

aside he wasn't crying in a vacuum he was crying to the son of David to the Messiah the one whom he was persuaded was able the one who was able according to his persuasion to do this for him how then could he be silent how reasonable then the request of the multitude who couldn't enter into his case at all and alas that people should be so free with their advice in cases of which they know nothing and can know nothing it would seem that some people have a gift of offering advice and offering advice under a pious code or cloak they would tell you in any circumstances what you ought to do they don't seem to be at a loss at all tell you you ought to do this and you ought to do that but that advice is with the expression of of their own ignorance they don't know and they cannot know a wise man is reticent with his advice he certainly would like to be earnest in season and out of season but he knows that there are seasons which are so much out of season that he can only be silent and commit the kiss to

[28 : 41] God they knew what Bartimaeus ought to do he ought to be quiet yes from their point of view but he also had a point of view and at this time his point of view was to prevail he cried so much the more Jesus thou son of David have mercy oh have mercy on me he knew what he was asking for he was really in close contact with his own inadequacy he wanted something he wanted it badly and therefore when he is asked the question what will thou that

I should do for thee there is no hesitation he doesn't begin to think now what should I ask he knows beforehand what he is asking for he is not going to ask for less and he is not going to ask for more this is what presses upon his consciousness and he takes such a hold of his force that he has no place for anything else what will thou Lord that I might receive my sight but before this there is a change in the attitude of the crowd Jesus stands still and they are not as ready with their advice as they were before but the advice is the very antithesis of the one they had previously given they had said before be quiet now they say be of good cheer oh how like the attitude of the multitude how like the fickleness of man's nature we find this brought out again and again in the word of

God in concrete instances you remember when Paul and his fellow passengers were cast on a certain island after the wreck of the ship they were in Paul took up a bundle of sticks to cast on the fire and a viper came out and hang on his arm and that crowd is as ready as any crowd to give an explanation of this their philosophy covered this as it covered everything else it is because they said this man is a murderer even though he has escaped the sea justice will not permit him to live there was the there was the the the the on his arm and this was their explanation and they were thoroughly convinced they were right of course they were and then when they waited and waited to see when

Paul would fall down dead and didn't he refused to comply with their anticipations he simply didn't fall down dead he continued standing and he threw the viper of his arm into the fire oh now they changed their tune he's a god and the viper has no power over him and with all deference they looked at him a god he was before a murderer now he's a god and we see the reverse of this taking place when at the city of Lyconia the elders of the city insisted on offering sacrifice to

Paul and his companion and when this didn't go the way they thought they changed their mind and they stoned him they start stoning their god gods that are easily made are as easily unmade so it is a swing from one extreme to another those who were ready to find fault with this man for shouting for crying out they compliment him on his sagacity his wisdom you were right no be of good cheer no that you have refused to listen to us be of good cheer and strange to say even the crowd can be right sometimes and it was so in this case there was reason for this man to be of good cheer be of good comfort wise why what has happened he calleth thee he calleth thee he has a personal invitation into the presence of the

[35 : 35] Messiah and the value of the invitation was measured by response of who this one was the son of David is calling him and this being the case there was no hesitation he casting aside or casting away his garment hoax and came to him every obstruction was cast aside he couldn't afford to let anything delay him in his answer to this word he called be he is not to be detained by anything and in a spiritual sense we are reminded of this again and again and specially reminded of it in the epistle to the

Hebrews where we read let us throw aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the wrist set before us looking unto Jesus the offer and finisher of our faith and the sin that doth so easily beset us and that word beset that means a garment that was ready to to to hinder the runner in the wrist what we have here is the literal counterpart the physical counterpart of that spiritual advice which the apostle gives us in the epistle to the

Hebrews he cast away his garment that is the outer garment that men wore in those days that would impede his progress and he wanted to have nothing of that he calleth for thee nothing must detain him nothing must delay him he came to Jesus how he is still blind as blind as he was before yet he was able to make haste and to come to Jesus we are not told whether he was guided to him by someone or whether to the hypersensitiveness of his hearing he was made able to make straight for the place from which the voice came but it wasn't

Jesus himself who spoke you say that is true it was the people who told him that Jesus was calling now this is one of the details that scripture doesn't answer shall we say it is part of our curiosity to which the scriptures don't cater why because this is not necessary to the right understanding of the incident it is a detail which has no place in the morrow we are to gather from the incident what is of importance is this the man cried Jesus called and he came he came to it as blind he came to him as he was in other words

I know man never came or can come in any other way certainly there were things working up to this but he came in order to receive sight he didn't come because he had sight now this is another aspect of the perversity of which we spoke this morning by which we are so apt to turn things the wrong way the natural man's idea is this that he would come to God when he is better the natural man's idea is that when he will improve himself when he will give diligence in one direction or in another or in many then he can think of drawing near unto

[42 : 07] God that's man's theology natural man's theology but it doesn't hold because it's not true supposing this man had said how can I come or he could have raised many objections we all do and the easiest thing in the world is to raise objections and it would seem that the mind that is somewhat concerned is a fertile soil for raising objections you never saw a man who can raise such objections as a man who has become concerned for his soul some things of which you never heard he will have this objection and that objection and the other objection so the thing is all these have their place but they are all put in the wrong place this man could have raised many he could have answered in self pity why

I cannot cure my blind you know very well that you are asking me to do the impossible he was too much in earnest to give place to ideas of that kind he came he came and there was reason why he should be of good comfort or good cheer even when he was blind yes when he was still blind when he was exactly the same way as he was before yes the occasion had developed into a reason for this man to be of good comfort and that reason didn't develop in the man be of good comfort what comes after that it's not you be of good comfort you no be of good comfort he he call it for people the comfort is in him the reason for it is in him its occasion is in him be of good comfort he he call it for thee and on this he came came with his request presented not something new but exactly what he wanted for from what he asked for from the beginning

Lord that I should receive my sight nothing more nothing less this occupied all his universe of thought by the moment he was obsessed with this nothing else could end that I should receive my sight and he did he was not disappointed he received sight literally so and on whom do you think he would like to look first there were many wonderful things around in which he could see but on whom do you think

I say he would like to have looked first of on and as a matter of fact I take it but this is exactly what he did he looked at his benefactor he looked at the one who had done such wonderful things for him and as what he had done was wonderful he himself was more wonderful still as worried of Jesus performing miracles we ought to wait against this background that he himself is the greatest miracle of all there is no miracle comparable with God manifest in the flesh and that is one of the reasons why the deity of the

Lord is denied today miracle in general is denied this universe has no room for miracles so they tell us therefore it has no room for the miracle of the Lord person the miracle of God becomes flesh and what anyone says that the miracle is impossible he thereby by that very statement he denies the deity of the Lord for the question of miracles is to be decided not in what Jesus did but in what Jesus is what he is in his person

[48 : 42] God manifest in the flesh and the expressions of this wonder coming out in the natural world these are the miracles that are immediately connected with Jesus himself and on that ground miracles are to be denied or to be safeguard Jesus is the miracle both in his life and death and by his in his death I include the resurrection those who deny miracles say that there's no resurrection no all miracles have to be cut out this is what they called demythologizing the gospel taking the

myths out of it and everything that is a miracle is a myth

Jesus is the great miracle and all miracles are to be understood from that viewpoint all his miracles he opened his eyes he received his sight what did he do he followed Jesus he followed Jesus in the way who do you think he was looking at whom do you think he was looking at what was he thinking as he followed in the way he oh he couldn't put us at sight it's a wonderful thing but the most wonderful thing about my sight is this that I can look on him who gave me my sight I can follow him now

I can see him and this is what I want to do to follow him who heard my cry to follow him through good report and ill report to live for him and not forever let the Lord grant us the same spirit performing in a spiritual sense the same miracle opening our eyes to behold the wonderful works of God and the wonderful works of God that concentrated in Jesus to behold him who is the wonder of wonder whose name is wonder wonderful to ut the projet of doom