

“Jesus, Son of David, Have Mercy on Me!”
(Mark 10:46-52 – Pentecost 23 – October 27, 2024)

Mark 10:46-52 – ⁴⁶Now 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. ⁴⁷And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁸Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁹So 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.” ⁵⁰And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. ⁵¹So 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.” ⁵²Then 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.

Dear Redeemed, by the grace of God in Jesus Christ:

“Have mercy on me!” It takes desperate circumstances for a person to cry out this way. He has to have given up all hope of helping himself out of some trouble. He must believe that the one to whom he cries is able to help and save him. We see this here, as the blind beggar cries out: **“Jesus, Son of David, Have Mercy on Me!”** In his desperate need, he cries out to the only One who can help him. Not only do we hear **1) A beggar’s prayer of faith**, but also **2) The Savior’s gracious answer**.

1) A beggar’s prayer of faith

We are introduced to this beggar by name as Jesus and His disciples are traveling along the road: “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!’” (vs. 46-47).

As a blind beggar, Bartimaeus was not able to work for a living. He was used to sitting by the road asking for handouts, depending on the support of others for daily needs. Yet he looked higher to the very hand of God to provide, not only his needs of temporal life, but of spiritual and eternal life. For he was a man of faith. Though physically he was blind, yet spiritually he could see more than many people. By God’s gift of faith, He had eyes to see Jesus for who He was as the Lord and Savior.

Bartimaeus had heard the Scripture prophecies of the Son of David who was to come into the world (Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5-6). He believed in this Messiah, who would be born of the family line of King David according to His human nature, yet be

the Son of God according to His divine nature (2 Samuel 7:12-14). He had heard of Jesus doing the miracles promised with the Messiah's coming, as in Isaiah 35:5-6: *"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing."* He acknowledged Jesus as that Son of David, the Son of God in human flesh. He cried out to Him as the One who had all power to save him and help him in his need.

Spiritually speaking, we all came into the world like blind beggars before God. The Bible speaks of our natural, sinful condition this way in Ephesians 4:17-18, describing unbelievers as those who *"walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."* In this condition, we had nothing to offer God but lives of sin. In our spiritual poverty, as beggars before God, we deserved to receive nothing from His hand but eternal damnation.

As blind sinners, Jesus could have walked right by us, and we would not have known Him as our Savior. But by God's grace, like Bartimaeus, our spiritual eyes were opened. As we heard the Gospel, God sent His Spirit into our hearts to give us faith, so that we see and know Jesus as our Savior. Ephesians 1:18-20 describes us as having *"the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places."*

Therefore, though we cannot see Jesus with our physical eyes, like Bartimaeus we see Him with the eyes of faith. Based on God's promises in Scripture, we cry out for mercy to Jesus, the Son of David and Son of God, who came with all power to save us from our desperate condition. We cry out to Him who died for us and rose again with mighty power to save us from sin, death, and Satan. We cry out to Him who comes to us with power to give us healing for eternal life.

This is the spirit of our worship. We begin with our *Confession of Sin*, crying out to God: "for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being." Then we hear His *Absolution*, through the called servant of His Word: "In the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Then in the faith of Bartimaeus, we sing the *Kyrie Eleison*: "Lord, have mercy upon us." Not only do we cry out to Him who in mercy forgives our sin and gives all that we need for spiritual and eternal life; we also pray for His mercy to provide all that we need for this body and life.

As blind Bartimaeus cried out in faith to the One who could help and save him, others tried to stop him: *“Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’”* (vs. 48). Did they think Jesus had no time for a man so low on the social totem pole? That is how Jesus’ disciples had felt when they rebuked people for bringing children to Him. But Jesus had taken the little ones in His loving arms and blessed them (Mark 10:13-16). Did they think this man’s blindness was a judgment on some sin, so he did not deserve Jesus’ attention? That is how the disciples had thought when they asked Jesus about another blind man. But Jesus had welcomed that man and restored his sight (John 9:1-7). Throughout His ministry, Jesus had shown Himself to be the loving Savior for all – welcoming the poor and lowly, sinners and outcasts, calling all to repentance, and bringing forgiveness for all. As He said in John 6:37: *“The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”* This is why Bartimaeus cried out, unabashed and unashamed, to his Savior. In fact, the more others tried to deter him, the louder he cried.

Today, the world around us wants to rebuke us for our faith and quiet us too. It says: *“Don’t be so foolish to cry out to a Savior you can’t see; it won’t do any good!”* Or *“You don’t deserve His help, with your sinful past!”* It is easy to become ashamed of our faith in Jesus and be quiet, if we focus on the crowd. It is easy to stay away from Jesus and His worship, if we are satisfied with the world.

But like Bartimaeus, when we truly see our desperate condition as poor, miserable sinners, it does not matter what the crowd thinks. We will cry out all the louder to the only One who can save us: *“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”* We cry out with our prayer of faith, knowing that He who came to give His life on the cross for our sins, will keep His promise to forgive us and receive us in His mercy. He who rose from the dead will not fail to give us all His promised blessings in this life and the life to come.

2) The Savior’s gracious answer

As Bartimaeus saw that day, the beggar’s prayer of faith receives the Savior’s gracious answer. It says: *“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”* (vs. 49-50). Jesus’ call and invitation promised His help. The poor beggar threw aside his garment – perhaps one of his only possessions, which provided warmth and security. If he only had Jesus, he would have all he needed.

So in faith we throw aside all that would hinder us from Jesus – all false comfort and security in worldly possessions and pleasures; all self-righteous pride and self-sufficiency. We *“lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us...”*

looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:1-2). We look to Him in whom alone we have all that we need for this life and the life to come.

Bartimaeus was not disappointed: “*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*” (vs. 51-52). How many times had Bartimaeus cried out to the Lord for mercy even before this? How many times did he cry out, even when it seemed Jesus was passing him by? Yet the Lord heard every prayer; and this was His chosen day of deliverance. Jesus gave His gracious answer. At His Word, immediately Bartimaeus received his sight. His faith clung to His Savior’s Word, and he received all His Savior’s promised blessings.

So also, Jesus invites us to pray in every need, as He does in the Lord’s Prayer. Hebrews 4:16 says: “*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*” He does not promise immediate healing on demand, or whatever we want in this life. But He does promise to give us all that we need, all that He knows is truly best for us. In humble faith like Bartimaeus, we bring our petitions, asking according to His gracious will. And Jesus says to us: “*Your faith has made you well.*” By faith, we receive all His promised blessings. His same powerful Word that healed Bartimaeus, heals us from the inside out – forgiving our sins, giving us spiritual health and wellness, guaranteeing us eternal life.

Though like Bartimaeus, we may pray in faith today and not yet see the answer, let us take heart and be of good cheer; for Jesus hears every prayer. And at last, His chosen Day of deliverance is coming for us. All our prayers will be answered when Jesus brings us into His heavenly Kingdom. At His Word, He will open our eyes; and we who have seen by faith, as in a mirror dimly, will see Him face to face with our own eyes (1 Corinthians 13:12). At His Word, Jesus will raise us up with glorified bodies; and we who have prayed in faith for healing and relief will feel perfect restoration and health, as we walk with Jesus in everlasting joys.

Luke’s account tells us that, with Jesus’ healing, Bartimaeus “*followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God*” (Luke 18:43). Today, we join Bartimaeus and believers through the ages in the same spirit of worship. As we lift our prayers of faith to Jesus, the Son of David, receiving His mercy, hearing His gracious answer, we join our hearts in glorifying and praising the God of all grace:

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.