

Sunday, October 9, 2016

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Introduction to Mark 10:46-52

We make choices based on alternatives. If we had an infinite amount of time and money, we would have too many alternatives to choose from—the possibilities of what we could spend our time and money on would be endless. Even with our limited amount of time and money we often paralyze ourselves considering what we should do with our time and money. But what if we had nothing? What if we were in such dire circumstances that there were no alternatives available to us?

To the follower of Jesus, we recognize that we have no alternatives when it comes to our sin. We have limited ourselves to only two alternatives: die and suffer the eternal punishment for our sin, or cling to Jesus, who took that punishment in our place. In this story from the Gospel of Mark, we read about a man who recognized his dire circumstances and acted on the only alternative to hopelessness and despair that was available to him—calling out to Jesus.

Context

Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem. He has traveled from Caesarea Philippi (8:27ff.) south, across the Jordan river to the east, and now He is making His way back up to Jerusalem. The first town He comes to on the final leg of His journey is Jericho. This healing of the blind man also marks the end of a section designed to demonstrate Jesus' identity and authority which began in 8:22.

Structure

- I. Bartimaeus' Request (46-48)
- II. Jesus' Response (49-52)

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Mark 10:46-52

“Blind Eyes See”

1. Request of a Beggar

- Passionate
- Perceptive
- Persistent

2. Response of the Savior

- Compassionate
- Personal
- Powerful

Discuss

- 1) Bartimaeus felt his need for Jesus because of his physical condition. What is it about our spiritual condition that causes us to understand or *not* understand our need for Jesus? How is physical blindness like spiritual blindness apart from Christ?

- 2) Bartimaeus “cried out” to Jesus because he knew how desperate his situation was. What does it look like for someone to “cry out” to Jesus today? How can you distinguish an authentic “cry” from an inauthentic or manipulative one?

- 3) Jesus, who came to serve and not be served (v.45), asks the same question of Bartimaeus that he asked of James and John in the previous section: “What do you want me to do for you?” (v.36, 51). If Jesus were physically in the room with you right now, and asked you this same question, how would you answer Him?

- 4) When Bartimaeus committed himself to Jesus by faith, he regained his sight. When we trust Jesus, what is it that we “see”? How are we healed spiritually?

- 5) Mark describes Bartimaeus’ post-healing actions as following Jesus’ “on the way.” This “way” would eventually lead to the cross. Reflecting on Mark 8:34-38, how has Jesus led you on that same way in your life? How is following Jesus along the way different from your former life?

Go Deeper (*This section is especially for leaders to consider as they prepare for the Growth Group meeting*)

Gospel Connections: There are many images used in the New Testament to illustrate the gospel. One of those is the image of “healing.” While it’s true that sin should be thought of in terms of guilt, it is just as much true that sin is a malady that we must be healed from. We cannot make ourselves innocent, nor can we make ourselves spiritually healthy. Thankfully, Jesus comes as our great physician to heal us of our spiritual infirmities and restore us to proper health, which is found in a loving relationship with Him (Mark 2:17).

Whole Bible Connections: Bartimaeus calls Jesus the “Son of David.” This would have been a loaded term for most Jews. The LORD promised David an eternal kingdom over which his son would rule (2 Sam. 7; Ps. 89). The OT texts—especially 2 Samuel—which recorded this promise leave a bit of a cliff-hanger. Is Solomon going to be the Son who will rule on David’s throne forever? Clearly not. What about Rehoboam or any of the others? Clearly not. Thus Matthew, writing primarily to a Jewish audience, establishes Jesus’ royal lineage right out of the gate (Matt. 1:1-17) to prove not only that Jesus is a direct descendant of David, but that all of the others failed to inherit the promise. Truly Jesus is greater than all. And if David was a powerful king, how much more would his son be who would reign forever and ever. Truly this king would be the ultimate authority. He would be the only one to whom a blind beggar like Bartimaeus could appeal.

Theological Connections: Bartimaeus saw his great need and cried out to Jesus. Jesus affirms that Bart’s faith has made him well. This is great support for the doctrine of justification by faith! But we would be remiss, in our contemporary cultural climate, if we failed to note that it was not simple “faith” that healed Bartimaeus. It was the *object* of his faith. While the culture may tell us that we simply need to “believe” in order to find meaning and happiness, as Christians we know that it is only through faith *in Jesus* that one can be saved.