

When Jesus Passes By.

Text: Mark 10:46-52

Suggested Hymns:
500, 222, 158, 330, 235

- 1) Let Us Recognise Our Need And Ask For His Mercy
- 2) Let Us Overcome Every Obstacle And Persist In Our Plea
- 3) Let Us Rejoice In His Help And Follow Him

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Mark 10:46-52, ***“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!”⁴⁶ Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

“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.”⁴⁷ And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.⁴⁸ 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.”⁴⁹ 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. (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

It proved to be an unprecedented opportunity and an unforgettable experience for Bartimaeus when Jesus passed by the place where he was sitting at the gate of the city of Jericho. This blind beggar had heard of Jesus of Nazareth and His miracle-working power.

When he was informed that Jesus was passing by on His way to Jerusalem, he called for help and received it. This was the last time that Jesus passed by this way.

What a tragic thing it would have been if Bartimaeus had neglected this one opportunity when Jesus passed by! What an unforgettable experience it proved to be when he took advantage of the opportunity and received the Saviour's help!

Although our Lord Jesus has long since ascended into heaven, He still passes by. When the church bells ring, calling a community to worship, when people gather in God's house to hear His holy Word, when we read the Word of God in our family circle or in the privacy of our own room, when we witness a confirmation service or some other event that reminds us of God's grace in our own life, yes, even when the Lord visits us with some affliction, then Jesus is passing by.

Jesus is knocking at the door of our heart, seeking entrance, and desiring to bring us His blessings. Our theme for today's sermon is "*When Jesus Passes By.*" May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. When Jesus Passes By

Let Us Recognise Our Need And Ask For His Mercy

Bartimaeus Calls for Help

Bartimaeus, being blind, had to resort to begging to obtain the necessities of life. He usually sat at the gate of the city, where many people passed by who could see his plight and hear his plea. One day, while waiting for some charitable person to come along and give him a coin, he heard the shuffle of many feet and the murmur of many voices.

When he inquired about the meaning of all this commotion, he was informed that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. Jesus of Nazareth? He had heard of Him before. Jesus was that Prophet that would come into the world. He was the Messiah promised by the Old Testament Prophets.

Of Jesus it had been foretold that He would open the eyes of the blind. Passers-by, who had stopped to give Bartimaeus coins, had also told him about this Jesus of Nazareth who went about doing good, healing the sick, casting out demons, restoring sight to the blind, opening the ears of the deaf, raising the dead, and performing other miracles of love.

"*Surely this Jesus of Nazareth can help me in my need,*" Bartimaeus reasoned. And as soon as this thought entered his mind, he began to cry, "*Jesus,*

Son of David, have mercy on me!” He recognised his need of the help of Jesus, and in his deep distress he took advantage of the opportunity when Jesus passed by to ask for His mercy.

The Spiritual Blindness of Man

If we only felt sorry for this blind man in his need, then we would miss the point of this lesson entirely. His physical blindness is but a picture of man’s spiritual blindness. The Bible frequently uses the picture of blindness to describe the ignorance and darkness in the heart of man as he is born into this world.

Ask the man who has never been enlightened by the Word of God where he comes from, why he is here, and where he is going in the future. Listen to his vague answers, or observe the blank expression on his face, and you will see why God says in 1 Corinthians 2:14, ¹⁴ ***But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.***

The hymnist was right when he sang,¹

*All our knowledge, sense, and sight
Lie in deepest darkness shrouded
Till Thy Spirit breaks our night
With the beams of truth unclouded.
Thou alone to God canst win us;
Thou must work all good within us.*

This spiritual blindness of natural man is even more evident when we observe what people try to do with their sins. We have ***“all sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”***² Likewise we read in Ecclesiastes 7:20, ²⁰ ***For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.*** Yet how many people deny that they have sinned and offended God, their heavenly Father! Or if they confess their sin, they either say that God will overlook their failures, or they feel that they can atone for their guilt by the good that they do. What blindness!

Even after we become children of God by faith in Jesus, we are in constant danger of having the scales of indifference and luke-warmness form a cataract over our spiritual eyes, so that we can no longer see clearly.

Then God must say to us as it is written in Revelation 3:17, ¹⁷ *you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.*

When Jesus passes by, let us therefore recognise our need of Him and ask Him for His mercy. Let us ask Him to remove our spiritual blindness, saying, as it is written in Psalm 119:18, ¹⁸ *Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.*

Let us confess with the hymnist,³

*Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly —
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.*

2. When Jesus Passes By

Let Us Overcome Every Obstacle And Persist In Our Plea

Bartimaeus Refuses to be Hindered

To confess our need and to come to Jesus for help is not easy. Bartimaeus found that it was not easy to come to Jesus and to receive His help. When he raised his voice and cried, *“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”* the multitude warned him to keep quiet, to sit down, and to hold his peace.

But he persisted in his plea for help. He knew his need, and he knew that Jesus was able to help. He believed that Jesus was the Son of David, the promised Saviour, the almighty God. Therefore he refused to be hindered by the discouragement of the crowd.

He also did not take the chance that Jesus would pass by at a later time. Jesus was passing by now. This was an opportunity he could not neglect. Therefore he overcame the obstacle of the crowd's discouragement, lifted up his voice, and cried all the more, *“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”*

Obstacles Others Put In Our Way

When Jesus passes by, we also must overcome every obstacle and persist in our efforts to receive His help. When our soul wants turn to its Saviour for help, there are those who would discourage us by telling us, “*This business of religion is all unnecessary. Don’t be a fool.*” There are others who say, “*I wouldn’t get too excited about it. A person can be too religious, you know.*” Still others, and maybe even among them, relatives and friends, and members of the family who should know better, might say, “*What’s the hurry? There is still plenty of time.*”

Let us recognise such discouragements as obstacles which Satan puts in our way to keep us away from our Saviour and Friend. Let us overcome them and persist in our plea for Christ’s mercy, until the soul finds the forgiveness and peace which God wants it to have.

Hindrances We Create

Besides the obstacles that others put in our way there are sometimes hindrances which we ourselves have created and which must be cast aside.

When Jesus commanded Bartimaeus to be called, and Bartimaeus received His message, he cast aside his garments and went to Jesus. He wanted nothing to hinder him in his coming to the Saviour.

In the same way, when the hour of worship comes and Jesus speaks to us in His Word, or when the Saviour offers us His body and blood in the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper, or when Jesus passes by in any other way, let us put aside every hindrance that would keep us from coming to Him.

Then let no outing, or sporting event, or guests, or other plans keep us away from Jesus. Or if Jesus passes by and seeks entrance into your heart and you have never accepted His mercy, cast aside those hindrances which you have set up. Put down your pride, throw away the cloak of self-righteousness, break off the ungodly associations, push away the cup of worldliness, stop loving yourself, and learn to love the Saviour.

Cast aside every hindrance, and joyfully receive the Saviour’s mercy. Jesus is passing by. Don’t take the chance that He will pass by again. The Bible states emphatically in 2 Corinthians 6:2, ***Behold, now is the accepted time; behold,***

now is the day of salvation. Open your heart now, and receive Him today. Then you will also receive His help.

3. When Jesus Passes By Let Us Rejoice In His Help And Follow Him

Sight Restored

When Bartimaeus persisted in his plea, Jesus commanded him to be called. It is not that Jesus did not know about Bartimaeus and his blindness or that He could not help him from a distance.

But for His own reasons Jesus commanded Bartimaeus to be called. The word passed along the crowd, and someone told the blind man, ***“Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.”*** Bartimaeus jumped to his feet, cast aside his cloak, and with the assistance of the multitude found his way to Jesus.

Jesus asked him, ***“What do you want Me to do for you?”*** Again, it was not that Jesus did not know what Bartimaeus wanted. As true God He knows all things, also the innermost desires of our hearts. But for the strengthening of the blind man’s faith and for the sake of the crowd, Jesus had him express his need.

Bartimaeus said, ***“[Lord], that I may receive my sight.”*** Compassionate and understanding Saviour that He is, Jesus granted the request and told him, ***“Go your way; your faith has made you well.”*** And immediately he received his sight. What a thrill that he could now see! What an experience that he could see with his own eyes Jericho, the City of Palms!

The Greater Blessing

But Bartimaeus could see more than houses and the city, faces and people, flowers and trees. His spiritual eyes had been opened long before this time. He believed in Jesus as his Saviour. He rejoiced in the physical help which he had received from Jesus.

But his greater joy was in the spiritual help that Jesus gives. Therefore he followed Jesus in the way and glorified God for the wonderful things that he had seen. Following Jesus, he became better acquainted with the Saviour and was permitted to see even greater things.

This was Jesus' last journey toward Jerusalem. He was going to His suffering and death. Undoubtedly Bartimaeus witnessed the offering of the Lamb of God on Golgotha for the sins of the world and the victory of Easter.

God Encourages Us to Ask

Many and exceedingly precious are the promises of God given to those who rejoice in His help and follow Him in faith. Here are just two of them. Psalm 50:15, ¹⁵ *“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”* And Isaiah 65:24, ²⁴ *“It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear.”*

If we do not receive the help God promises in His holy Word, it is not because He is slow to hear, but because we are so slow to ask. And often, when we ask, we are so easily discouraged and do not persist in our plea. Let us therefore be encouraged by His gracious promises and ask more often and more persistently.

The Kind of Help God Gives

It is well also to keep in mind what kind of help God gives. When thinking of the help of God, many people think only of the fact that He will provide our bodily necessities, protect us from danger, grant us recovery from our sicknesses, and provide other earthly needs.

It is true, that God grants these things if it is His will. But the greatest help which we can receive from Him is spiritual help.

Through His Word He opens our eyes and brings us to the knowledge of our sins. And when we are of a contrite heart and tremble at His Word, He also applies the soothing balm of His Gospel so that we see His love and forgiveness through Christ.

He leads us to trust in His mercy so that by faith in His Son we have peace with God, the assurance of God's abiding presence, and the hope of everlasting life. These things provide us such immediate joys as greater happiness in living, a more ready resignation to disappointments, and greater patience in affliction. Let us therefore rejoice in His help and continue to follow Him.

We Shall See Even Greater Things

Then, like Bartimaeus, we shall see even greater things. We shall become more intimately acquainted with Jesus and His ways, we shall grow in knowledge and understanding of spiritual truths, and we shall be given the joy of greater and more consecrated service to our Lord.

More than that, the time will come when we shall see face to face those things we now see by faith, everlasting life, the glories of heaven, seeing Him as He really is, reunion with our departed loved ones who have kept the faith, and an eternity in the blessed abode where there is no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain. Then we shall know fully what it means when Jesus says to us, *“Your faith has made you well.”*

Let us not receive the grace of God in vain. When Jesus passes by, let us recognise our need of Him and ask for His mercy. Let us overcome every obstacle and persist in our plea for help. Let us rejoice in His help and follow Him. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Hymn 500 v2

² Romans 3:23

³ Hymn 330 v 3