

Mark 10:46-52. Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸ Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." ⁵⁰ Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. ⁵¹ "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." ⁵² "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Call out to Jesus.

- 1. He hears your call for mercy.**
- 2. He invites you to draw near.**
- 3. He addresses your personal need.**

In January of 2016, a man named Kent Kerswell, who was begging in the streets of Melbourne Australia, received a surprise visit from none other than the Prime Minister of Australia, Malcom Turnbull. The Prime Minister, who seems to have a genuine heart for these simple displays of generosity, gave Kent a handshake and a \$10 bill. A nearby photographer snapped a photo of the two, and the man later told reporters that he used the \$10 to buy himself a Subway sandwich and a cup of coffee. While some saw this as a nice story that displayed the generosity of the leader of the country, others saw it as a questionable ploy of a politician looking for a boost in his approval ratings.

In our lesson for today, there is no debate above genuine motives, there is no question if Jesus did enough to help this man. When Jesus meets a beggar named Bartimaeus, Jesus demonstrates remarkable generosity and power, compassion and grace, in a scene that was both genuine and revealing. Jesus had no thought of turning this into some sort of public relations stunt to boost his approval or manipulate the situation for his favor. Instead as Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem to die for all sinners, one particular man called out to Jesus for mercy; and Jesus in his compassion simply stopped to help. Jesus took time out of his day, and momentarily paused on his path toward the cross to help one person in need. As we dig into this account about Bartimaeus, the beggar outside of Jericho, there is no

question, no debate about it, Jesus is our compassionate Savior and our gracious God. Therefore, we are all encouraged to **call out to Jesus. He hears your call for mercy. He invites you to draw near. He addresses your personal need.**

As Jesus traveled with his disciples from Jericho up to Jerusalem there was some rather big and pressing issues on his mind. He had recently reminded his disciples that when they arrived in Jerusalem he would be handed over to the chief priests, to the rulers, and they would condemn him to death. He would be handed over to the Romans and he would be spit upon, mocked, and flogged. They would kill him, and yet on the third day he would rise. And even though this had been one of several times that he had told his disciples about such weighty things, they still didn't understand. Instead they chose to fight among themselves about who would be the greatest in Jesus' kingdom. *Who would it be that would sit on Jesus' left and on Jesus' right?* Mark recalls how Jesus reminded the disciples that they didn't know what they were asking for. He prepared them for their own persecution and death, and then he called them to lives of humble service, saying to them, ***"For even the Son of Man, did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* – Mark 10:45**

His impending death, the lackluster understanding of his disciples, the burdens that his friends would have to bear for following him, these were all concerns that would have certainly been heavy on his mind, and yet, as he goes through Jericho with a large crowd following him Jesus makes time to show concern for one simple beggar. The man's name was Bartimaeus, which could be translated, son of high value, or son of great worth. And so it was this man who was blind and whose life had been limited to the lowly role of begging at the city gates would be treated as a son of high value, by Jesus, the Son of God. When the blind beggar heard that Jesus of Nazareth was drawing near he called out, ***"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"*** ⁴⁸ ***Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"*** It appears that Bartimaeus, had not only heard of the compassionate acts of Jesus, but his call reveals that Bartimaeus had heard the promises of a coming Messiah and had correctly connected those promises to Jesus. Even when others told him to quiet down, he shouted all the more, ***"Son of David, have mercy on me!"*** His cry expressed a confidence that this was the promised one of God, from the house and line of David, promised to come and help, and heal, and save. From what he had heard about Jesus, Bartimaeus was emboldened and enabled to bring his request to Jesus, the Son of David, Jesus the Son of God?

Who was he, who are we that such royalty should even listen to our cry or give us the time of day! A famous saying declares rightly what the Scriptures proclaim about natural sinful state, *we are all beggars*. As many around Bartimaeus, tried to keep him from shouting out, the skeptics around us, and the skeptic within us, reasons that this

won't work. Why even bother? Why would he listen to me? I have nothing to offer to a holy God. I have nothing to give that he should have favor on me. Who am I that I should approach a holy God? Who am I that the all-powerful Jesus would be concerned about my needs? And yet in his underserved love, in his amazing grace, the LORD Jesus encourages us and even calls us to cry out to him, as he promises to hear each and every one of us. While we might be beggars born in sin, the LORD God invites us to call out for help. While we are beggars who struggle in a sinful world, who hurt under the weight and curse of sin; who have our own difficulties, who have our own problems that seem both too little to be a bother or too big to be solved by mere prayer request, the Bible tells us to cry out all the more! To cry out to Jesus, not just for mere therapeutic - if you talk about it you will feel better - purpose. The Bible encourages us to call out to Jesus in prayer for he has the power to provide genuine help. The Son of David, the one who came as promised to save the people from their sins, to cleanse us from our unrighteousness, he has the power and the compassion to help us with our daily needs as well as our eternal salvation.

Look at how he deals so graciously with Bartimaeus and notice how he teaches his disciples about his complete care for every soul. He enlists his disciples to call to this beggar. **Call him**, he says. And the disciples call out to him with words of encouragement. **Take heart. Get up. He is calling for you.** With that Bartimaeus threw off his outer garment, jumped up, and came to Jesus. What a privilege! What an honor! What an opportunity! The LORD, Christ Jesus the King of kings, had heard his cry and had called him near. And now with a genuine display of personal care and attention, the King of kings - the Son of David, the Son of the Most High - asks a blind beggar this question of remarkable significance, **"What do you want me to do for you?"** And the man lays his request at the feet of his LORD, **"Teacher, I want to see."**

Look at how graciously the LORD deals with Bartimaeus and know that this is how he deals with us as well. He summons us through his gift of faith and he gives us beggars and audience with the King. Called to faith through the proclamation of his holy word, he puts his name on us in Baptism. He washes away our unworthiness and welcomes us into his presence. Filthy beggars no more! Instead by his goodness and grace, we are considered sons and daughters of high value, children of great worth. Through the gift of faith, we are emboldened and enabled to bring our prayers, our requests, to God.

Jesus would finish his journey from Jericho to Jerusalem to go to the cross to give us this status, through him we are redeemed children of God. The one born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth is the almighty King who comes to save unworthy sinners. The holy God can relate to the human experience, he knows our needs our pains so well and he is quick to listen to our pleas and helps us in our distress. The Son of David came to save the lost, to help the helpless, to give hope to the hopeless. The Son of God took on our poverty so that we might become rich, heirs of eternity, sons and daughters of God

through the gift of faith. And so, we cry out accordingly to the one who could and did and does help us. Through the Word that is still proclaimed by his disciples he summons us, and encourages us, to come near. ***Take heart. Get up. He is calling for you.***

What an honor and privilege we have been given through our Lord Jesus Christ! We are able to come before the LORD in prayer. And the LORD who answers our prayer for mercy, who forgives our sins through the blood he would shed for you and me on the cross of Calvary, this same compassionate Savior gives us the opportunity to lay our personal needs at his feet as well. What goodness, what undeserved favor, what compassion, what abundant generosity Jesus demonstrates when he asks of Bartimaeus, ***“What do you want me to do for you?”*** And so it is that the LORD God comes in much the same way to us. He tells us to ***cast all our anxiety on him because he cares for you and me. (1 Peter 5:7).*** He allows us an audience with the Almighty God and whatever is bothering us - whether public problem or private plight - we can bring it all before God and he promises, he demonstrates, that he will hear our cry. And then in his great love, and in his great power he will answer, he will help, he will deliver us from problem and pain.

What problems are weighing on you? Whether concern over health, or finances, family or friends, work or weather, relationship or temptation, bring it all to the LORD Jesus, the King, the Son of David, the Son of God. What a friend we have in Jesus, indeed! For in his great love for you, the same LORD who graciously went to the cross to die for you, offers you this tremendous gift of prayer. He promises to hear our cry for mercy. He invites you to draw near. And in his love and wisdom he will address your personal needs. Listen as he come near and says with genuine concern, compassion, and care, ***“What do you want me to do for you?”***

Far greater than any earthly story of generosity, the LORD Jesus, comes with divine benevolence. The promised Savior goes to the cross, to wipe away our sin, to forever change our status. Beggars no more, we are children of high honor. We who are blessed with an eternal inheritance are also blessed with a daily audience with the king. The one who rules all things, the one who lived and died and rose again to give you eternal life, wants you to come to him with the problems and the pains of life. Jump at this privilege to speak with Jesus. Jump at this opportunity to lay requests before the mighty Lord. Give thanks for this generosity that the LORD has shown and promised to you through his Holy Word. With a thankful heart let us go on our way in faith, calling out to Jesus, knowing that he will hear our cry for mercy as he has met our need for eternal salvation. Amen.