

**“Bartimaeus”**  
*Mark 10:45-52*  
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***Mark 10:45-52***

<sup>45</sup> *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*”

<sup>46</sup> *And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. <sup>47</sup> 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!” <sup>48</sup> And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” <sup>49</sup> And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.” <sup>50</sup> And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. <sup>51</sup> And Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And the blind man said to him, “Rabbi, let me recover my sight.” <sup>52</sup> And Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.*

**INTRODUCTION**

People have been arguing about the existence of God. I once read an article with a parable about unbelievers, saying a family of mice lived in a large piano. Music filled their dark spaces with the sound of harmony. At first, the mice were impressed by it and drew comfort and wonder from the thought that there was someone who made the music, though invisible to them. Above, yet close to them, they loved to think of the great player whom they could not see. One day, a daring mouse climbed a certain part of the piano and returned very thoughtful. “I have learned how the music is made,” he said. “There is no great player, but the secret lies in the thinly stretched wires of graduated lengths which tremble and vibrate.” Thus, they had to revise all of their old beliefs, such that only the most conservative ones could still believe in an unseen player. In the course of time, another explorer carried the explanation even further, postulating that a number of hammers dancing and leaping on the wires were the secret. Though a more complicated theory, it simply went to show that they lived in a purely mechanical and mathematical world. With the passage of time, the unseen player came to be thought of as a myth, yet the pianist continued to play. The lesson here is that regardless of people’s naturalistic theories, the world is orchestrated by the great conductor of the universe. Many times you may lose the argument on God's existence because others are smarter than you, but it is absurd to think of such order in inanimate objects in this world without God. The intricacies of a single cell cannot be contained in all the books and computers of the world. Also, all the knowledge in this world cannot make a blind man see, especially the spiritually blind.

Furthermore, when the Soviet Union first launched a rocket with a human into space, the pilot, Yuri Gagarin is quoted by some sources to have uttered the now famous atheistic quote, “I don't see any God up here.” Later, a child wrote to him saying, “Hey mister, when you went out there, was your heart pure?” Referring to Matthew 5, which says, “Blessed are those who are pure in heart, they will see God.” How can the blind, unimportant and hopeless beggar in this passage, see without a miracle? His name, Bartimaeus, meaning Son of Timaeus, was a very normal name in that society (like a Timaeus Jr., nowadays). It could have been anyone, hence tonight, we must desire to see, meet, and encounter Jesus through the Word and prayer. The Bible says that the more we behold him, the more we become like him, to represent him. We proceed with examining the sixfold practical applications of this passage.

**1. Know the reality of your desperate condition – begging, sitting, and blind [46]**

***Mark 10:46*** – “*Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.*”

The threefold lessons here are as follows:

- I. **Begging:** We are spiritual beggars in poverty, hungry, and doing anything to be fed. His begging for food can be likened to one begging to fill his heart with all sort of deviant addictions and habits including drugs, sex, internet, academics and fame.
- II. **Sitting:** He could not go to many places, and was unproductive as a result. He had no direction and did not know where to go in life. Likewise, when we are stagnant, there is no progression towards something eternally purposeful, apart from Christ.
- III. **Blind:** Here, physical blindness was a mere reflection of spiritual blindness. He could not see the sun, tree, house, people, and could not even see his own face; neither could he see God. Similarly, we live in darkness apart from Christ, unable to see His creation, ourselves, and or our own sins. Importantly, we cannot see our holy, loving God, who is building up wrath for sinners. We need to know the reality of our desperate condition, else face the impending judgment apart from Christ.

## 2. Know that Jesus is always willing and available to serve [45, 51]

*Mark 10:45 – For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

*Mark 10:51 – And Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And the blind man said to him, “Rabbi, let me recover my sight.”*

I think Mark 10:45 is the main/ purpose verse of the whole gospel of Mark. The main reason He came was to give. He desires to give and pour His praise and blessings upon us, such that He receives praise, honor and worship from us. We need to undergo a paradigm shift from thinking that God needs something from us. God is God, self-sufficient and in need of nothing from us. When he receives our honor and praise, He simply wants to include us, by using it. Everything in this universe is already praising Him but He still desires to receive our praise to use in a special way. Importantly, the foundation of how prayer works lies in Jesus’ propensity to give.

I have had about four to five pastors in my lifetime, and I still remember and pray for them in the mornings, sometimes tearfully thanking God for placing them in my life. None of them were perfect, yet they all impacted me in helping me get closer to Jesus. I tremendously respect one of them in that when he preached, I learned so much, especially about the cross. His sermon at a Junior High retreat is a great example. Upon becoming a pastor and preaching at a revival meeting myself, noticing him in the congregation was quite awkward. I had no idea of what he was thinking and tried to ignore him to forestall distraction. After a wonderful retreat, he talked to me afterwards about how blessed he was. I think he was lying, but from that moment on, the pastor I looked up to all my life, was almost treating me as another pastor, and as an equal in our dialogue. He began asking me theological questions, and the very first time he did that, he asked, “What do you think is the essence of prayer?” I had no idea what I was supposed to say. His own concept emphasized how prayer was related to a relationship. I then brought up the aspect of empowerment through relationship.

These two things I think are a good balance of what prayer is. As we build our relationship with God, he wants to serve us by pouring his grace upon us to strengthen, empower, forgive and wash us. So, in Mark 10:51 when Jesus said to him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ He does that because He wants us to ask in prayer so that He can give. As we build our relationship with Him, there is a balance, He pours and gives. The proof of having a relationship with Him is in receiving much cleansing, mercy and grace; you are always so full of something, though the circumstances might not change, though you feel miserable, you suddenly have the desire and strength to move on in your life. He came to serve, even chasing after us to serve while we are running away. Martin

Luther said, “prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance, but laying hold of his willingness.” We often think we have to chase Him and twist His arm to receive from Him, but God always wants to pour His grace upon us, and all we have to do is want it. As soon as you say, “Okay I want to change,” He says, “You got me at O.” As we go out, we cannot help but to give whatever we receive to others.

A falling domino chain helps me understand redemptive history. It goes through the whole room, and everything falls. In the midst of hardships, difficulties, storms, and especially when we want to quit, we need to remain faithful. As we are affected by others, even as they sacrifice themselves, fall and even die, their relationship with God spills grace upon us. Then, as we slowly fall, we affect other people. From one person to another and one generation to another, God is faithful. We need to go to prayer, to do our part, to receive the grace given to us, so that we can affect people in our lives, even if it is a few people in our family, friends, workplace, mission field and local area. We go to prayer to be served, so that we can go to our places to serve others. We pray to receive, and apply to release. We go to Jesus to get Him, and go to others to give Him. That is what we need to do daily, and throughout our lives.

### **3. Know how to stop Jesus and have him call you [49]**

*Mark 10:49 – And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.”*

There is a deliberate progression in this sermon in that once you know your desperate reality, and understand His willingness to give, you need to know how to receive Him. In Mark 10:49, we see that Jesus is stoppable. In his Omni-presence, He is roaming around the universe in His Spirit. He is always with us in one sense, but in another sense, as we observe in this verse, we have to stop Him, and that is what prayer is. I will illustrate this using Walter Peyton, who is perhaps the best running back that the professional American football team, the Chicago Bears, ever had. During one Monday night game against the New York Giants, and with his teammates playing badly, Walter Peyton still moved the ball, slowly and constantly gaining yards sometimes past 10 people. The announcer mentioned that he had accumulated about nine rushing miles during his career, with someone knocking him down every 4.6 yards. Walter Peyton was pretty unstoppable. However, the beggar stopped Jesus as we observe in verse 47. Jesus’ stop-ability is demonstrated in how one man’s simple plea for mercy stopped the mighty God-man who was almost ready to enter into Jerusalem to die and fulfill redemptive history. Similarly, the robber on the cross simply said, “Jesus, when you enter into your kingdom, remember me.” Beaten and barely breathing, Jesus stopped, looked at him, and told him, “you will be with me in paradise.”

Mark 10:52 says: *“And Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your faith has made you well.’”* As you pray in hunger, trust, reliance and faith, an incredible exchange takes place, with your bad going to him, and His good to you. According to Isaiah 53:5, “By his wounds, we are healed.” We give Him our pains and wounds, while He gives us His healing. The healing service in this passage was a service of Himself. Also, just as the blind beggar was able to see Jesus, Jesus was also blinded on the cross in return. He said “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” For all eternity He had been able to see God the Father so close, but on the cross, He was blinded by sin. In addition, from Mark 10:47 which says, “he heard it was Jesus of Nazareth,” we see what generated a condition of faith in his heart. There is an important lesson for us here. When you hear bad things, the condition of your heart will be that of doubt, but when you keep hearing God’s Word, meditating and praying through it, your heart will be in a condition of faith. Meditate on the verses that you know about his goodness, and pray through them to encounter Him through the Holy Spirit.

#### **4. Seek Him with all your heart in the ways that you know how [46-47]**

*Mark 10:46-47* – <sup>46</sup> And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. <sup>47</sup> 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!”

Everybody has different ways of practically seeking Him, but we herein examine the intensity and method, that is, how much and how. The intensity of our desperation is equivalent to the intensity of our plea. In the first point, we examined how in spiritual poverty, we must turn from sin to the pleasure of a relationship with Jesus. Simply turn the intensity as well as method used to seek wrongful things to seek God. In fact, this is the underlying principle behind fasting. It is hard to desire God with a divided heart. Fasting, if you do it right, will always lead to a feasting on Him. Bartimaeus could not see, but he was able to hear and speak and beg. He does exactly that in verse 47. Do not worry about what you do not know how to do, but with what you can, learn how to hear, speak, beg, and seek Him with all your heart. So, do praise-begging if you can sing, artistic-begging if you are artistic, cry out to the Lord if you are an emotional person, intellectual begging if you are intellectual, and write your prayers down if you are relational. The key lies in emptying self of other things to focus on Him.

#### **5. Seek with confidence and humility [48]**

*Mark 10: 48* – “And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’”

The words “many” and “more” here are actually the same. Perhaps, for every rebuke, he responded with holy defiance, crying out, “Jesus, Son of David!” each time someone said, “be quiet!” This was not out of sinful revenge or spite but of humble confidence in Jesus. Balance in Christian life helps us even in our prayers. There is a balance between divine sovereignty and our responsibility to pray. There is a heavenly realm in prayer, even as we pray in the earthly realm on our knees. Although, there is a fearful reality as we look at the spiritual battle and sin and wars in this world, it is balanced with trusting in the everlasting arm of Christ. As we become desperate to pray, there is the holiness of God, and we can still be confident and relax. Through Christ, we can beg for His mercy. In prayer, have confidence, not arrogance, as well as humility, not insecurity. Some guys, in attempt to be humble in job interviews say, “I do not know how to do anything, I am nothing,” and do not get the job as the world wants confident and humble people as well. Our attitude should be, “I believe I can do it. I might not know everything, so please teach me.” Have confidence in believing Jesus Christ will empower you, but be humble in understanding that everything is for the glory of God. Do not look down on other people, but trust in Christ, to boldly approach His throne of grace.

#### **6. Always seek for more. [52]**

*Mark 10:52* – And Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

Upon receiving his vision, Jesus said go, but the healed blind man comes. He was now able to see, find and touch Jesus physically. He was also able to see Jesus with his heart, i.e. spiritual vision. He wanted more of Jesus, so he followed Him. Recall that when asked for what he wanted, he requested sight and not money. If God were to come to ask you for what you want, what is the one important thing that you want in your life? Do you want the gifts or Jesus the giver? When he received sight, he realized that was not what he was seeking for and that receiving Jesus was the greatest joy. In other words, gaining his sight enabled him to see what he was truly seeking for, and then he was able to follow Him, probably for all the days of his life. There is always more of Jesus to receive.

Ephesians 3:20, is a verse that motivates me to pray, as it says, “*Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think.*” In NIV it says, “*all that we ask or imagine, according to the power that is already at work within us.*” Then, verse 21 says, “*to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*” The sight that the blind man received was quickly replaced by the awe of what he was now able to see, thus following Jesus. Many saw Jesus with their eyes that day, but he truly saw Jesus in such a way that he wanted to follow him all the days of his life. We need a similar attitude tonight such that our spirit's nature would be so addicted to him, that we would never leave him nor forsake him, because he is our vision, our sight, our love, our passion, our music, our song, our purpose, and our heartbeat. Bartimaeus starts as a blind and sitting beggar but ends as a child of God, prince of the King, seeing, following, and satisfied. Pray tonight that, “Lord purify me that I may see you and though I may fall asleep occasionally in prayer, I still want to see Jesus in my dreams.”

### **Conclusion**

This week, all the pastors visited Atlanta for a wonderful pastor's conference. Going away together is usually a great time for us, even as we make fun of each other, eat, and play basketball. A speaker at the conference told a story about a young and diseased dying woman that invited the pastor over, even as she planned out her funeral. “Can you make sure that when I go into the coffin, I have a fork in my hand?” she said. “What is the story behind that?” they asked her. She proceeded to tell them a story told to her by her grandmother that grew up in the Depression era. Her grandmother's own mother would barely be able to make food to eat. But once in a while, she told them, “Hey, clean your plate, but make sure you keep your fork.” What that meant was that she thought miraculously, even after the meal, she would somehow be able to make a dessert as well. Essentially, the phrase “keep your fork,” means that the best is yet to come. “When I die, make sure I have a fork in my hand, because I will be with Jesus,” she said. Christ is coming, and the best is yet to come. I pray that as we pray tonight and every day, we will have even more of the bread of life, more of Jesus and His sweetness. If you enjoy your Christian life, as you receive grace, mercy and strength, there is always more in Jesus Christ. In Him, every day, the best is yet to come. Tonight, let us keep our forks, because better is ahead, and again, the best is yet to come. We have to learn how to pray. Let us pray.