

Title: The path to salvation

Introduction

One of the most crucial questions you and I can ask is how do I get saved?

What must I do to be saved?

Or how should I counsel someone who asks me that question.

I believe our passage gives us some insight into that question this morning.

Read the passage Mark 10:46-52

Historical background

In our passage we encounter the historical event in which Jesus healed a blind man as they were coming to the new Testament Jericho.

It is not a complicated story.

Along the road we encounter a man called Bartimaeus, a beggar, who is physically blind.

When He hears Jesus walking by, he calls out to Jesus, son of David, a messianic term to show mercy to him.

The crowd initially try to silence him.

But Jesus stops calls him to himself and asks him what does he want Him to do for Him.

He asks for his sight.

Jesus tells him “go your way ,your faith has made you well.”

Instantaneously his sight is recovered and he follows Jesus.

The end.

That is what happened on the surfaces.

You may ask ...ok so what?

Mark was an evangelist writing to Roman believers facing persecution under Nero.

In the back of Marks mindset is always the gospel .

Jesus was on route to Jerusalem, to his own death and resurrection (the gospel).

In a sense it was also the journey His apostles made to becoming believers. At this stage they were still spiritually blind, and needed to gain spiritual sight.

They needed to move from their understanding of Jesus, the Son of David as the royal king to deliver them from the oppressive Romans to an understanding of Jesus the Son of David who first came to deliver them from the effects of the fall, their own sinful hearts.

Mark was giving his readers and you and I a vivid display of how physically a blind man gained sight through faith in Christ, as well as spiritual sight. This was a vivid picture of the journey an unbeliever to salvation and discipleship.

This happened to Bartimaeus, the apostles, Mark and many of His readers.

It's important for you and I to understand this journey not only for ourselves but also to help others on that journey.

The journey of unbelievers (spiritually blind) to salvation (getting spiritual sight).

Proposition

5 pictures displaying how you become a saved disciple of Jesus

1. He was blind and helpless
2. He understood his need and appealed for Mercy
3. He lefts everything and went to Jesus
4. Jesus revealed his need
5. Jesus healed him and he followed Him.

1. He was blind and helpless

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. Mark 10:46 (ESV)

And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd

After crossing the Jordan River from Perea Jesus and his disciples came to the new Testament Jericho.

In that period of time you had two Jericho's.

1. OT Testament Jericho, which was the City you and I read about that Israel had walked around 7 days and then the walls came down. This city was just a mound of ruins. Today it called Tell al Sultan

(Show the picture)

This was the city whose people had been hardened in their sin, and God totally destroyed the city because of their hard-hearted rebellion against a Holy God.

Just as you would have in any story this would have been the visual backdrop to the life of this blind beggar (a sinner, a slave to sin, destined to eternal ruin).

The backdrop a city in a state of ruin, yet in the fore ground a man's life who physically and spiritually was in a state of ruin.

Note that Mark was emphasizing that they were leaving this city of ruins.

Luke emphasises that they were heading towards the 2nd city, The New Testament Jericho, which was the Eden of Palestine.

As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. Luke 18:35 (ESV)

The New Jericho had been built by Herod.

It had four forts, the amphitheatre, a new palace and splendid gardens.

Jericho means perfumed.

Archaeological excavations have uncovered baths and the ruins of the palaces of Herod.

This would have been practically an ideal place for a beggar to be located as there would have been travellers heading towards either the NT Jericho or the New Jerusalem.

But Mark was emphasising the ruined Jericho and I think that was purposeful for a good narrator.

A large crowd was accompanying Jesus.

Jesus always drew crowds.

But here we encounter our blind beggar

Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. Mark 10:46 (ESV)

Alongside the road was a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, which means the son of one esteemed or honourable, it also means son of Timaeus (highly prized/polluted)

Mathew20:29 in fact reveals that there were two blind beggars, but Mark focusses on only one.

Sitting along the side of the road meant that he was not on the road.

He was not a follower of Jesus.

Beggars would have been marginalized by society and would have been mostly ignored, just like many do in society today.

They were outcasts unable to help themselves.

Being blind meant that he could not see Jesus or see how to follow Him.

This man physical state or ruin also reflected his spiritual state of ruin.

A physical picture of the unbeliever's spiritual condition

Just as he was blind physically, he was also blind spiritually.

This was the condition of the disciples of Jesus.

After Jesus having fed the 4000 people, on the boat berated the disciples for their hard heartedness and blindness.

*¹⁷ And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are **your hearts hardened?** ¹⁸ **Having eyes do you not see,** and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? Mark 8:17–18 (ESV)*

Their hearts were hardened.

They were spiritually blind.

Every unbeliever is blind to the gospel.

*³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,
⁴ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:3–4 (NASB95)*

In Mark 8:22-26 just after Jesus had berated his disciples for spiritual blindness had healed the blind man at Bethsaida.

This miraculous healing contrasted the man gaining sight with the spiritual blindness of the disciples.

The two stages of healing were a visual picture of how the disciples were gradually come to understand not only who Jesus is but also what he would come to do as the savior.

Discipleship was a journey of growth in understanding for His disciples

- 1) Nonunderstanding
- 2) Misunderstandings or partial understanding
- 3) Complete understanding.

These two healing events (Blind man healed at Bethesda) and the blind men healed near Jericho served like the bookends to the Disciples journey from spiritual blindness to finally seeing who Jesus truly is.

- Bartimaeus was blind physically, the disciples were blind spiritually
- Bartimaeus was unable to heal himself, the disciples were unable to heal themselves spiritually.

Jesus had taught that also in the encounter with the rich man mark 10:17-31 salvation was impossible to be achieved through human efforts. Every unbeliever is cannot save themselves through human efforts.

²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God." Mark 10:27 (ESV)

Application

The most important truth any person needs to have is a proper understanding of your condition.

Understand this Satan and sin has blinded you to the gospel. It is impossible for you to change your spiritual condition through human efforts. Only God can give sight to a physical blind man and only God can give sight to a spiritually blind man.

You need to understand that due to your sin, due to your blindness, its just a matter of time that you will face judgment and an eternity under the wrath of God.

The first thing any unbeliever needs to understand is their spiritual hopeless condition.

As I reflect on my life, I see my sin, I know my sin, I know that before Jesus I was destined to an eternity in hell, I was in a state of ruin, blind to the gospel.

2. He understood his need and appealed for Mercy

47 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!" 48 And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 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." Mark 10:47–49 (ESV)

47 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!"

Being blind all Bartimaeus had was his ears to direct him.

Obviously, he had heard the stories of Jesus and so when he heard that Jesus was there, all he could do was to cry out to Jesus.

The meaning of the term cry contains the idea of the hoarse cry of the raven.

It's the same term that Mark used in Mark 15:13, when the people cried out "crucify Him"

The grammar indicates that kept on crying out.

So, you have this idea of a hoarse continues crying out from this blind beggar.

“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

In this case its hoarse cry for Mercy,

“Jesus, Son of David, is a messianic title, the son of David, the heir to David’s throne, the Messianic king in fulfilment of all the promises made to Abraham and David.

Have mercy on me

Mercy means to show deep compassion, to show **benevolent goodness** to a person in a **pitiable or miserable condition** even though you do not deserve it.

Basically, don’t inflict upon me what I deserve for my sin = have mercy on me

The **Jewish cultural understanding** was that blindness was an affliction from God because of sin. It was one of the curses God brought for disobedience to His covenant

²⁹ and you shall grope at noonday, as the blind grope in darkness, and you shall not prosper in your ways. And you shall be only oppressed and robbed continually, and there shall be no one to help you. Deuteronomy 28:29 (ESV)

Of interest is also the events in 2 Sam 5:6 The king of the Jebusites insulted David in which he said that the blind and the lame would ward off David and his men.

David responded by calling his men to strike the blind and the lame(enemies) but also prohibited them from coming into the house (the palace or Yahweh’s sanctuary)

The blind would be prohibited from entering God’s home.

⁸ And David said on that day, “Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack ‘the lame and the blind,’ who are hated by David’s soul.” Therefore, it is said, “The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.” 2 Samuel 5:8 (ESV)

So, the appeal for mercy was appealing to Jesus the Messiah, the son of David to withhold punishment that was is deserved to the blind.

- The curse of blindness for sin
- The prohibition of entering the house of God due to blindness
- Remember, that this is what **the cultural perception** was of blindness.
(different to our modern understanding)

The principle we see here is that

1. You need to understand your sinfulness and your spiritual blindness
2. You need to understand that due to your sin you are deserving of Gods punishment.
3. Your only option is to appeal to Jesus: have mercy upon me Jesus.

On the cross God withheld the punishment we deserved, by punishing Jesus Christ as a substitutionary sacrifice.

You and I deserved the punishment

Mercy is God *not giving* us what we *do* deserve;

The crowd responded harshly to the man.

48 And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Many in the crowd were sternly charging him that he might be silent.

They showed disdain to this blind beggar.

Earlier in Mark we see Jesus silencing people to prevent premature and false confessions.

But here the crowd wanted prevent this person from coming to Jesus.

They viewed his blindness as Gods curse due to his sin.

But ignoring the crowd he kept on crying out for mercy.

His blindness and his Jewish cultural understanding of it being the results of sin would have been his motive to cry out for mercy

Oh, my brothers and sisters, it is only when you fully begin to comprehend how much of a sinner you are and how much you are deserving of God's eternal punishment, do you sense your true need.

Do you no matter what resistance you face, call out to Jesus for Mercy.

And even though Jesus was focused to go to Jerusalem, he still has time to stop and to give special attention to a simple blind beggar, who understood his own sinfulness and was crying to Jesus for Mercy in faith.

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." Mark 10:47–49 (ESV)

Jesus' response changed the crowd's response.

Their rebuke was not allowed to stand.

One moment their rebuking the man to shut up, the next they encourage him to get up, because Jesus is calling.

Application

Do you understand your own sinfulness and that you deserve God's wrath and punishment?

If you do not comprehend your spiritual condition, you will see no need for salvation.

The bible is clear

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 1 John 1:8 (NASB95)

Or are you still in that condition where you are justifying yourself?

Rather lying than admitting your own sinfulness.

Do you tend to say what a good person you are and inflate stories or make up stories so that people would not see your wicked heart?

It's only once you fully comprehend your sinful state, that you see your desperate need of God's Mercy.

And its when you realize this that you to should call out to Jesus for Mercy, no matter what people say.

Even if people tell you to keep quiet, call out to Christ, that He too may stopped, and call you to come to Him.

And in fact, Jesus has stopped and is already calling.

Will you go to Him?

Will you leave everything behind and go. This is the next point

3. He lefts everything and went to Jesus

And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Mark 10:50 (ESV)

Bartimaeus cast aside his meagre earthly possession.

Everything he owned to cover him is flung off him.

What a contrast to the rich man's response.

²¹ Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." ²² But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property. Mark 10:21–22 (NASB95)

The love of money, the pursuit of worldly things can hinder you from coming to Jesus for spiritual healing.

This man not only flung of his garment, he jumps up and comes towards Jesus.

Application

Ask yourself this question, what is it in your life that hinders you from coming to Jesus.

Is it your love of the world?

Is it the pursuit of comfort and pleasure?

Is it your love of money?

Is it the love of your own sins?

Cast them aside, Make Jesus your goal.

Don't delay, you don't know if you have a tomorrow, come to Jesus.

As the world scrambles to deal with the corona virus, just another effect of the fall.

People live in fear of death.

Yes, death is coming, it could be the corona virus, it could be a heart attack, God knows.

But after death then comes judgment

And will you standing before the throne of God say that your love of money, pleasure or what ever the excuse is prevented you from coming to Jesus for salvation and healing.

4. Jesus revealed his need

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." Mark 10:51

This is the same question he had asked the sons of Zebedee.

Their answer to the question revealed their heart condition.

³⁶ And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" ³⁷ They said to Him, "Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your glory." Mark 10:36–37 (NASB95)

They wanted position and glory, power and prestige.

Bartimaeus wanted ordinary health.

Jesus obviously know that he needed sight, why did he ask this question?

Jesus allowed this man to express his **need** in his own word.
Our words reveal our hearts.

His response was simply this: Rabbi, Rabboni, frequently used to address God in prayer...that I might receive sight (implied he was born blind).

Unlike James and John who thought they deserved power and status, he knew he deserved nothing.

He just wanted mercy, to receive what he did not deserve.

Application

Pray

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way
everlasting!” (Ps 139:23–24, ESV)*

Your words reveal what is in your heart.

1. If you're always justifying yourself, it reveals a prideful (idolatry of self) heart not willing to accept its own sinfulness.
2. If you pursue status and position, it reveals a heart wanting to worship self rather than God.
3. But if God has been working in your heart, then your words may be something like this.

Jesus, I am a miserable sinner.

I deserve your judgment

Have mercy upon me.

Save me

Grant me the gifts of repentance and faith

Give me spiritual sight

Will that be your prayer this morning to God?

And if you're a believer, then this should be some of the things you should be looking for and praying for in the hearts of the many unbelievers that you interact with in your world.

5. Jesus healed him and he followed Him.

*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.
Mark 10:52 (ESV)*

Mathew 20:34 tells us what Jesus **did**.

³⁴ And Jesus in pity (moved in compassion) touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him. Matthew 20:34 (ESV)

Luke states Jesus **spoke**.

⁴² And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." Luke 18:42 (NASB95)

Jesus touched his eyes and spoke to him and he gained sight.

Jesus's declaration is interesting.

Go your way; your faith has made you well."

Grammar means keep on going your way.

Your faith has saved you (the term has made you well) is a term used for saved.

Understanding the Jewish mindset of blindness attributed to sin, this man would have understood that his trust in Christ has forgiven him from his sins and thus the affliction of blindness.

And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

His physical healing was instantaneous, not delayed.

And instead of him going his own way, he followed Jesus.

The fact that Bartimaeus was named and known not only by Mark, Peter and the early church indicates that he had become a disciple known by name in the Church.

He had not only gained physical sight instantaneously, but also spiritual sight instantaneously.

⁶ For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:5–6 (NASB95)

From being a blind beggar along the side of the road, he became a saved follower of Jesus on the road to Jerusalem.

He had come to see the glory of God in the face of Christ.

In Jerusalem Jesus's displayed of mercy, by withholding the punishment sinners deserve.

In Jerusalem Jesus's displayed His grace by granting salvation to those deserving hell.

It was in Jerusalem the disciples finally received spiritual sight as they came to believe in Christ death and resurrection.

The blind man gained his sight both physically and spiritually through faith in Jesus on route to Jerusalem.

This passage models salvation before the cross.

- He understood he was a sinner under Gods judgment and needing Mercy.
- He acknowledges Jesus as the Messiah, who was able to save Him.
- He acknowledges Jesus as Master.

We see Jesus response that he did not ignore those who cry out to him for mercy who understand their sinful condition

Application

This passage does not teach us that all blind people are cursed.

It does teach us:

- That it is a journey.
- That you need to understand and be convicted of your own sinful state and condition
- That you understand that you are deserving of Gods punishment
- That all you **can do** is cry out to Jesus for Mercy

- That Jesus wants you to express your need to Him
- That salvation is through a dependence upon Jesus
- That salvation is a work of God, giving you spiritual sight
- That Jesus more than willing, and more than able to save you if you trust in Him

Will you in your heart cry out to Him for Mercy

Place your faith upon His ability, his power, his death and resurrection to save you.

Repent and trust in Him.

For me as a believer, this story illustrates my story and your story of salvation.

IT also provides you and I a guideline to understand the journey that every unbeliever chosen by God goes through to come to be a believer in Christ

Conclusion

5 pictures displaying how you become a saved disciple of Jesus

1. He was blind and helpless
2. He understood his need and appealed for Mercy
3. He lefts everything and went to Jesus
4. Jesus revealed his need
5. Jesus healed him and he followed Him.