

Title: The Book of Mark: Part 31, Blind Bartimaeus & Kingdom Healing

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Passage: Mark 10:46-52

Big idea: God's Kingdom requires us to look to Jesus in Faith.

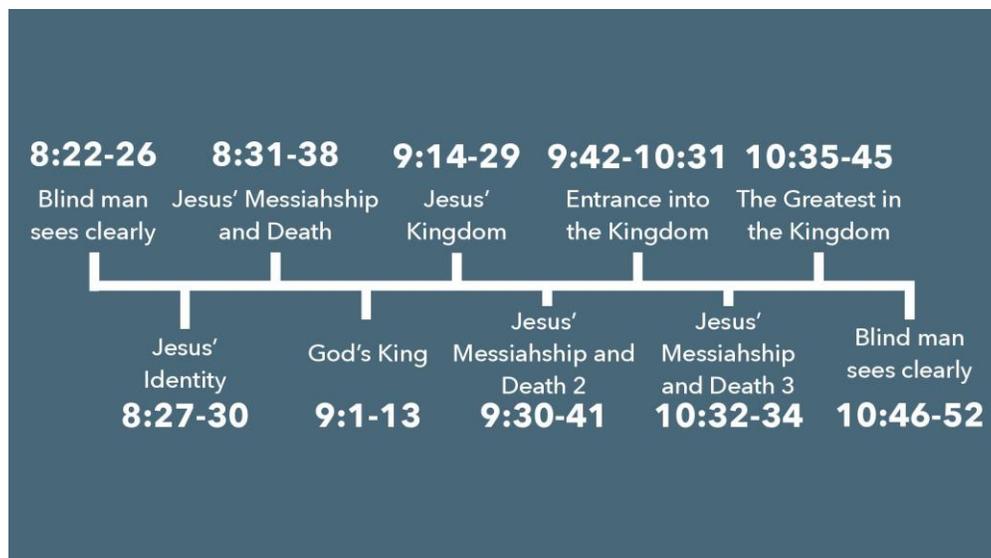


In so many places in the Gospel of Mark the theme of sight and spiritual sight, and by extension, blindness, comes up.

In many places in Mark, the disciples do not see clearly. They do not see the message, method, ministry, or Jesus clearly. They do not see Jesus' identity, Kingdom, or messiahship clearly. They do not understand the purpose of the Kingdom.

Whenever there is a passage that relates to the clarity of the Kingdom of God in Mark's Gospel there is some event of restored sight applied to it.

Here in Mark 10:46-52, is a story of man being healed of his blindness, which follows directly after the lengthiest portion of Mark's Gospel in which the Kingdom of God is presented to the disciples. What it means for Jesus to bring about the Kingdom of God, and what it looks like is presented from Mark 8:22-10:52. The Kingdom of God is placed directly in the center of 2 healing miracles of Jesus about sight.



<sup>46</sup> 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. <sup>47</sup> When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” <sup>48</sup> Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” <sup>49</sup> Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” <sup>50</sup> Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. <sup>51</sup> “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.” <sup>52</sup> “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

#### Mark 10:46-52

Mark 10:46-47, “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. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’”

They are on the journey to Jerusalem, and along the way stop in Jericho. Bartimaeus is a blind beggar along the road out of Jericho towards Jerusalem.

Bartimaeus is two words combined together, Bar-Timaeus. His name is Timaeus, and Bar means son. Mark is writing this gospel primarily to Gentile Romans, who do not have the same understanding of Jewish history and culture.

It is interesting that Mark names Bartimaeus, rather than calling him the blind beggar. Jericho was a trade road, and a very highly travelled area, it could be that for historical context, Mark is helping his audience know that this was a man who had been known, and who had lived outside on the streets, begging for a very long time. The indication is that, not only did Jesus know this man, but the public knew him as well.

Then, Bartimaeus calls Jesus by his Kingly title, Son of David.

This is important to note. The title, Son of David, implies the kingly rule of the Messiah. Most of the disciples understood this as a kingdom of David bringing vengeance and justice against the oppression of the Romans. The Son of David was to be a king in the way that David was king, in the eyes of the Jewish people, David was a defending, conquering King.

Remember the theme of sight throughout Mark 8 - Mark 10. People are not seeing Jesus and his Kingdom, his mission, or his messiahship clearly. But Bartimaeus, the man who cannot see physically, does see Jesus spiritually and calls him by his Kingly name.

Bartimaeus cries out for mercy, knowing only Jesus can do what it is that Bartimaeus is asking. Bartimaeus “sees” something that the others do not, the nature of Jesus’ mission & messiahship.

One of the major texts about the Messiah is found in Isaiah 61 and 35.

Isaiah 61:1, “The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners”

Isaiah 35:5-6a, “Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.”

This is part of the healing ministry of Jesus as he is bringing about the Kingdom of God into the world.

The name that Bartimaeus identifies Jesus as, Son of David, is very important. Every Jew knew that the ‘Son of David’ was the Messiah, or God’s King.

Jesus has been identified rightly three times so far in Mark’s Gospel.

Mark 1:1, “The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the **Son of God.**”

Mark 1:24, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the **Holy One of God.**”

Mark 10:47, “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!’”

In all three of these passages, we have an identity statement. Mark 1:1 is the thesis of the book; what Mark is going to argue for, that Jesus is the Son of God. Mark 1:24 is the statement from the spiritual realm, from the demons, because they know who Jesus is, but don’t worship or follow him as King. Mark 10:47, Bartimaeus “sees”/understands who Jesus is as King, and requests mercy.

Mark has been placing these accounts all over the place to bring us to a point of knowing, who Jesus is and what he is about.

Bartimaeus, correctly identifies Jesus, right before Jesus’ triumphant entry as King in Jerusalem. This event takes place just before Holy Week in Mark’s Gospel. The “Ministry of Jesus” portion of the Gospel of Mark is now going to be over. The proclamation of the Kingdom of God portion of Mark’s Gospel is going to now stop, and the entry of the King and the cost of the Kingdom will now come about in the death of Christ and his resurrection.

Mark 10:48, “Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’”

The crowds commanded him to be silent. They “reproved”, or “rebuked” him to be silent. We’ve seen this in other places in the Gospel account, most recently in the events of Mark 8 & Mark 10 with Peter, and then with the children coming to Jesus.

But Bartimaeus faith compels him forward, and he shouts all the more. The statement “have mercy on me” means, be compassionate towards me, or show me grace, or take pity on me.

Mark 10:49, “Jesus stopped and said, ‘Call him.’ So they called to the blind man, ‘Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.’”

Jesus Calls him to himself. Bartimaeus has been calling to Jesus, shouting, clamouring for his attention amongst the crowd and the disciples. Typically rejected, generally avoided, or ignored. But when Jesus’ attention is caught, he will not ignore.

And, in his response, Jesus corrects the crowd’s behaviour, and quickly their tone changes.

The crowd tells him to cheer up, meaning, have courage, take heart, be confident.

“He’s calling you”

This could easily get overlooked, but what an absolutely beautiful moment of clarity for us to behold. That Jesus calls the marginalized, rejected, outcast, ignored. He calls this man to himself.

Now there could be a million applications to this point, but I won’t belabour it too much.

Take cheer, have confidence, take heart because the King is calling YOU.

Mark 10:50-51a, “Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ Jesus asked him.”

Throwing aside anything that could hinder him further, discarding all things that could get in his way, Bartimaeus jumps to his feet with no thought other than getting to Jesus. Jesus’ effective call is pointed and obeyed in this moment. Call him to me, and his response is exact, ferocious and immediate.

“‘What do you want me to do for you?’ Jesus asked him.”

Remember what this story is about, of course its about the healing of this man and Jesus’ miraculous power to do so. But more than that, this passage comes off the heels of this same question from the disciples and their view of greatness in the Kingdom of God.

Mark is so smart to include this right on the heels of that interaction.

Mark 10:35-36, “Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. ‘Teacher,’ they said, ‘we want you to do for us whatever we ask.’ ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ he asked.”

We have the same question, the first in Mark 10:35-36 from the perspective of false Kingdom sight, and the second in Mark 10:51 from the perspective of true Kingdom sight.

The Disciples were still misunderstanding the nature of God’s Kingdom. Jesus asks the same question of the blind man, that he did of the disciples. One wanted what they didn’t understand, one wanted what they understood.

And so, here is the question that I’m going to pose to us?

Do we do the same? Do we have a misunderstanding about God’s Kingdom, and God’s King?

Mark 10:51b, “The blind man said, ‘Rabbi, I want to see.’”

There are two ways to interpret his response:

1. He wants to see physically - the ESV says, “I want to recover my sight”.
2. He wants to see the Messiah - he calls Jesus the Son of David, understanding his messianic purpose and mission.

Bartimaeus knew who Jesus was, from what he had heard, and so he wanted to see the Messiah with his own eyes.

Could you imagine, being this man, and having the opportunity to ask to see? Imagine opening your eyes for the first time, and the first thing that you see is Jesus, God’s Messiah, God’s Son.

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.”

“Immediately” (Mark’s favourite word to use in his gospel) the response to Jesus and the Kingdom of God is to follow.

So many times, in Mark’s Gospel, people were healed by Jesus, and left him. Or, healed by Jesus and Jesus told them to go home. Once Jesus sent a guy on a mission to proclaim what God had done in his healing.

But this time, immediately he was healed and immediately he followed Jesus.

One of the major questions and issues that this type of a verse can bring about is the question of “why does God heals some, and not others, or not all?”

If you wanted this verse to say that God always heals people who have the “right” kind of faith, you could make that argument. Certainly, that is a wrong interpretation of this.

Here is what needs to be known about these sorts of things:

1. God can and does heal physical limitations, sickness, disease, and infirmities.
2. God does heal people as a result of faith placed in His will to heal.
3. God does not always heal physical limitations. So, we pray, fervently, not in demands, but in pleading with open hands.
4. When God does not heal it is not due to a lack of faith on the part of the people praying, or because they did not pray hard enough, or care enough.
  - a. Sometimes, God in his infinite wisdom beyond our understanding, allows for our prayers for healing to go unanswered. In these times, it hurts deeply.
  - b. If our view of God is that he is some distant being, uninterested in the difficulty and pain of our lives, we can easily see this as unloving, uncaring, disinterested, and even evil.

Pastor Charles used to say all the time, “When you cannot see God’s hand, trust in his heart.”

The heart of God is for the hurting, the sick, the marginalized, the oppressed, the downcast, the lowly, the rejected. It is always a heart of care.

The Spiritual Implications of this are massive.

When Jesus heals us spiritually of our sin, our spiritual death, our rebellion against God, it is immediate. He gives us a new heart, healing us spiritually. The response should be this, to immediately follow God’s King, inside of God’s Kingdom.

What do we learn from this passage:

**God’s Kingdom:**

looks **Different than We Expect.**

looks for our **Response when Called.**

looks for us to **Follow Jesus Immediately.**



Inside of God’s Kingdom, God heals, not just of physical things like he has done so many times as we’ve studied Mark’s Gospel, but God heals our physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental ailments as well.

And here is how I want to posture this:

1. We are going to ask God to heal, not command that he heals, it is up to Him.
2. We are going to ask in Faith. We ask in faith believing that God can and does bring healing.
3. We are going to ask with open hands, because if God does not heal, it is because he is using it for some purpose that maybe we do not and cannot understand.
4. We are going to ask for the strength to trust Him if he does not heal today.

<sup>14</sup> Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup> And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup> Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

**James 5:14-16**

**(NIV)**

We want to provide prayer for healing. Our elders would love to pray for you. If you have a prayer request, please visit our website [HERE](#), or email [office@westparkchurch.ca](mailto:office@westparkchurch.ca), or call the office at 519-471-7460.