

"WHAT DO YOU WANT?"

Mark 10:46-52

Key Verse: 10:51

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."

In this passage, Jesus helps a blind man personally out of his compassion. Jesus opened the blind man's eyes and wiped the tears from his eyes. Finally, Jesus died on the cross for the blind man and for all of us. We learn from today's passage how we can overcome fatalistic elements in our lives God by coming to Jesus by faith.

I. "JESUS, SON OF DAVID, HAVE MERCY ON ME!" (46-48)

Look at verse 46. *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.* Jesus and his disciples were on their way to Jerusalem where the terrible suffering and crucifixion awaited Jesus. They came to Jericho, a city located 5 miles west of Jordan and about 15 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Jesus' heart must have been heavy as he approached Jerusalem. As he and his disciples, along with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. This blind man was a most pitiful person in the city. Why?

First, he was blind. We tend to take our vision for granted. How blessed are we to see the budding flowers in spring! How beautiful it is to see the wide and embracing summer sea, the colorful leaves in fall and the white snow in winter! How beautiful it is to look at the children's smiling faces! How gracious it is to be able to see the faces of those we love! But this blind man could not see anything. He could not see the beautiful nature, nor his own mother's face. Even if he had married, which is doubtful, he could not see his wife's face. Because he could not see, he must have lived in the darkness of misunderstanding and prejudice. He must have felt like living in a prison called darkness. His eyes were there only to shed many tears day and night in sorrow over his fate.

Second, he did not have his own name. Everyone has his or her own name. There are many different kinds of names. Some people have the name "Shepherd". Their ancestors must have been good shepherds for God's flock. Some people have the name "Wolf". Their ancestors must have been shepherds who were greatly annoyed by wolves that snatched away many lovely sheep. Other people have names that match their career, such as a music teacher named Miss Song, a dentist named Dr. Payne and a stock broker named Mr. Swindler, ... Parents want to give good names to their children. In our ministries, there are so many Abraham's, John's, Sarah's and Mary's because their parents want them to be great men and women of faith. Other parents wish their children to stand out by giving them unique names such as Cadillac, iPod, ESPN or Adolf Hitler. But at least, they have their own names. In the Bible, a person's name

represents his character and identity. But this blind man had no name of his own. People simply called him Bartimaeus, which means the Son of Timaeus. People hardly recognized this man's existence.

Third, he was a beggar. He could not see. He had no name of his own. Still, he was a human being who had to satisfy his hungry stomach. The society did not have generous social programs that take care of disabled people like in our society. So he would sit by the roadside and pleaded with the people passing by, "Alms for the blind! Alms for the blind!" His life was misery itself. The Hebrews at that time thought that the blind were cursed by God because of their sins (Jn 9:2). He was a pitiful man. He had all the fatalistic elements of life in himself. So he could have given up on himself, living without hope or purpose.

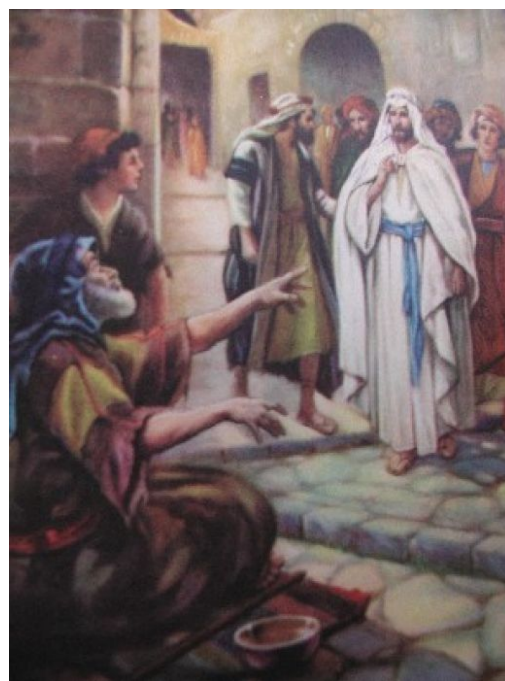
Fourth, he did not give up. The life of the blind man in this passage was pathetic. His physical situation couldn't have been worse. But this man did not give up on his life. Actually, his spiritual condition was better than that of most people with good eyesight. His spiritual eyes were not blind. Look at verse 47. *When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"* He called Jesus the Son of David. This was significant. The Son of David meant God's promised Messiah. God had given the people of Israel that he would send the Messiah from the line of David. We don't know how, but this blind man heard about this promise of God and believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah. This was remarkable, given that most of the religious leaders failed to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. The blind man was not blind spiritually. He had the eyes of faith to see Jesus as the Savior!

Let us learn what this blind man did to overcome his fatalistic life. He not only believed in Jesus but had the courage to come to Jesus by faith. There were many obstacles within and without that hampered his coming to Jesus. People rebuked him and told him to be quiet. Usually people support those who look promising, but despise those who don't look promising. When Jesus was born in a manger, people despised him and rejected him. When Jesus' ministry did not look glamorous but humble, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law thought they could do away with him. Likewise, this blind man was only a target of people's cruel jokes and sarcasm. But he did not give up. He began to cry out, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" The people thought he was presumptuous. So they rebuked him. "Hey, blind man. Keep it down!" But the man cried out all the more. When he wanted to receive the Messiah's mercy, he had to face people's strong pressure and hindrance. It was easy for the blind man to succumb to their pressure. But he did not give up. He overcame the pressure by faith. Where there is God's work, there is always Satan's prank. When the blind man tried to overcome his fatalism by faith and come to Jesus, Satan tried to hinder him. But he did not give up. He shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" By faith, he overcame the obstacles and came to Jesus by faith.

II. "WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO FOR YOU?" (49-52)

There is a saying, "God helps those who help themselves." Jesus heard this blind man's crying and helped him.

First, Jesus stopped on his way to help him. Look at verse 49. *Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you."* At that time, Jesus' footsteps must have been very heavy because he was on his way to Jerusalem to suffer and die on the cross for the sin of the world. Jesus must have been concerned with his disciples, who were still spiritually immature. Jesus must have been burdened by the crowd of people following him with false hopes. At that moment, if Jesus were an ordinary man, he would have been indifferent to the blind man's crying. But he was not indifferent. He stopped at the crying voice of one blind man. This blind man was ignored and despised by people. But Jesus honored and respected him as a child of God. Jesus saw the man as a precious person who was created in the image of God. Only the image had been marred by his sins and fatalism caused by his blindness. People only saw the blind beggar in him. They were even entertained by his misery. But Jesus was gracious and compassionate toward him. Jesus said, "Call him." When Jesus said, "Call him," it meant, "Bring my child to me." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." On hearing Jesus' calling, the man threw his cloak aside, jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. He threw the cloak of destiny that helped him to get coins from people, and came to the Messiah. Outwardly, he was a fatalistic blind man, but inwardly he was a man of faith and courage. And thus, a meeting between the holy God and a miserable blind man took place on the street of Jericho.



Second, Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus wanted to help him. So he asked him the question: "What do you want me to do for you?" (51) In this question, Jesus wanted to know if this man knew what he really wanted. It was very important for the man to know what he really wanted, so that Jesus could help him. Sinful people are by nature inclined to follow their sinful desires, instead of what their souls really need. They want to have so many things. But they don't know what they really need to receive from God. Every year, I ask my new students what their hopes and dreams in life are. A majority of them answer, "I want to make a lot of money and be happy." Their idea is that money will make them happy. They don't know what they really need. Even James and John did not know how to answer this question. When

Jesus asked them the same question, "What do you want me to do for you?" they asked him to grant them two most important cabinet positions (Mk 10:35-40).

What did this blind man say to Jesus? Look at verse 51b. *The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."* He knew exactly what he wanted. He knew exactly what Jesus wanted him to ask. He knew the key point of Jesus' question. He knew that Jesus had asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" so that he could heal his blindness.

We have many things that we want God to do for us. Personally, we want good health, good grades, good job, money, good car, and so on. Nationally, we want the answers to this prolonged economic downturn, deterioration of public education, declining morality, and so on. Indeed, we have a long list of things that we want to ask God to do for us. But what can we answer when God asks us at this moment, "What do you want me to do for you?" To answer this question, we must first know God. We must know what God wants us to do. We must have spiritual eyes to see what we really need. Spiritually speaking, our answer must be the same as that of the blind man. You might say, "Why? I have a 20/20 vision!" That is exactly what the religious leaders in Jesus' time were thinking. In John chapter 9, Jesus healed a man born blind, but the religious leaders pressured him and his parents that Jesus was a sinner who could not have done such a miracle. But Jesus was happy to see the man confess his personal faith in the Savior. Jesus told the man, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind" (Jn 9:39). Some Pharisees heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you see, your guilt remains" (Jn 9:41). If we become spiritually proud and claim that we see everything, like the Pharisees did, we remain blind before God. But if we humbly come to Jesus, like the blind man did, Jesus opens our blind eyes to see the wonderful world of God--who he is, who we are, what he wants us to do in our lives, what will happen to us after our lives are done here, and so on. So we should reply to Jesus, "Lord, we want to see you. Please open my spiritual eyes to see what you are doing!" We should pray that God may open our eyes to see him, every time we study the Bible and whenever we hear the word of God.

The apostle Paul knew what God wanted him to do. It was to conquer the Roman Empire with the gospel so that the gospel of Jesus might spread to the entire world. But Paul did not say, "I want to conquer the whole world with the gospel." Instead, he humbly said, "I want to know Christ ..." (Php 3:10) Like Paul, we must personally answer, "I want to know Christ," when Jesus asks each of us, "What do you want me to do for you?" Only Jesus can heal our spiritual blindness. Only Jesus, the true light, can shine our ways in this dark world.

Third, Jesus blessed his faith. Look at verse 52a. *"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you."* This blind man had been miserable with all his fatalistic elements in life. But when he came to Jesus by faith, Jesus healed his blindness. Jesus opened his blind eyes with his healing touch. Now, he could see everything with his clear brown eyes. He

could see all the beautiful things of the world that God created for his own glory and for the happiness of mankind. He could see Jesus the Savior with his own eyes! Jesus shined his light of life on this man. Now, he did not have to cry any more because of his blindness.

What can we learn from this man? The formerly blind man pleased God by coming to Jesus by faith despite the obstacles. He had the overcoming faith. He also knew what God wanted him to do. So he was able to know exactly what Jesus wanted him to do. He said clearly, "I want do see." Most of all, he firmly believed that Jesus could heal his blind eyes. He knew Jesus is the loving God who came to this world as the Messiah. May God help us to know Jesus personally as we come to him, overcoming obstacles within and without!

In today's lesson, we learn that Jesus is the Messiah who can open the eyes of a blind man. Jesus can open our spiritual eyes so that we can see the beautiful world of God! May God help us to hear Jesus' voice, "What do you want me to do for you?" May God help us to answer this question personally!