

Guest Preacher - Rev. Roddy J Campbell

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Preacher: Rev. RJ Campbell

- [0 : 00] Seeking the Lord's help and blessing, let us turn back to the portion of scripture that we read together in the New Testament and the Gospel of Luke and chapter 18.
- And we'll take up our reading at verse 35. And he drew near to Jericho. A blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.
- And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. And he cried out, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. And so on.
- Now I am of the opinion, just like the parables, that the miracles that are recorded for us in the Gospels are meant to teach us, not only that Jesus is truly the Son of God, but they are also to teach us some things about ourselves.
- Those miracles certainly took place. People were healed, even raised from the dead. But I am of the opinion that they all have a spiritual lesson to teach us all.
- [1 : 14] Let us remember that Jesus did more miracles than what we have recorded for us. The Apostle John in his Gospel testifies. Now there are also many other things that Jesus did.
- Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. This evening we are looking at Luke's account of the healing of the blind man, whom Jesus met as he was making his way to Jerusalem and to the cross.
- We have this miracle recorded for us in three of the Gospels, that of Matthew, Mark and Luke. There are slight variations in the accounts that has caused some difficulty for people.
- However, we can be assured that in spite of these apparent discrepancies, that the three passages do refer to the same incident.
- We shall get these apparent discrepancies out of the way, first of all. The Matthew account, which we have in chapter 20, cites two men healed as Jesus left Jericho.
- [2 : 30] While the Gospel of Mark and Luke refer only to one blind man being healed. Luke says it happened as Jesus was entering Jericho, while Mark records it happening as Jesus left Jericho.
- And there are those who will immediately jump and claim that this is a contradiction, and that the Bible is in error. However, let us try and explain those apparent discrepancies.
- First of all, we claim that all three Gospels are reporting the same incident, and this can be evidenced by the similarity of the accounts, beginning with two beggars sitting by the wayside.
- For instance, they call out to Jesus, referring to him as son of David. And in all three accounts, they are rebuked by those nearby and told to be quiet, but they continue to shout out to Jesus.
- The three accounts describe nearly identical conversations taking place between Jesus and the beggars, and the conclusion of the stories are also identical.

[3 : 46] The beggars receive their sight, and immediately they follow Jesus. Only Mark chooses to identify one of the beggars and names him as Bartimaeus, which means the son of Timaeus.

Perhaps he names him because Bartimaeus was known to Mark's readers, or the new Bartimaeus' father, Timaeus, whereas the other blind man was a stranger to them.

In any case, the fact that Mark and Luke only mention one beggar does not contradict Matthew's account. Mark and Luke never say that there was only one beggar.

They simply focus on one beggar. They focus on this man that was called Bartimaeus, who was probably the more vocal of the two beggars.

Matthew refers to both of the blind men calling out to Jesus, clearly indicating to us that there were two, but Luke focuses on one.

[4 : 54] The other issue in question is whether Jesus was entering Jericho or leaving it. Well, commentators cite the fact that at that time there were two Jerichos.

Therefore, Jesus could have healed the two men as he was leaving the ancient city of Jericho and entering the new city of Jericho. We are told that the Jericho of New Testament times was built by Herod more than a mile to the south of the Old Testament location, and that today the modern city of Jericho includes both sides.

It is also reckoned by some scholars that at this time Jericho had around 100,000 people living in it, so it was a very populous city.

However, we must not focus on these details and miss the point of the narrative. Jesus, by his miracles, was proving that he was indeed the Son of God and also teaching spiritual lessons, and it is especially to that that we would like to draw your attention and reflect upon this evening.

Matthew says that Jesus had compassion on them and that he touched their eyes before he gave them their sight, and he notes that both followed Jesus. Mark, on the other hand, draws our attention to the fact when Bartimaeus was called that he drew off his garment, rose and came to Jesus.

[6 : 30] But this evening we are going to focus much on Luke's account of the healing and hence on the beggar that Mark calls Bartimaeus. Luke says, as he draw near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.

And hearing a crowd going by, inquired what this meant. And they told him, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. We know that, in general, that large multitudes went along with Jesus.

They followed Jesus and his disciples wherever they went. And as Jesus and the multitudes were making their way down the road, the beggar heard the commotion.

And he knew from the noise that there was something different going on that day. The beggar probably sat by the wayside day after day begging.

This was allowed to be at the gate of the city and to be there begging. He would be seeking gifts from those who were passing by, for there was nothing else that he could do.

[7 : 42] For he was a blind man living in a culture that made no special provision whatsoever for the blind except to allow them to congregate at the city gate.

In this miracle, like all miracles, we see the sovereignty of God. We see that God is in full control.

This meeting of Jesus and the beggar was no accident. It was not just a chance meeting. Although to us it may look like that, that it was all a coincidence.

But the truth is that this meeting was part of the rolling power of God. This meeting was by God's appointment.

This meeting was in accordance to the sovereignty of God. Also we see that the beggar was by the wayside begging.

[8 : 50] He made use, as we have noted, of the only provision that was available to him. Although he could not see, nevertheless he made use of his ears.

What lessons can this have for me and you?

Well, first of all, our meeting this evening is no coincidence. It is no coincidence that I am preaching and that you are listening.

We are both together this evening in this manner by the sovereign hand of God. And secondly, just as the beggar made use of the only provision that was available for him to ease and help with his situation.

For he would forever praise the Lord that he was found by the wayside on that day. And for you and me, the gospel is the only provision made available to sinners to bring us to salvation.

[10 : 06] This is why the Apostle Paul, why he boasts in the gospel, as he wrote his letter to the church at Rome. He says, The beggar, Bartimaeus, would forever be thankful for the provision that was given to him.

And the thing is, and the great question for me and you tonight is, are we grateful and thankful to the Lord for the provision of the gospel?

Do we fully understand the great privilege that is given to us as individuals, as a community, that we have the gospel?

That the gospel is brought before us. What a great privilege it is. And the privilege that was given for Bartimaeus, this blind beggar.

The provision that was made for him. He will be ever thankful for it. But also we see that he acted upon his responsibility that day to be found by the wayside.

[11 : 29] We not only see the sovereignty of God, but the responsibility of the blind man himself. Think of it if he had responded differently, and if Bartimaeus, the blind beggar, had decided to stay at home that day.

For you this evening, it is a good thing that you are found where the gospel is preached, that you are found in the way.

They used to say that the way to meet the king is to be on the king's highway. The way to meet Christ and the saviour of sinners is to be found on his highway, which is under his word, to be found where there is the preaching of the gospel, where there is the breaking down of the word of God.

The highway of the gospel has brought blessings to many a person. And thirdly, the beggar Bartimaeus heard a noise, and he recognised that it was a different noise in comparison to other days that he was found there begging.

He knew there was something different this day. And maybe you are listening this evening, and for many years you have been by the wayside, you have been where the gospel is, where the word is preached, you have been on the highway of the gospel.

[13 : 07] But maybe recently, perhaps even this evening, something has caught your attention. It is so different in comparison to other times that you have been under the word of God and under the preaching of the gospel.

For this blind beggar, it led him to ask what it meant. What is the meaning of all this noise that I'm hearing?

What is the meaning of all this commotion that's around me? What does it all mean? Have you ever asked that question? What does the gospel mean?

Why do people set themselves aside to preach the gospel? Why are there people called by God to go out and to preach the gospel?

What does the gospel mean? Why do people preach, and why do people gather together to listen to the gospel? What does it all mean?

[14 : 15] Well, here this blind beggar called Bartimaeus was told, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. This is what all the noise is about.

And that is what all the gospel is about. It's about this person, Jesus of Nazareth. The gospel is all about Jesus.

If we take Jesus out of the gospel, there is no gospel. There is no good news. Jesus is the heart, the center, the principal point in the gospel.

For this blind beggar, this was the greatest news he ever heard. And for me and you, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest news that we can ever hear.

I'm sure that he took hold of these words, passing by. For Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem on the cross.

[15 : 33] He was not going to lodge in Jericho. This was an opportunity that Bartimaeus must take for Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.

Fourthly, we can ask, why was this such great news for Bartimaeus? And how can it be the greatest news that I and you can ever hear?

Well, although Bartimaeus could not see Jesus, there were several things that he could see, and there are several things that you and I need to see as well.

He could see his need, or he could understand that he had a need. He knew that he had a need. And that is what we all need to see. That is what we all need to understand.

Understand. Our need for Jesus. Our need for the Son of God. Our need for salvation.

[16 : 37] In all the miracles, there is an illustration between the physical needs of the body and our spiritual needs. Spiritually, we are all blind, like this man was physically.

And that is why we need the work of the Holy Spirit to enlighten us. That is why we pray for the Holy Spirit to be breathed upon us.

That is why we pray for the Holy Spirit to accompany the word being preached. For unless the Holy Spirit accompanies the word that is preached, it will fall just on ears that are close to the gospel, on eyes that are blind to the gospel.

We need the Holy Spirit. We cannot do it of ourselves. We need the Holy Spirit to accompany the preaching of the gospel in order to enlighten us.

Paul, writing to the church at Ephesus in chapter 4, he writes, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.

[18 : 00] We need the Holy Spirit to take that blindness away. To the church at Corinth, Paul writes, And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

In their case, the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Do you see your need for salvation? Do you see your need for a saviour? If not, ask the Holy Spirit to show you your great need of salvation and your great need of Jesus.

Earlier in this chapter, we are told of a young rich ruler who approached Jesus with a very important question. Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said to him, You know the commandments, do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honour your father and mother.

[19 : 10] And he said, All these I have kept from my youth. And when Jesus said this, he said to him, One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.

And come, follow me. Here we have a man who has his physical eyesight, but who is blind to his spiritual needs. And what blinds him to his spiritual needs is his wealth, his riches.

When he heard that what Jesus had to say, we are told that he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. His wealth became a hindrance.

It became a stumbling block to him from following Jesus. And I ask you tonight, what is your stumbling block?

What hinders you from following Jesus? If you are Christless tonight, if you are an unbeliever tonight, if you are outside the salvation of Christ tonight, I ask you, what is the stumbling block?

[20 : 18] What is the hindrance that keeps you from following Jesus? Bartimaeus, although physically blind, he saw his need.

Here was a man who for his whole life up to this point, lived his life dependent upon others. Maybe this is a picture of yourself this evening. Maybe up to this point in your life, you have lived your life dependent upon others for your salvation.

perhaps repenting upon the prayers of your parents or your grandparents. But this man, he also saw who Jesus was.

Somewhere and somehow, he had heard of Jesus. He had heard how Jesus had given sight to others who were blind, but more than that, that many of the people may have called him Jesus of Nazareth.

But as we come to see, Bartimaeus called him Jesus, son of David. Have mercy upon him. He was told, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.

[21 : 35] But you notice that when he called out to him, he didn't say, Jesus of Nazareth, have mercy on me. What he said was, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

This title does not appear often in the gospel, but it is a term that would have been remarkably familiar to any Jew of that day who knew the Old Testament.

The title, son of David, became a Messianic title. In the days of Jesus, there was a strong hope and expectation for a king who would restore Israel to his former glory and liberated from Roman power and oppression.

Most of the people around him only saw Jesus as a preacher, the miracle worker. But this blind beggar called Bartimaeus some as God's anointed servant, the saviour, the Messiah, the one that was promised.

Bartimaeus cried out saying, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And as we have already noted, Bartimaeus saw his need.

[22 : 47] And I believe that he saw his need not only physically, I believe that this man saw his need spiritually. And why do I say that?

Because of the way he cried out, son of David, have mercy on me. he sought mercy. And although mercy may mean a relief shown to someone who is in a desperate need, mercy is often more often associated with sin.

And in its fullest sense, it is the grace by which God restores a sinner from his lost condition. Throughout the book of Psalms, we have many instances where the psalmist prays for mercy and most familiar one is Psalm 51.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindnesses, according unto the multitudes of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgression.

When Bartimaeus was asking for mercy, he was asking for more than his physical side. He was seeking salvation. He was seeking to reconcile to God, to have peace with God, to have his sins forgiven.

[24 : 07] Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet. It is very often the case that when a person gets interested in the gospel or decides to seek salvation, to be saved, to be forgiven, to become a follower of Jesus Christ, opposition always arises.

Maybe for a time you have been seeking salvation and as you come closer to submitting and committing your life to Jesus, others may notice signs that a change has come over your life.

Maybe you are not frequenting places where you may have been, as they say, the soul of the place. You are seen less often in those places. Maybe your language has become more seasoned.

Maybe you are more defensive of the gospel and the church than you used to be, more defensive of the believers than you used to be. And as these changes are taking place, there may be friends, even family members, who try to discourage you.

But while that opposition is from the outside, there is also much struggle inside. Do you know that inwardly your thoughts and motives and desires are not clean?

[25 : 23] in God's sight. Maybe this evening that is the most painful opposition of all, convicting that you are a sinner, that you are not clean in God's sight.

Maybe because of that you are concluding, well, what is the use? What is the point? I will not be able to stand. I will not only bring disgrace on myself and on my family.

But Emmaus could have said, whom have I beside those, whom am I, besides those disciples of Jesus Christ? Who am I beside James and John and Peter?

Who am I besides these disciples of Jesus Christ? It is never easy for any of us to make our way to Jesus, for we are all found in some measure to be in a hostile environment, whether it be at home or at work or in school or in our community.

But we have to engage with that hostility and opposition to our coming to Jesus.

Bartimaeus came to the point where he did consider the hostility and opposition to be no more a stumbling block for him as his case was a desperate case which only Jesus could meet.

[26 : 48] He knew that this man called Jesus, who was the Messiah, who was the Son of David, was his only hope if he was ever going to be healed, if he was ever going to receive his sight.

He had heard that Jesus had brought sight to others. You've seen lives being transformed by the grace of God, maybe within your own family, in your own home, in your neighbourhood, certainly in the community and in the congregation here.

You have seen lives being transformed by the grace of God. God's have you come to that point in your own experience where you see your great desperate need as a sinner, which only Jesus can meet, and in spite of all hostility and opposition, nothing is going to keep you from coming and crying to Jesus for mercy.

Bartimaeus, the blind beggar, knew that Jesus was the answer. Have you ever come to that place where you are convinced that Jesus is the answer to your dilemma as a sinner under the condemnation and wrath of God?

Well, take a lead from this speaker. Despite all the opposition, from without and possibly from within, he persisted in crying. He kept on crying.

[28 : 31] He cried out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me. Let nothing stand before you and your salvation. He kept crying mercy over the noise of the crowd.

He could not give up on his desire to have mercy, to be healed. Sadly, there are many who come to a point, we noted that this morning, coming to a point and goes no further.

Opposition arises, and they stay where they are outside of salvation, like the seed that fell on the rocky ground and among the thorns. But here we see the beggar, and he cried out so much the more, he became more earnest in his cry, Son of David, have mercy upon me.

And Bartimaeus' persistence was rewarded. Jesus stopped. I think these are the most wonderful and encouraging words that we have in this whole narrative.

Jesus stopped. This beggar, because of his persistence, got the attention of Jesus. The question can be asked if Jesus heard him the first time, had he cried out, Son of David, have mercy on me.

[29 : 53] I think he did. But he wanted to prove the genuineness of the cry. You see, true faith is always persistent. It never gives up.

Jesus' silence to Bartimaeus was a test to ensure that he was a genuine seeker of mercy. Jesus stood still, because from amongst all the noise of the crowd, and all the commotion that was going on, he heard a genuine voice crying for mercy.

Matthew tells us that both beggars cried out to Jesus, and that Jesus had compassion upon them both. Well, the theme of God's compassion is one that runs throughout the Bible.

This evening, it is important for us to know the attitude of the Father's heart for sinners like me and you. Here, Jesus, the Son, reveals to us the attitude of the Father's heart.

This is an insight of God that encourages sinners like me and you to come to Jesus. Here is a great encouragement for the sinner. See Jesus in his compassion.

[31 : 08] It is a revelation of the compassion of God. He has time for everyone who needs him. Satan may whisper in your ear tonight, he will not listen to you.

But look at the evidence set here before us by this beggar. Jesus stopped. He heard a genuine cry.

Is Jesus hearing a genuine cry from our congregation tonight? From this assembly tonight? Is Jesus hearing a genuine cry? Son of David, have mercy upon me.

Or is he looking upon this congregation tonight? And it's all silence. All silent. There is no cry going out. The time of opportunity is set before you to cry.

Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And Mark tells us, and they called the blind man to him, take heart, get up, he is calling you. And these words, take heart, can be encouraged.

[32 : 19] Be encouraged. Take heart, be encouraged, get up, he is calling you. And this seeming sinner, you take heart, and you be encouraged. As Jesus calls you and says to you, come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest into your souls. And he gives to each one of us that promise, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.

As we said this morning, the unwillingness is on your part, not on the part of Jesus. Jesus says, him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.

But you will not come to him. The unwillingness is yours. And when he had come near, he asked him, saying, what do you want me to do for you?

What about yourself this evening? You have been called by the gospel. And what is your response? Maybe tonight you are content just to remain where you are.

[33 : 34] Or maybe you are promising yourself plenty of time. Remember that Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. As Paul says, now is the accepted time.

Behold, now is the day of salvation. Friends, we know not what a day nor an hour may bring forth. Now is the time. Now is the time of opportunity.

Tomorrow may be too late. We must never preach the gospel and tell people, tomorrow put your trust in Jesus. Because tomorrow may be too late.

Tomorrow may never come in your experience. It is now. It is today. It is now. Grasp this time of opportunity and grace and rise up and come to Jesus for salvation.

The beggar replied, Lord, let me recover my sight. He addresses Jesus here again as Lord. We did mention the title he gave Jesus son of David.

[34 : 37] And here we see that he speaks to him as Lord. He addresses Jesus as Lord.

And writing to the church at Philippi, Paul writes that the day is coming when at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Although Paul there is speaking of the second coming and judgment day, there is a sense which by faith we acknowledge Jesus not only as saviour but also as Lord now in the present.

When Bartimaeus addresses Jesus as Lord it was more than just as a mark of respect it was a confession of his faith he was submitting himself to Jesus as Lord and immediately Jesus confirmed that Bartimaeus was a man of faith he says recover your sight your faith has made you well it was Jesus who healed this beggar called Bartimaeus but he received Jesus by faith and therefore faith was a channel by which he received his salvation B.B.

Warfield says this that it is Christ that saves through faith the saving power resides exclusively not in the act of faith or the attitude of faith or the nature of faith but in the object of faith Christ himself saving is always personal there was a personal interaction between this man and Jesus and if you are going to be saved it must be a personal act between yourself and Jesus the gospel call is for everyone to trust personally in Jesus Christ we are told that there are three essential elements to faith three essential things in faith there is knowledge for it is impossible to have faith in Jesus Christ without knowing who he is and what he has done for

[36 : 55] Bartimaeus as we have already noted his faith meant knowing that Jesus was the son of David the promised Messiah the son of God who had power to heal for you this evening faith means knowing that Jesus is who the Bible says he is and that he has done what the Bible says he has done for we preach Jesus Christ crucified and risen faith means knowing that Jesus Christ is a crucified and risen saviour who offers redemption from sin who offers forgiveness who offers reconciliation to God and they tell us that the second essential element to faith is belief that means accepting the message of the gospel it means just not knowing what the Bible says about Jesus but accepting from the heart that it is true what the Bible says about Jesus to commit yourself to follow

Jesus the third element is trust which Martin Luther explained there is a difference between faith that believes what is said of God is true and the faith which throws itself on God you see you may be here tonight and you believe what is said of God is true you believe what the Bible says about God is true you believe what happened on the cross of Golgotha is true you can have all that but you have true saving faith means that you throw yourself on God faith is resting absolutely on Jesus Christ for salvation he received his sight and he saw

Jesus with his own eyes think of this blind beggar he first saw Jesus when he opened when his sight was restored what was the first thing he saw it was Jesus Jesus and then he saw the beauty of the creation that was around him he could truly sing the heavens declare the glory of God and the sky proclaims his handiwork in saving Bartimaeus in saving this beggar and restoring his physical sight he saw he was given a glimpse of what still awaits him on a far higher level in the new heavens and in the new earth we are told that Bartimaeus immediately received his sight and followed him glorifying God we see in Bartimaeus the evidence of saving faith it leads to a whole life of following

Jesus in the highland and islands we have that great phrase when someone commits their way to Christ we say he is following he is following Christ or she is following she is following Christ well that's what Bartimaeus did he committed himself to a life of following Jesus to a life of worship to a life of obedience he went on his way glorifying God he started to live the purpose for which he was created which was to glorify God and to enjoy him forever and we're told that when others saw what happened in this man's life and all the!

people gave praise to God now Jesus has come your way this evening and he is calling you in the preaching of the gospel and as he is passing by will you cry out to him by faith this was an important opportunity for Bartimaeus an opportunity that was never to be repeated again for Jesus was passing through he was on the way to Golgotha he was on the way to the cross how many opportunities have you allowed to pass you by and remember this evening might be the last for the last opportunity to commit yourself to Christ will come will you call on him by faith tonight to have mercy upon you another blind man that was blind now I see remember

[42 : 04] Newton's famous poem amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me I once was lost but now I'm found was blind but now I see well will you join with Bartimaeus among the ranks of the saved among the ranks of those who have committed their way to Jesus Christ and who are following Jesus in the way but Emmaus will ever be thankful that on that says Bartimaeus followed

Jesus where was Jesus going he was going to Golgotha he was going to the cross there is a possibility that Bartimaeus was among the crowd that was at Golgotha the day that Jesus was crucified because we're told he followed Jesus and Jesus was on the way to the cross and if he continued to follow Jesus and the others then he would have ended up at Golgotha there is a possibility that he was at Golgotha but this is the great and important thing he was found in Christ he was found committed to Christ he threw himself on the mercy of God in Jesus Christ and my friend if you're going to be saved!

that's what you must! in Jesus Christ commit yourself to him and follow him in the way may the Lord bless our thoughts this evening we shall bring our service to a close by singing in Psalm 146 Psalm 146 and at verse 5 O happy is that man and blessed whom Jacob's God doth aid who so upon the Lord doth rest and on his God is dead who made the earth and heaven sigh who made the swelling deep and all that is within the same who truth doth ever keep we shall sing down to the verse marked 8 the Lord doth give the blind their sight bow down doth raise the Lord doth dearly love all those that walk in the bright way Psalm 146 on page 446 verse 5 to the Lord praise oh happy is that man unblessed whom

Jacob's God doth aid O happy is that man unblessed whom Jacob's God doth aid whose hope upon the Lord doth rest and on his God his state who made the earth and heavens high who made the swelling deep and all thought is within the same who truth thoth ever keep who righteous judgment executes!

use for those oppressed that be who to the hungry give food God sets the prisoners free!

[46 : 46] hear! the Lord doth care the blind their sight the bow with down doth raise!

The Lord doth hear love love all those that walk in upright ways!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen.