

Main Idea: In Mark 10:46-52, we see The Servant serving on the way to the cross. In the three scenes of this passage, we learn some vital truths about Jesus as He encounters a blind beggar named Bartimaeus.

- I. Scene #1: The Master on a mission (46)
 - A. Jesus came to save sinners.
 - B. Jesus took time to serve a sinner.
 - II. Scene #2: A man in need (47-48)
 - A. He calls for Jesus.
 - B. He believes the Scriptures.
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 - A. Many have distorted views of Jesus.
 1. He is a good example, but not the Savior.
 2. He is a viable option, but not the only way.
 - B. Here is the real Jesus.
 1. He possesses unrivaled power.
 2. He is never too busy to serve.
 3. He loves to help the person who asks for mercy.
 4. He responds to those who demonstrate real faith.
- Application: There are two questions we each need to ponder...
1. Is my faith in Jesus real?
 2. Is my faith in the real Jesus?

It’s a joy to study God’s Word with you. This morning, the Lord has granted us another opportunity to behold His amazing Son in the Gospel of Mark.

In Mark 10:46-52, we’ll see The Servant serving on the way to the cross. In the three scenes of this passage, we learn some vital truths about Jesus as He encounters a blind beggar named Bartimaeus.

Scripture Reading: Mark 10:13-31

With our Bibles open to the final passage in Mark 10, I must begin with a confession. There is a question that’s plagued me as I’ve contemplated the text before us. *Why did Mark include this story?* Granted, the story about a man named Bartimaeus is fascinating, but quite honestly, it doesn’t seem to fit the flow of the storyline, at least it didn’t to me, not at first.

According to verse 32, Jesus is traveling to Jerusalem. Passover is approaching, so the streets are packed with Jews traveling to the city of David. This will be a very special Passover, one that will change the world forever. Jesus will not merely observe Passover, but will BE the Passover Lamb. Yes, as we come to the story before us, keep in mind that Jesus is on His way to the cross which is merely a week away.

Mark makes it very clear in verse 32 (NIV), “They were *on their way up to Jerusalem*, with Jesus leading the way.” Jesus is focused. He has a mission to accomplish, and nothing will deter Him. He details the mission plan for the Twelve in verses 33-34, “*We are going up to Jerusalem,*” he said, “and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

^{**}Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the Mark series in 2004.

This is the third time in three chapters that Jesus gave the same prediction to His disciples about His impending death and resurrection (see also 8:31 & 9:31). The cross is on His mind. *His cross* is on His mind.

When His disciples start arguing about greatness, Jesus teaches them about servanthood in verses 35-45, with this climaxing statement in verse 45, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” There it is again. Jesus is thinking about the cross.

In fact, the very structure of Mark’s gospel shows how important the cross is. The first ten chapters of Mark’s gospel cover the first thirty-three years of Jesus’ life. As we’ll see beginning next time (the Lord willing), the final six chapters (from Mark 11-16) focus on His final *week* of life. In a very real sense, everything we’ve seen in Mark’s account thus far is preparatory for this final week, the *passion week*.

As we approach the end of Mark 10, the Gospel writer has made it clear what Jesus is thinking about. He’s gripped with the thought of completing the work His heavenly Father gave Him to do, the redemptive work of the *cross*.

What are you like when your attention is fixed on accomplishing a project? I tend to get consumed. My focus becomes intense to the point that I have a hard time listening and thinking about anything else (my wife says I have a ‘one track mind’).

It’s at this very point that Mark includes a story that doesn’t seem to fit, the healing of a blind beggar by the name of Bartimaeus. Which raises my question again. *Why?* Why is this story included at this point in Mark’s narrative?

You say, “Because it happened! That’s why Mark included it!”

Yes indeed, it did happen. But so did many other things in Jesus’ life that are not included in the brief Gospel accounts (John 21:25). So when a Holy Spirit-led writer includes an event, especially an event that seems out of place, we need to ask the question *why?* Why is this story here? What truth is the writer intending to teach us?

The fact is that this story most certainly *does fit*, and its presence teaches us something very significant, very compelling about Jesus.

As you may recall, last time in our study of James and John’s request for the prime seats in Jesus’ kingdom, we talked about the problem of *competing agendas*. We, like the sons of Zebedee, tend to become consumed with our own, self-seeking, self-promoting agenda in life, whereas Jesus calls us to live with a God-focused, people-serving agenda. The story before us shows that Jesus practiced what He preached.

There are three scenes in today’s text.

I. Scene #1: The Master on a mission (46)

Our story begins in verse 46, “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 says that Jesus came to Jericho, a place called ‘the city of palm trees’ in the Old Testament (Deut. 34:3). But Jesus is not in town to view the scenery. Jericho is located five miles west of the Jordan and fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem. Jesus is in Jericho because Jericho is located on the road that will take Him to Jerusalem, where His cross awaits Him. See Him, beloved. See our Master on His mission here.

The fact that Jesus is in Jericho reveals the intentionality of our Savior in two compelling ways.

A. Jesus came to save sinners. Hear His words again, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and *to give his life as a ransom for many* (45).”

That's why the Son came to earth. That's why He is traveling through Jericho. He's on His way to shed His own blood as a Passover lamb so that all who believe in Him will not perish but have eternal life. That's what brings Him to Jericho on this day. He's there because He came to save sinners.

But His presence in Jericho reveals something else.

B. Jesus took time to serve a sinner. It's not just sinners (plural) that Jesus had in mind as He walked through Jericho. He also had in mind *individual* sinners too. Mark introduces us to one of them.² His name is Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus. Some scholars say the reason Mark preserved his name was because he later became a noteworthy figure in the Jerusalem church.³

That's speculation, but this is not. Mark tells us that Bartimaeus was blind, and being unable to work, he resorted to begging. Matthew's account indicates there were two blind men, but Mark mentions only Bartimaeus, possibly because he was the spokesman.

Note also that Mark says the encounter with Bartimaeus took place as Jesus was *leaving* the city. If you're a serious Bible student, you may recall that Luke's account states the meeting occurred as Jesus was *approaching* Jericho. Critics of the Bible get excited at this point and say, "There's another contradiction. The Bible is full of them!"

To which I would respond, *wrong on both counts*. It's not a contradiction, nor is the Bible full of contradictions. The Bible, by its own claim, was written by holy men who were guided by God the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20-21). This provides assurance that the texts they wrote were indeed without error. It's called the doctrine of *inerrancy*.

"What about the apparent contradiction here?" you say. "How do you explain it?"

I explain it by using your own word. It's an *apparent* contradiction, not a real one. And it's only apparent because our perspective is limited.

You say, "Wait a minute. Mark says the miracle happened when Jesus was *leaving* Jericho, while Luke says it happened as He was *approaching* Jericho. Both can't be right. One must be wrong, right?"

Wrong. Both are right. Both are recording truth unmixed with error. It only seems contradictory to us. How can that be?

Actually, there were *two cities named Jericho*, an old Jericho (which was basically in ruins at this time) and a new Jericho (the latter built by Herod the Great who had his winter palace there). Walter Wessel explains, "Matthew...says the healing took place on the way into Jericho; Mark reports that it took place on the way out of the city. It is possible that the miracle was done somewhere between the old Israelite city and the new city of Herod."⁴

Friends, please keep this in mind whenever you see an apparent contradiction in the Bible. It's merely apparent, and it's apparent because we don't have all the facts. But what we do have is this assurance. This Book came to us from a God who does not lie and cannot lie. This means we can trust our Bible. It is inspired, inerrant, infallible, and sufficient for life and godliness.⁵

² I say "one of them" because there were others. It was also on this day that Jesus met a sinner named Zacchaeus (see Luke 19:1-10).

³ Observation by Kent Hughes, *Mark*, p. 75.

⁴ W. Wessel, p. 721.

⁵ J. D. Jones remarks: "The fact that there are slight divergencies in the various narratives does not discredit them; it does the very opposite, it adds to the weight of their witness. For quite obviously it shows that we have here three independent testimonies. If they slavishly copied one another in every detail, we should suspect that we had in them only three versions of one and the selfsame story. But the very

By the way, if you don't understand the truth about the process God used to give and preserve His written Word, you will not be able to talk intelligently with skeptics today who question the accuracy of the Bible. Sixty million sold copies of *The Da Vinci Code* attest to the fact that many people are questioning whether the Gospel accounts written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are accurate or fraudulent, as Dan Brown's conspiracy theory supposes.

You say, "But Dan Brown's book is fiction." Granted, but its storyline uses ideas that others promote as fact. I urge you prepare yourself so you can give answers to those who ask for a reason for the hope you have. To help you, I've included this as a discussion topic in today's community groups. I hope you'll come.

As we return to our story, here is a great truth we must not miss. Jesus came to save *sinners*, but He also is concerned about the *sinner*.

He sees individuals, beloved. He saw Bartimaeus that day. Today He sees you. You are not here by chance, but because the all-knowing Lord has scheduled an appointment with you.

So ends scene one, the Master on a mission.

II. Scene #2: A man in need (47-48)

Notice verses 47-48, "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!'"

Bartimaeus is a man in need, and he expresses his need in four ways.

A. He calls for Jesus. In fact, the text says he *shouted*. "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" That's a great thing to do when you're in need, *call for Jesus!*

But don't expect everyone to applaud your efforts. Those in the crowd rebuked Bartimaeus and told him to stop the commotion.

The text specifies the crowd was large. Barclay explains there were 20,000 priests and as many Levites that served in the temple in Jerusalem. They didn't all serve at the same time, but were divided into twenty-six courses that served in rotation. Many of these priests and Levites lived in Jericho, and undoubtedly, filled the streets that day heading to do service in the temple.⁶

Why did the crowd tell Bartimaeus to be quiet? We're not told. Maybe they thought they were doing Jesus a favor. Maybe they thought He was too busy for a beggar.

But this blind beggar wouldn't give up. The more the crowd tried to shut him up, the more he cried aloud.

B. He believes the Scriptures. Listen to his brief, but significant request, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Mark is the only gospel writer to use this title, "Son of David." It's a title that the Old Testament uses to refer to the Messiah. For instance:

Jeremiah 23:5-6 "'The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will raise up to **David** a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.'"

divergencies and contradictions show that what we actually possess is three separate and independent accounts. And in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." *Mark*, p. 387.

⁶ William Barclay, p. 260.

Ezekiel 34:23-24 “I will place over them one shepherd, my servant **David**, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the LORD have spoken.”

This man may not be able to read his Bible, but he sure knows it. He also believes it. He identifies Jesus as the one promised to David, the Messiah. J. D. Jones remarks: “Physically blind though he was, he saw further into spiritual things than the multitude. He had heard about Jesus, about His wonderful words, and still more wonderful deeds. He had meditated upon it all in his heart. And while other people were quarreling and debating who Christ was, this blind man had made up his mind that this Jesus Who was giving sight to the blind, and cleansing to the leper, and life to the dead, was none other than the promised Christ.”⁷

Someone once bluntly asked blind and deaf Hellen Keller, “Isn’t it terrible to be blind?” To which she responded, “Better to be blind and see with your heart, than to have two good eyes and see nothing.”⁸

It’s significant that Jesus doesn’t here reject the title used by Bartimaeus. In the past He tried to keep His identity as Messiah under cover, but now, with Jerusalem in sight, He lets the man spread the news. He even brings attention to the man’s words by calling for him.

C. He asks for mercy. Mark records Bartimaeus’s words twice. In verse 47, “Jesus, Son of David, *have mercy on me!*” And in verse 48, “Son of David, *have mercy on me!*”

What does he request? Mercy. Not, “I deserve better than this life of blind misery! Society owes me! God owes me. You owe it to me to help me, Jesus!”

No, that’s not what he says. He doesn’t seem himself as a victim. He does see himself in need of mercy, and he pleads for it.

“Please, Jesus, take note of me, not because I deserve it. I admit I don’t, for I am a sinner, and have fallen short of God’s holy standard. I simply ask that you *not* give me what I deserve. I ask for mercy.”

D. He persists. How many times did he utter that simple request? I don’t know. Mark just says that he *cried out all the more*. Like a drowning man with a lifesaver in view, Bartimaeus knew that his only hope was passing by him on this day. In confident desperation, he kept on shouting.

He sounds like a little child who won’t take no for an answer, doesn’t he? And perhaps that’s the point. Did not Jesus say, just a few verses earlier in this chapter, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God (Mark 10:14)”⁹? Indeed, He did. The persistent child pleases the Master.

And so, we read in verse 49, “And Jesus stopped and said, ‘Call him.’” The persistence of this desperate man paid off. The crowd relayed the message to Bartimaeus, as the rest of verse 49 indicates, saying, “And they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.’”

The life of Bartimaeus son of Timaeus was about to change. That’s what happens when Jesus the Christ calls for you and enters your life. Do you remember? I do.

Which brings us to scene 3. Having seen the Master on a mission and a man in need, in the final scene we see the Jesus that many today do not know.

III. Scene #3: The Jesus that many today do not know (49-52)

⁷ J. D. Jones, p. 391.

⁸ Taken from Kent Hughes, *Mark*, p. 72.

It's a sad reality but a true one. Many people simply do not know the real Jesus. Oh, they may believe in a Jesus, and they'll tell you so if you ask them. But the Jesus they have in mind is a fictitious combination of some facts from the Bible with some fable conjured up in misguided minds. Some of the folks I'm describing are quite irreligious, yet a large number are sitting in churches this very morning. It's true.

A. Many have distorted views of Jesus. In other words, they think and say things about Jesus that simply do not square with the whole counsel of God's Word. Let's talk about a couple of examples.

1. *He is a good example, but not the Savior.* This view of Jesus is often evidenced more by what people do NOT say rather than what they actually say.

I've shared with you before that I spent the first part of my life in a "church" that emphasized the golden rule. Jesus was presented as our role model. His life was seen as a collection of inspiring stories. And so I learned to view Jesus as my example.

But as my Savior? No. Good people don't need a Savior, and that's what I was taught, that I was a *good person*. A sinner needs a Savior, sure, somebody like Hitler for instance, but if you are a good person, you just need examples. You need motivation to inspire you to achieve the supposedly God-given potential of your inborn goodness.

Again, it wasn't that our church didn't believe Jesus was the Savior. I'm sure it was on a doctrinal statement somewhere. They just didn't talk about this reality. You don't talk about salvation if you talk about sin. And sin is such a negative subject, depressing some would say. So you stop teaching about sin, or redefine it so that it is somebody else's problem and not your own. Before long, this is what you have left. A Jesus who inspires you, a good example that you seek to exemplify and follow. But certainly not a Savior in whom you must place your trust for God's pardon, and if you don't, you'll spend eternity in a place of torment called hell.

Here's another example of a distorted view of Jesus.

2. *He is a viable option, but not the only way.* In our age of relativism and political correctness, this is a very common view. It's why church attendance is up in many places. It's the "in" thing to be spiritual nowadays, so believing in Jesus is a good thing. Believing in *anything* is a good thing, we're told, as long as it helps you. The only thing that is NOT good is to suggest that others are wrong, and that what you believe in is the only right option. That is totally unacceptable in our pluralistic world.

But this of course is the very message that Jesus Himself preached. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by Me (John 14:6)." He said, "I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved (John 10:9)." He also said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this (John 11:25-26)?"

Yes, many have distorted views of Jesus.

You say, "I don't want to be in that number. I want to know the real Jesus. Who is He?"

I'm thankful to hear that. My friend, if you want to meet the real Jesus, I invite you to travel with Bartimaeus as he stumbles in the darkness and makes his way through the parted crowd.

B. Here is the real Jesus. Let's join the narrative at verses 50-52, "And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 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.' 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.”

From just this one text, we learn four essential truths about Jesus.

1. *He possesses unrivaled power.* Jesus issued a command, “Go!” and eyes that previously didn’t function instantly saw the world with 20-20 vision. Instantly. Jesus didn’t perform surgery. He didn’t give the man medicine to take. He simply spoke (Matthew’s account indicates Jesus touched his eyes as well), and Bartimaeus could see.

Now that’s power. That’s unrivaled power. No one else who has ever walked on this planet had the inherent power to do what Jesus did.

Why would Mark want us to know this about Jesus at this point in his story? Think about it. What’s going to happen in just a matter of days? Jealous religious leaders will carry out their plot to take Jesus’ life, a crowd will foolishly cry out for His crucifixion, a Roman leader will choose to save his neck rather than administer justice, and the Messiah will be crucified. Did that happen because Jesus lacked the power to prevent it from happening?

A thousand no’s! And here is one final bit of evidence before the Passion week begins that makes it clear that Jesus possessed unrivaled power and could have saved Himself if He had been so inclined.

2. *He is never too busy to serve.* We’ve just witnessed the last of Jesus’ healing miracles in Mark’s gospel. How fitting! Though the Lord is on His way to Jerusalem to save sinners, He takes time in Jericho to help one poor sinner named Bartimaeus.

I love this about Jesus, don’t you? Jesus sees the person, not just humanity. There’s a great lesson here for us, too. G. Campbell Morgan says it well:

“If Jesus should have passed that blind beggar and refused to help him, because His thoughts were so great, He would have cut the nerve of His coming passion. He could not pass that man by, because He was mastered by the passion that took Him to the Cross. So God help us to go forth, seeing the coming of His glory, sharing the travail of His soul, and doing it with the next who asks our help.”⁹

This brings us to a third vital truth regarding the real Jesus.

3. *He loves to help the person who asks for mercy.* In fact, as Walter Wessel points out, “[Jesus’] opening the eyes of the blind man stands in sharp contrast to the blindness of the religious leaders he is about to encounter [in Jerusalem].”¹⁰

Do you remember the story Jesus told about two men who went to the temple to pray? One was a Pharisee. He was a good man, respected by others (and in his own eyes). When he prayed these words came from his proud heart (in Luke 18:11-12): “God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.”

Next Jesus put the spotlight on that tax collector the Pharisee mentioned, saying in verse 13, “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’”

Then Jesus delivered the divine assessment of those two men in verse 14, “I tell you that this man [the tax collector], rather than the other [the Pharisee], went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

⁹ G. Campbell Morgan, *Mark*, p. 250.

¹⁰ W. Wessel, *The Expos. Bible Commentary: Mark*, p. 722.

Who finds favor with God? Not the self-righteous, but the person who pleads for mercy. That's what Bartimaeus asked for...*mercy*. "Have mercy on me!"

Dear friend, that cry pleases the listening ear of the Savior, even today. He loves to help the person who humbles himself, admits his unworthiness, and simply asks for mercy. Do you need mercy today? Will you ask Him for it?

4. *He responds to those who demonstrate real faith.* This is why Jesus healed Bartimaeus, according to His own words. "*Your faith* has healed you," He told him.

Faith. The assurance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). Believing that God exists and that He rewards those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

Bartimaeus had faith, and we see it throughout this story. Why did he cry out to Jesus? Because he believed Jesus could make a difference. Why did he keep crying out when others tried to silence him? Because he believed his only hope was in this Man passing by. And what does he now do when the crowd tells him Jesus wants to see him? *He throws his garment aside.*

Do you see the man's expectant faith in that action? A man who anticipates remaining blind in the future wouldn't throw his cloak into the darkness. How will he find it when Jesus leaves? But a man who expects to see soon could care less where that cloak lands! There's joy mixed with beautiful abandon in the man's response.

And when Jesus gave him what we might call "a blank check offer," saying, "What do you want me to do for you?", Bartimaeus doesn't hesitate.

"Rabbi," he says. Think about that word. It's the word *Rabboni* which means "My Master." The only other person in the Gospels who used it was Mary Magdalene (John 20:16). And now it's coming from this lips of this believer.

"Rabbi, *I want to see.*" His request reveals his faith. He's putting in the blank check what he wants Jesus to do, *and he believes Jesus can do*, again, just like Hebrews 11:6 says. "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

Bartimaeus believed Jesus. He put his total trust and confidence in Jesus.

And Jesus commended him for it, "Go, your faith has healed you." Of course, faith per se didn't restore his eyesight. Jesus did that. Jesus healed the man using His matchless power, a foreshadowing of what He will do for all His people in the kingdom age to come.

"Every one that asks receives," the Lord says in Matthew 7:8. Listen to these words by J. D. Jones: "So let us, as Dr. Glover says, sow the seeds of prayer on the heart of God. There is no hard ground, or rocky soil, or thorny ground there. His heart is the good soil of tender and gracious love. Let us scatter the seed of prayer, and we shall get a harvest of blessing. According to our faith it shall be unto us."¹¹

One of the tragedies we discover in reading the Gospels is that many took Jesus' benefits without giving Him their hearts.¹² That did NOT happen this time.

It's significant that Jesus told Bartimaeus to *go*, yet what did the healed man do? The text says he *followed Jesus along the road*. That's the natural inclination of a person has saving faith, to follow the One in whom he has placed his faith.

You see, real faith is not merely *intellectual*. It's not enough just to believe some facts. Nor is it simply *verbal*, saying "I believe in Jesus" doesn't necessarily mean you

¹¹ Quote taken from J. D. Jones, p. 393.

¹² Observation by J. D. Jones, p. 393.

do. Real faith is *personal*. By that I don't mean it varies from person to person. I mean that if you have real faith, you will *follow a Person*. You will trust and obey and person, namely Jesus Christ, the One who said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily *and follow me* (Luke 9:23)."

Please note. What did the man ask Jesus to do? To restore his sight. What did Jesus tell him to do? To go your way. After Jesus restored his sight, what did the man actually do? He didn't go his way, but instead *followed Jesus on the way*. What he said he wanted was his sight. But once Jesus restored his sight, something changed. He learned what matter most to him was not his sight, but being with Jesus.

Can you relate to that? I can. When I called out to Jesus as a lost little boy, I asked Him to save me, because I wanted to go to heaven, and I knew He could give that to me. But when He gave me the gift of heaven, I realized for the first time in my life that there was something I now wanted more than heaven. I wanted Him.

That's what happens when Jesus saves you. He becomes more important the gift of sight, or the gift of heaven, or any other gift He may choose to give us. We want the Giver more than anything else, to be with Him, to please Him, to help others know Him.

So ends Mark 10, with The Servant serving on the way to the cross. He is about to finish His mission as we shall see in our coming weeks together, the Lord willing.

Application: There are two questions we each need to ponder...

We've just seen what Jesus did for Bartimaeus, how He commended him for his faith. Now let's ask ourselves two personal, essential questions.

1. *Is my faith in Jesus real?* Speaker and author, Jim Elliff, begins his provocative book entitled *Wasted Faith* as follows:

"Most people will spend far more time examining the vegetables in the supermarket than they will ever spend scrutinizing their faith. In the follow pages we will take a hard look at faith...*your* faith. We will pry off the lid of deceptive faith and smell its contents. In the process, we will come to an understanding of what is authentic—the faith that is the acceptable response to the activity of God. And we will discover the disturbing possibility that what we thought was conversion to Christ may have only been a shadow, an illusion, a mere experience."¹³

The question is vital. *Is my faith in Jesus real?* You say, "How can I know?" Elliff offers this counsel: "To reveal the true nature of your faith, strip away your reliance upon family traditions, church attendance, or baptism. Look deeper than the pious words you say in the right company. Look beyond the well-intentioned assurances given by a trusted parent, pastor, or evangelist. Set these insufficient comforts aside and look at what is left. Then determine if you have what the Bible describes as genuine Christian faith."¹⁴

Be honest, beloved. The stakes are eternal. *Is my faith in Jesus real?* Then ask yourself this follow-up question...

2. *Is my faith in the real Jesus?* We've just seen the real Jesus this morning. Is your faith in Him? A faith in a different Jesus will not save. Only the real Jesus saves. Make sure you know Him.

Closing Song: #405 "*My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*" (all four verses)

Benediction of the month: Revelation 22:21 (ESV)

¹³ Jim Elliff, *Wasted Faith*, p. 7.

¹⁴ J. Elliff, p. 9.

Community Group Discussion:

1. Today's message from Mark 10:46-52 was entitled, "*Serving on the Way to the Cross.*" After reading the account again, discuss this question. Why does Mark include this incident? After all, Jesus healed many people. What makes this particular story significant at this point in Mark's gospel narrative?
2. In verse 46 we're given the blind man's name (as well as his father's name). This is both unusual and significant. How so?
3. Matthew and Luke also tell this story, but with some variations (see Matthew 20 & Luke 18). Some critics say these accounts contradict each other. Compare the three accounts. What are the similarities and differences? How would you respond to someone who says they are contradictory?
4. What stands out to you about Bartimaeus in this story? What can we learn from him?
5. In your opinion, what's the most encouraging thing about Jesus that we learn from this account? How will this truth help you as you live this week?