

What Do You Want?

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Date: 22 October 2023

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[0 : 00] Okay, we're going to turn back to Mark's Gospel chapter 10, the last section of that chapter from verse 46, this healing story.

Now I think it's fair to say that we're not very good at drama in the free church. We're not great at doing drama in our worship services.

But Mark the writer here inspired under God to write this Gospel account of the beginning of the Gospel. There's no doubt he wants us to feel drama here in this story.

Absolutely. If you've ever watched, and I doubt unless you've watched some Netflix series, you'll have 10 or maybe 12 episodes of some amazing story in Netflix.

And you'll notice that at the end of every program, the end of every episode, it kind of comes to a crescendo. And it's all very exciting.

[1 : 00] And they leave you just hanging. And then the count comes up 30 seconds to the next episode. And of course you're baited.

They've got you by then, haven't they? Because it's exciting. And you say, ah, just one more. And then 12 later, ah, just one more. Four in the morning.

Ah, because that's how they do it, isn't it? That's how they keep you in. And you keep watching the next episode because it's exciting. That's exactly what's happening here.

Mark had it way before Netflix had any idea of what they were doing in terms of grabbing an audience. Because from the middle of it, and we've seen that over the last number of weeks, from the middle of chapter eight through to this section, to the end of chapter 10, it's like an episode because Mark is split into episodes.

And Jesus is the central character, obviously, throughout the gospel of Mark. And he's been revealing who he is. Mark's been revealing who he is. And in this section, as we've seen over the last number of weeks, it's been talking about discipleship, what it means to follow Jesus.

[2 : 09] And Jesus all the time has been dripping in three very significant times, dripping in the prophecy of the crucifixion and the resurrection each time and the suffering of Jesus.

And he's been bringing that into this episode very powerfully. And it's critical to see that. And it's critical to recognize that.

And it's critical that we see the gospel in every single section of this great gospel that is given to us by Mark because whether you're just maybe investigating Christianity, if you are, it's brilliant to see you today.

But if not, and you've been a Christian for a long time. The gospel message remains absolutely critical and central. And the gospel story needs to be the heart of our lives, not just, as we've said very often, not just at the beginning of our lives.

And so what is being said here is hugely significant because this is no Netflix show. This is no wee story. This is no mere historical biography.

[3 : 10] This is the message that comes from the living God. It's the most important truth that you will ever have to wrestle with in your life and me in mind.

As a follower or a not yet follower of Jesus, if you're not sure about following Christ, what is being spoken of here and what we've been looking at in the last number of weeks is critically important.

So I'm just going to do a bit of drama. I'm just going to retell the story to begin with because it's so important and it's so good and it's so dramatic because Jesus here is on His way.

Now, I'll say a little bit more about that later. But there's tension in the air. He's moving towards Jerusalem where His enemies are and He's spoken about His crucifixion and His suffering and His death, but He's on the way towards them.

But there's tension. The disciples are gathered around Him. They're walking with Him and He's gathered a great crowd. The crowd are interested in Him. Maybe not because He's going to the cross for sure, but they have some kind of idea that He's a special person and that He's possibly a Messiah and they're interested in Him that He's going to Rome potentially to claim a Roman scalp and to claim the crown that will set the people of Israel free.

[4 : 29] And so there's this crowd, but like what's outside today? A crowd gathering outside, but there's maybe not a focus of anyone today. Maybe if Usain Bolt came along, then there would be a big crowd around Him as the athletes are going out for their run.

But there was this crowd around Jesus and they were moving forward together. You know what it's like when a great crowd moved together. And then above the noise, above the hubbub of noise of this crowd moving towards Jerusalem, the blind beggar shouts, the Son of Timmyus, Son of David, have mercy on me.

He shouts above the crowd. Now, doubtless, He didn't really understand exactly who Jesus is, but He knew enough to cry out for mercy, didn't He?

He knew enough to cry out for mercy. It's chaotic. Ah, shut up, you old clown. I don't know if he was old, sorry, I shouldn't say that. He doesn't say anything about his age. Shut up, you young man, blind man, beggar.

Let Jesus get bigger fish to fry. He's not interested in you, just be quiet, shut up. But He kept shouting, didn't He?

[5 : 42] And then the whole dynamic of the story changes when Jesus stops. So when the big man stops, when the focus of attention that the crowd are following stops, then the crowd stop and listen to what Jesus has to say.

And Jesus says, call Him. Bring Him here, call Him around. And all of a sudden, the crowd who were berating this guy, this beggar, this blind beggar, all of a sudden he's the center of attention. And he says, hey, cheer up, this is a great day for you. The master's calling you. Go up and listen to him. And of course, the son of Timious is delighting him.

Throws away the dirty old rag, I'll no be needing that again. And he goes up to Jesus. And Jesus asks him a question now, if you're really sharp, and if you were here last week, or maybe the week before because we looked at the, Corrie looked at the last passage for two weeks, if you're really sharp, you may notice that Jesus asked son of Timious exactly the same question that he asked the disciples previously in the story.

Exactly the same question. Verse 36, this is from last week. And he said to them, what do you want me to do for you?

[7 : 05] And then in verse 51, the passage we read today, Jesus said to him, what do you want me to do for you? Exactly the same question.

We'll come back to that. Do you want money? Do you want a decent house? Do you want a friend? No, he said, I want to see. I want to see. That's what he asked Jesus, blind Bartimaeus.

Now where's the drama? The drama is completely gone. There's no drama because there's no great, amazing work of Jesus revealed here in touch.

He doesn't touch him. There's no thunder. There's no spitting in the mud and rubbing his eyes. Oh, Jesus say, hugely undramatic, huge anti-Glimax.

[8 : 07] Just says, go your way. Your faith has made you whole. Jesus is going his way, and he says to the blind man, your faith has made you whole.

Go your way. And where does he go? He follows Jesus. He goes the same way as Jesus. Bam! The credits roll.

59 seconds. Are you going to read the next chapter? Course you are. You're going to go home, you're going to fret about making the Sunday lunch, and you're going to get into chapter 11.

You're going to watch the next, read the next chapter because it's dramatic, and because Mark by the power of the Holy Spirit is leading us to the great conclusion.

But we're not going to go on to that today. What I am going to do is I'm going to ask one huge central question for all of us. It's the same question that Jesus asked to Bartimaeus and to the disciples.

[9 : 11] What do you want me to do for you? Jesus says, so ask that question yourself, in your own heart, in your own life. Have you ever asked that question? Have you ever thought of Jesus asking you that question?

Have you ever done that? Do you think of Jesus as someone who comes and says that to you today? What is it? What is it that you want me to do for you?

Because there's two significant answers, aren't there, in these two passages. I'm sorry if you weren't here last week and you didn't read that passage. We maybe should have read it over again because I'm dipping back into last week a little bit as well, probably repeating a lot of what Corey said because we were in mid-dread.

There's only one answer, and the disciples got it wrong, didn't they? The disciples got entirely wrong because they didn't get the whole story.

They didn't understand what was happening. What did they ask for? Grant us to sit one at your right hand and one at your left in your glory. So just let that sink in for a moment.

[10:19] If you're a Christian today, as I'm a Christian today, we're disciples, we're followers of Jesus. And the disciples in this story got it all wrong. They were asking the wrong questions.

The privileged followers of Jesus were the blind ones. Can you not see the contrast that Jesus is, that Mark is wanting to make here? It's not a physical blindness he's wanting to get across. It's the fact that the disciples were spiritually blind, and Barton Mays was the one who could see the disciples. They still thought of Jesus as a genie and a lamp.

They still think, you know, we want you to do for us whatever we ask. Imagine the audacity of that question, the living God. Imagine asking, and yet we do all the time in our lives.

Is that what Jesus is to you? Is he that genie and a lamp that does whatever I ask? Are you wanting His blessings and His privileges and His comfort?

[11:16] Do we want His love and His belonging and all the material stuff? Please don't give me the cross. Don't give me the way of the cross. I don't need your mercy.

I just want these things. Is it? I don't necessarily want really to see my own heart as you see it.

I don't want to be exposed as needy. I want to see your right hand and your left. I want to share in your glory. I want the power. I still want to be Lord of my life.

Now that's the disciples. Don't sit here as a Christian thinking, that must be a message for unbelievers. That's for the disciples. That's for the Christians, the believers.

Don't listen for someone else. Don't think it doesn't apply. We need to be convicted to our very core by the message of the gospel for us as Christians. And listen for what God wants us to learn about the danger of being a follower of Jesus and not really grasping at all what it means to follow Jesus.

[12:20] Because they didn't grasp. They had the wrong idea. And maybe if you hear Jesus today saying to you, what do you want me to do for you? You'll have an understanding of what's in your heart.

I want to understand life. I want life to be laid out my way. I want my future to be secure in the way that I think. Whatever it might be.

But listen for Bartimaeus. Listen for what he said. Remember it was the same question, what do you want me to do for you? The Son of Timmaeus got it right.

I want to see. I want to see. Did they understand fully what that meant? I doubt it. I doubt he fully understood what he was asking. Sure he was asking for physical healing.

But through that, he knew more clearly because the first thing he asked was, Lord, have mercy on me. And he knew that this great Messiah was at least physically able to heal him so he was from God.

[13:25] And he went and followed Him. And he probably, let's hope so, followed Him all the way to the cross and understood more. He certainly was urgent in his request.

He was willing to shout above the crowd who were telling him to shut up and be quiet and go home. He needed Christ. His life was in a mess. He was poverty-stricken. He was begging on the streets. Was he yet in times to come as a follower of Christ to be challenged and surprised? Undoubtedly. Undoubtedly as we all are. But I think the deep spiritual reality is there.

He saw the healer. He saw the Lord. And his life was turned around and he left the old one behind, symbolized by throwing his cloak aside. That cloak was the old cloak that I used to beg on.

But I'm not going to need that anymore. Now that's the story that we got here. This dramatic story is historically real, undoubtedly, without any shadow of a doubt.

[14:24] However, it also has a deeper spiritual message that Mark intended it to have because of where it's placed in the gospel.

Without doubt, the section that Mark has written here, this episode of Mark's gospel is carefully crafted. It's not just thrown together haphazardly. It's carefully crafted.

It begins, interestingly, in chapter 8 verse 22, this section, with this healing of a blind man. And it finishes this section with the healing of a blind man.

Because, and the contrast particularly between the disciples and Bartimaeus is powerful in that you've got Bartimaeus who is a poor nobody in the eyes of the crowd and the people around him, he's a beggar.

And yet he sees, and the disciples who follow Jesus for all these years, they were blind. He couldn't see. Can you see the contrast? You see, and Corey was talking about that last week, the incredible counterintuitive nature of the gospel.

[15:30] It always turns our understanding upside down. And you can't sit here today and not recognize and see that, whether you agree or disagree with the gospel or not.

And that's the question that Jesus asks you today. What is it you want me to do for you? Ask that in your own heart. What is the first thing you're asking?

What is the reality that you seek? Is it that you see? You've been a Christian for a long, long time and that's still your request, still my request, Lord, please.

Take away the clouded eyes. Help me to see you more clearly, to see your beauty, to see your power, to see your finished work. Just to see what my life is in you.

I belong and I'm part of your family and you have a calling for me. Help me to see these things.

What is it that you want Jesus to do for you?

[16:26] That's a very important question. So as we just draw it to a conclusion, what do you and I see in God's Word here? Because there's that central question and there's one or two other parallel things that we see in the passage here.

I think it's important to recognize and see that Jesus is on the way here. We mentioned that before. It starts with Him coming to Jericho. He's traveling.

He's traveling down from Jericho and then it's going to be up to Jerusalem. So verse 46 says He came to Jericho and then it finishes with saying immediately, recover the sight and followed Jesus on the way.

So Jesus on the way. Now there's seven or eight times in this episode, this chapter from the middle of chapter eight, that it speaks about Jesus being on the way. It's clearly a journey. It's clearly significant and important.

The phrase is used often or words similar to that phrase because He's on the way to offer the one thing alone that you need and I need. The one significant thing we all need, He's on the way to deal with that at the cross and then His resurrection.

[17:31] He's on the way to show us His mercy. Remember what Corey was saying last week about the incredible reality of Jesus coming to serve and not to be served?

To serve you. He's served you in the one significant, most important way in your life to offer you mercy, His mercy. To show you His mercy and to give you peace with God.

That great exchange, that's what He's offering. He takes our sin and our failing and our inability to meet God's perfect standard of love for Him and for one another.

He having reached and lived that standard Himself, takes our sin and dies in our place. The great exchange, do you know that great exchange?

Have you taken that great exchange? Have you taken Christ who is the one who sets us free, the gift that He offers in His love? That's the deepest identity we need to come to terms with in our lives.

[18:31] That is why Mark is driving us towards the cross all the time. Jesus is there. So one thing He's come to do, He's set His face firmly for Jerusalem.

So one thing I need as a sinner in my life is what Jesus Christ offers, a great loving relationship that transforms every other relationship, not just vertically with God but also horizontally with one another.

At least it should, eh? Isn't that right? Are we quite happy with the horizontal one? But I can't be bothered with the vertical one. I can't be bothered with the horizontal one. Sorry, I'm not very good at these things.

The horizontal one is much harder, isn't it? It's easy to love God, sort of, even though we can't see Him. Oh, but to love one another, that's a challenge. Can't do it. Can't do it without His grace.

We're selfish and bitter and proud and arrogant and ignorant. Can't do it. We need His grace in our hearts. And we recognize, and when we know that belonging, it begins to... the gospel begins to transform us.

[19 : 40] Not just once, but when we're 85 and when we're 90 years old and have been a Christian for all our lives, it's still changing us. It must be. Otherwise, it's ceased.

We haven't understood it, anyway. Jesus is on the way. Then of course we see the blindness, as we recall it, the blindness of the disciples, isn't it? The contrast is absolutely crystal clear.

And so the challenge is for us to ask the question, do we think we can see we're actually we're blind to our own guilt before God and our lostness and our desperate need for His mercy?

Can I ask today if you've been a Christian for quite a long time, but you're completely prayerless, untransformed? Yeah, I have had no concept of coming here today or reading Scripture when you read Scripture of allowing it to transform your heart and life.

If you're dry as an old dry cloth or something, dry bone, something, anything, are you dry?

[20 : 47] There's no vibrancy, no vitality, there's no expectation, you can't wait to get home. Just nothing in your life.

No change. In fact, there's probably possibly regression. Is that because we've allowed ourselves to become blind? And we've stopped asking Jesus, Lord, I want to see.

I want to see. I know the amazing thing is here. The divine Son, remember Mark chapter one, one of the very early episodes of Mark, God says, this is my beloved Son, do my will please.

The divine Son becomes David's Son here in the story. It's the only time that Mark uses this, and he's quoting Bartimaeus, Son of David, have mercy on me.

He comes to save Timmy's, Timmy's son. Isn't that interesting that the three sons come together? I think that's the reason why, can you think of any other reason why Mark here says, Bartimaeus, the Son of Timmaeus?

[21 : 56] Well, why would he say that? Well, that was obvious if you knew the name Bartimaeus. It's like MacDonald, the Son of Donald. Well, Bar is the same in that language. It's just, it's the Son of.

And so he's the Son of Timmaeus. And I think that's why Mark does it. I think that's why he gives us parenthesis here, because he says, Jesus, the beloved Son, Son of the living God, as God Himself who becomes flesh, in whom the Father is well please, becomes the King of promise, the greater David.

He's only mentioned here once as the Son of David. If only the today's Jewish nationals could see that, eh? And that's not a political comment.

Only the Son of God who is the Son of David could see this Son of Timmaeus as having any worth, because you know that's what Timmaeus means.

It means worthy. Isn't that interesting? It's a blind beggar that no one had any time for. Jesus sees him as the Son of His Father, someone who's worthy, someone who's a family, someone who's a past, someone who's made in his image, someone who needed rescued, who needed hope and who needed a future, someone who was worth dying for.

[23 : 11] Timmaeus, Son of Timmaeus was worth serving. Was worth the God of the universe coming to serve Him by going to the cross on His behalf. So that the Father would say, the Son of Timmaeus, I'm well pleased with you through the work of Jesus Christ.

And that's a really important truth, maybe for you to hear today more than anything else, that Jesus made Himself nothing for you, that He suffered for you to serve your need of redemption and of life. He loves you. And in Christ, you're worthy. He calls you through faith to follow Him. And as believers, we need to start living if we're not living in that knowledge of being precious children of the living God and of loving other Christians in the same light as that, sons and daughters of the King who are important and significant.

We're not called to judge others, to despise the poor and the homeless and the disadvantaged and the uneducated and the stranger and the immoral and the different.

And if we do, we're not, we don't see Christ and we don't understand discipleship. Looking to your heart, as I must look into mine today, are you more naturally with Bartimaeus, with the disciples or with the crowd?

[24 : 40] No time. No time for Him whatsoever. Now I'm just going to finish with a sidebar, because there's a question here about faith and miracles, isn't there?

John's Gospel, maybe you thought of this, I don't know. Maybe your mind was wandering towards these deep theological truths. John chapter 14 verse 12, Jesus says, whoever believes in me, and that obviously significant because of the story of faith here, will also do the works that I do.

And greater works than these will He do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so the Father may be glorified in the Son. When the earth does that mean? Do greater works than Jesus, do you really believe that?

Is that the case? This wider issue of faith and miracles, really? Are we going to be able to raise the dead, which Jesus did, or walk in water or open the eyes of the blind like it is here?

If anyone has faith, you can do anything in his name. I don't think it means that. I think it's pointing to the reality of physical miracles, I have no problem with the reality of physical miracles today.

[25 : 54] But it's pointing to a deeper spiritual reality that we have the privilege of being significantly involved in a way that Christ wasn't. Christ opened the way at Pentecost for sure.

He intercedes from glory, from His place of ascension, and He sends His Spirit. But we're the workers. We're the workers in the harvest field in a way that Christ wasn't when He came on earth and the way He isn't now.

And we're called to the greatest work of all, which is to partner with Him in seeing the spiritually blind, having their eyes opened, the spiritually dead being raised from the dead.

The coming of His kingdom, the ushering in of the great commission. That's what we're called to.

These miracles were great, but I believe primarily they were signs, not exclusively because Christ does come to heal, but primarily they were signs because the blind man, Barra Mayes, probably still needed glasses when he got older.

And Lazarus, he died again even though he was raised from the dead. But the greater miracle was that they were given spiritual life. And we have that privilege.

[27 : 08] You and I, each one of us as believers, have that greatest of privileges of sharing Jesus as His disciples and being used by Him to bring people into the kingdom.

That's why we're on mission. That's why we plant churches. That's why we believe in the kingdom coming and not just maintaining a little group of believers and saints, who all love each other.

It's more than that. It's much more than that. We have a much higher calling, much more dignified calling. We do greater works than Jesus as we go out in His name and as we believe Him.

So seeing Jesus for who He is changes everything and will change everything in my life and in yours. Is it time for us to throw aside the cloak of our old life of faithlessness and spiritual blindness and pray to God to see.

To see His beauty, to see His power, to see our need, even as 40 or 50 year old Christians of His need for mercy, of our need for mercy, to see His glory and just to follow Him.

[28 : 29] It's a simple message, but it's profoundly challenging. Rebirth, repentance, refreshment, renewal. We need it all.

We absolutely need the renewing of the Spirit of God and we pray that through His Word and through our lives focused on Him, we will see and know and enjoy that.

Let's pray. Father God, we thank You for who You are. We rejoice in the amazing drama of Scripture. Forgive us when we make it a dry and dusty and dull old book.

And we ask and pray that You would enliven us, not with fine words or not with even with drama as we think of the story, but with the power of the Spirit of God bringing from death to life our blindness and enabling us to see.

We live in such a dark world. There's much that is amazing about this world still, much that still reflects Your glory and Your goodness and Your common grace to us is remarkable, Your patience.

[29 : 34] But there is much darkness. There is so much that causes us to weep and recognize that things are so out of joint, things are so wrong.

But maybe not be judgmental, we will not see it as something outside of ourselves. And maybe we see that that rottenness, that core selfishness is in our hearts and needs the redeeming power of Jesus to transform us.

So we pray for any who are sitting on the edge as it were today of faith, but who have not yet committed to Jesus Christ or who are blind and think that being here is just enough.

And who ask Jesus like the disciples for the power and the glory and for sitting on His right hand, His left being in His company because they earn or deserve it.

We pray that you would take that from all of us and help us to know and love Your mercy today in His name. Amen.