

DARKNESS DESTROYED!

Mark 10: 46-52

It is an awful thing to be blind. But it is not the worst thing in the world by any means. There have been some blind people who've accomplished some great things. Nobody has ever been used more greatly by God to compose hymns for His church than Fanny Crosby. Depending on the source to which you want to refer, she wrote between 8000 and 9000 hymns. In 2009 a young man from Japan, Nobuyuki Tsuji, was the first blind person to ever win the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, when he was only 20 years old. You may or may not like rhythm and blues music, but you must say that Ray Charles was perhaps the best rhythm and blues singer ever. Many called Ray "the Genius".

But perhaps the most amazing accomplishment of a blind person has to be the career of Charley Boswell. Few of you would remember his name now, but Charley Boswell was one of the most famous athletes in Alabama in the mid-20th century. He played football at Alabama, but later was blinded in combat in WWII. But that didn't stop Charley from excelling athletically. He took up golf and won 16 national championships and 11 international championships before his career was over, and Charley even had three holes in one! That makes me never want to pick up a golf club again.

Well, today we have another great man to talk about who was blind. His name was Bartimaeus. Blind Bartimaeus was not a musician and he was not an athlete, in fact, he never did anything that anyone would give him any accolades over. But blind Bartimaeus had a résumé that every one of us should envy. And the greatest statement that you could ever say about blind Bartimaeus was, "Healed and saved by the grace of God".

Turn in your Bibles, please, to Mark 10: 46-52. Life was not always great for Bartimaeus. We don't know how long he had been blind. Blindness or eye disease was a widespread problem among men in the days of Jesus. So perhaps he had not been blind all of his life, but regardless he was blind then and as a result he was a beggar. We assume he had no family, no home, and he no hope for anything better. Life was not kind to Bartimaeus.

Friends, I want you to see today that blind Bartimaeus is a picture of every person in this world who is lost without Jesus Christ. They are blinded to the glorious truth that Jesus Christ came to save them from their sins. Jesus called the Pharisees the blind who were leaders of the blind (Matt. 15:14). They were the spiritually blind leading the spiritually blind, and they both were headed for the ditch. Paul writes in 2 Cor. 4:4 that the gods of this age had blinded the minds of those who did not believe, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. Jesus' words in John 8 carry the same idea when He said, "I am the Light

of the world. He who believes in Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12). And here is the correlation between Bartimaeus and the most of the spiritually blind. They are all are living for the here and now.

We mentioned that Bartimaeus probably had no family nor home. His existence depended totally on the mercy of those passing by his begging spot every day, as they dropped enough money in his little tin cup for supper and maybe a place to sleep at night. That was his life, day after day, week after week, year after year. But beloved, that’s exactly the way it is with most who are spiritually blind. They may be begging poor like Bartimaeus, or they may be so rich they don’t have any idea of their net worth. But they are still living for the present, living for the pleasures that they can squeeze out of this world of heartache and corruption, with few if any thoughts of eternity. And the tragedy, of course, is that the eternity they are marching toward so swiftly is a place of torment called hell. Now, in a recent survey 56% of Americans disagree with this, saying there is no hell. But Jesus said that hell is a place where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched, and where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth (Mark 9:48; Matt. 13:42). And Jesus said it would be better to cut off your hand or gouge out your eye than to let them cause you to go to hell (Matt. 5:30).

So blind Bartimaeus had been begging for years and up until recently had never had any hope for anything better than being a poor, unloved beggar. But he had heard of a man named Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth. He had heard of His claim to be the Son of David, Messiah of the Jews, and he believed that He also was the Son of God Who had the power to heal him. And his heart must have almost leaped out of his chest when he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he began to scream at the top of his voice, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” And the tense of the verb there indicates that he wouldn’t stop screaming. He was just like a baby when he’s hungry. He won’t stop screaming until someone sticks a bottle in his mouth. There’s not a sweeter little baby in the world than Jena Kate Crutchfield. She is a little doll, let me tell you. But you let sweet little Jena Kate get hungry, and after about 10 minutes that little doll has turned into a little pumpkin. But she has for sure gotten mommy and daddy’s attention. And in just one more minute, she’s a little doll again.

Friends, this is the kind of cry that always touches the heart of God. A cry of desperation! You’ll notice in v. 48 that the crowd tried to hush up Bartimaeus when he began to cry out to Jesus. Some of them probably felt guilty because this poor beggar was acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah when they did not have the faith to do so. Others didn’t want Bartimaeus spoiling the festive mood they were all in as they traveled with Jesus to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Some of the locals were probably embarrassed that one of Jericho’s indigents would make such a scene with such a dignitary as Rabbi Jesus. But they did all that they could to keep

Bartimaeus from getting Jesus' attention. But the more they hushed him the more he hollered. Bartimaeus would let no one stop him from crying out to Jesus.

There was something else that Bartimaeus didn't let stop him from crying out to Jesus. And that was his need for money. It was a large crowd that was passing by with Jesus that day. What a great opportunity for a beggar to have a good day at his trade. But this was not a day for begging for money. This was a day for begging for something far, far, better. This was a day for begging for sight, for freedom from the bondage of darkness! And nothing, not even a full collection can, was going to keep Bartimaeus from getting Jesus' attention.

What a picture blind Bartimaeus is of a sinner who comes to Jesus, begging Jesus to wash away his sins. If you've never given your life totally to Jesus Christ and you've been thinking of doing so, you can be sure that there will always be a multitude of detractors out there to try to dissuade you. For we live in a world that is hostile to Jesus. They did not think that He was the Son of God then and they do not think that He is the Son of God now. And the world will tell you that you are a fool if you commit your life to follow Jesus Christ.

You see, following Jesus Christ is just like receiving your sight. When a blind man is made to see that man has a brand new life. Everything about his earthly life changes. And so it is with everyone who is saved by faith in Jesus Christ. Everything changes. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "...Old things pass away, behold, all things become new". All of the saved are delivered from the darkness of sin and are brought forth into the light of the righteousness of Christ. They have a new heart, washed clean by the blood of Jesus. They have a new lifestyle, a lifestyle of holiness. They have a new purpose, to glorify God in all things, and they have a new destiny, they are going to Heaven when they die. And if you ever attempt to leave the darkness, the inhabitants of darkness will cling to you and do all they can to keep you in the darkness with them. They will say that you are condemning them for their lifestyle and that you think that you are better than them. Some will tell you that you are either arrogant or disillusioned or both if you think that Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven. And I'm talking about family and friends, the ones you love the most.

But not only does the world try to prevent sinners from coming to Jesus, so do their own desires. How many in affluent America are just like the rich young ruler who came to Jesus seeking eternal life! Making money and spending money is what they are all about, and they are not about to make Jesus Christ more important than all of their stuff. That's certainly the way it was with the rich young ruler. When Jesus told him to sell all that he had, take up his cross and follow Him, he bailed. The cost to follow Christ was just too great. And just like him, many today are so engulfed in their pursuit of treasures that one day will be dust and ashes that they never cry out to Jesus for the treasures of heaven that will never perish.

Well, praise God for His grace, because verse 49 says that Jesus heard all of Bartimaeus' screaming and yelling and rabble rousing and stood still and called for Bartimaeus to be brought to Him. Oh, beloved, what sweet music to anyone who is seeking Jesus today! Jesus stood still! Jesus halted all of His plans to minister to one poor blind man. What compassion that Jesus has for broken people! You see, beloved, Jesus had about one more week to live, and the last week of his life was weighing heavy on His heart. He was on His way to Jerusalem to cleanse the temple, and for a final time of teaching the multitudes and the disciples privately, and then to die on the cross. And you know that He had to be preoccupied with all of these things.

But look what Jesus had just said to His disciples in verse 45. Beloved, Jesus was forever ministering to hurting people. It didn't matter how busy He was. It didn't matter how much He was hurting Himself. He always thinking about others and stopping what He was doing to help those who were in need. And if you are troubled about your soul today and are crying out to Jesus, then I want you to know that Jesus has stopped whatever He's doing in Heaven right now and He is listening to you. Oh, yes, Jesus can multitask for sure. He can keep the all the stars from falling and keep the sun coming up in the morning and make sure we get enough rainfall and He keeps the devil from devouring all of us and hear the prayers of millions of people; He can do all of this at one time. But still, all of these are of the lowest priority to any sinner that cries out to Him for forgiveness. And I beg you to take heed to the words of the crowd in verse 49: "Be of good cheer. Rise. He is calling for you!" He's calling for you!

Well, that was all that it took for blind Bartimaeus. In a split second he leaped up, tossed aside his garment, and rushed toward the sound of Jesus' voice. He didn't stop to pray about it. He didn't care if anyone offered to lead him or not or if he stumbled and fell on his way. He knew that if Jesus heard him Jesus would heal him, and he would either get to Jesus or die trying.

Friends, Jesus wants everyone you to know this morning that He delights in those who will run to Him! In fact, He invites all of us to run to Him. Jesus said in John 8:37, "If any man thirsts, let him come to Me and drink". He said in Matt. 11:28, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest". When Peter dared to ask Jesus to come to Him walking on the water, Jesus said, "Come". When a centurion pleaded with Jesus to come and heal his servant Jesus said, "I will come and heal him" (Matt. 8:7). When a leper came to Jesus and said, "Lord, if you are willing You can make me clean", Jesus said, "I am willing. Be cleansed (Matt. 8:3).

And it was perhaps the very same day as Jesus continued His journey toward Jerusalem that He encountered someone else who came to see Him. But this man couldn't see Jesus, but it was not because he was blind, it was because he was too short. But like Bartimaeus, he would not be denied. So he scampered up a

sycamore tree to Jesus as He was passing by. And Jesus knew Zacchaeus' heart. He knew that Zacchaeus was seeking to know Him, to know the truth about Him and eternal life, and Jesus said to him, "Come down, Zacchaeus, I'm going home with you today". I'm telling you, friend, whoever you are, if you have a desire in your heart to come to Jesus today, you can be 100% certain that if you come running to Him that He will come running to you.

Now, I want you to notice the conversation between Jesus and Bartimaeus. Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" Did not Jesus already know the answer? Of course He did. But He wanted blind Bartimaeus to express it himself, and to express it specifically. And so he did. He said, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight". Then Jesus responded, "Go your way, your faith has made you well". And all of a sudden Bartimaeus blinked his eyes and the lights popped on, and he could see!

But beloved, it is likely that something far more important happened to Bartimaeus that day than being healed of blindness, and that was that he became a child of God. How do we know this? First of all, Bartimaeus called Jesus "Rabboni". That title that is used only one other time in the NT. Mary Magdalene called Jesus "Rabboni" when she first saw Him after His resurrection. It literally means "My Great One", or "Master". And by using it Bartimaeus' expressed faith in Jesus as his own personal Master and Lord (Wiersbe). And when Jesus said to Bartimaeus, "Your faith has made you well", the literal translation is, "Your faith has saved you". It is the same words that Jesus used in Luke 7 of the woman who washed His feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven you. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace" (Luke 7:48, 50). What a double blessing for Bartimaeus!! He gained his sight and He gained eternal life, in one great encounter with Jesus, Son of David and Son of God.

There's one more thing that we need to see concerning Bartimaeus this morning. When Bartimaeus met Jesus, he did not just go his merry way with his new gift of eyesight. Verse 52 says that he followed Jesus on the way. Luke's account adds that he glorified God (Luke 18:43). Friends, that's what people do when they meet Jesus. They don't walk away from meeting Jesus back to their old life, back to doing the same things with the same people the same way. With few thoughts of Jesus, with no desire to follow Him. NO! When someone meets Jesus, and I mean really meets Jesus, they follow Jesus. Yes, they do go back to their families, and yes, they do back to work if it's honest, noble work. But they start to follow Jesus on the spot. They glorify Jesus for what He has done for them in every area of life. Their family knows they are saved, their friends know they are saved, and by the way, they may lose some of them as a result. But their family and friends and their co-workers know that they are saved. Because when the Almighty God has reached down from Heaven and made you completely whole, inside and out, you cannot keep the joy to yourself.

