# Jesus met a Blind Beggar

Mark 10:46-52 #192

Jesus was on the road heading for Jerusalem. He had just told His disciples that He was going there to give His life up to redeem many people. No one knew what He meant. He had a big following. Many expected that Jesus would lead a national uprising against the Roman rulers.

As Jesus was leaving Jericho, on His last town before arriving in Jerusalem He passed beggars squatting on their mats, begging for alms. It was a good place for begging because pilgrims on route to Jerusalem were filled with religious fervour. That made them a soft touch for giving alms.

One well established beggar was known as Bartimeus, meaning son of Timeus, his father. He didn’t seem to have a personal name of his own. He was not established in life, no home of his own, no wife, no family, no job, no income and no education. People knew him for what he didn’t have –eyesight – not for what he did have. Every other body part was in good working order. But without sight all he was good for was shouting. They pushed him, they looked down on him and they labelled him cursed by God. He was sick of it, sick of being left out, sick of missing out, sick of being of no worth to anybody.

One thing he knew was that when Messiah comes, He will not join in this discrimination, but He will be on the side of the poor and oppressed – like him. It seemed a slim hope waiting for Him.

This day the town was alive. He heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing through. He had a reputation for healing hopeless cases like him. He thinks that Jesus has all the signs of Messiah. If so, He was of the line of David our great king. Most of the crowd are more interested in the possibility that He will lead a charge against the Romans – but that means nothing to our blind man, Bartimeus. He wanted to see. He heard the din of the crowd getting louder and louder.

Jesus must be near. He begins to shout, “**Jesus, Son of David have mercy on me”.** Some people get upset. They tell him to shut up. He takes that as a clue Jesus is close, so he shouts even louder. He may not be able to see but he’s had plenty of shouting practice. He shouts loud.

**“Son of David have mercy on me!”** This upsets more crowd members. They don’t think a low-life like him should slow down the progress of their soon-to-be deliverer. He can’t see where Jesus is, but he can make sure Jesus knows where he is. He is not put off by crowd members no matter who they think they are. This Jesus helps people in need, even nobodies like him. And he heals them with miracles only God can do. That makes Him Messiah in his book, and he knows a few scriptures. He was going to get His attention by the best means he knows how – on the road, out of Jericho, toward Jerusalem, at the right time – shouting loud.

The noise dies down. The crowd has stopped. He senses it is close. They stop telling him to be quiet! Someone comes over to him.

**“Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.”**

He doesn’t need a second prompt. He stands up. He throws off his coat. He feels for some hands and follows where they lead. It is just a short distance and then they stop. He senses he is in the presence of someone extraordinary. It is Jesus. The crowd become quiet. It is just him and Jesus.

Jesus speaks, **“What do you want me to do for you?”** Jesus knows he is blind but His question encourages him. It arouses something deep within him to get active. Jesus invites him to get involved in overcoming the curse that has struck him down, making him helpless, and dependent on others. For a moment in time the stage is his. He has an open invitation to request anything he wants from the One he believes is Messiah, the deliverer, his deliverer. The crowd saw him as a nuisance and ordered him silent. Jesus, Messiah, sees him worth stopping a whole crowd for and invites him to speak – whatever he wants. Empowered by His question he has no hesitation, “**Rabbi, teacher, I want to see**”. He states clearly and boldly. He doesn’t want to stay blind and helpless, dependent on others, treated like rubbish. He wants eyes that actually see things. He wants to leave begging behind and take control of his life. He believes Jesus can do this. As he speaks, his courage grows, and he believes the words he is speaking out.

Jesus speaks again, **“Go, your faith has healed you”**. What? he thought Jesus would heal him, but instead Jesus says his faith has healed him. These words arouse more inner strength, more faith, then it happens. His eyes begin to take in light, shapes of people, of a person, a face, a beautiful face. It is Jesus. The first thing he sees with his own two eyes is the face of Jesus. He will never forget that face, that smile, that compassion. The moment seems to last and last. Their eyes meet each other. He is being loved and accepted. He belongs to Messiah.

How did he do it? He doesn’t know but to his surprise He doesn’t make an announcement, no magic words, just, ‘your faith has made you well’. These words touch something deep in his soul. He got more than just his sight. He got healed of the curse that had crippled his spirit – helplessness. Every day he used to hear, ‘there’s that blind beggar’ – a double curse.

Well get this – ‘I’m no longer blind and I’m no longer helpless’. Jesus gave him the key to getting on his feet, getting up and getting going. “And what was that?” It was the first thing he saw when he opened his eyes for the very first time – the face of Jesus.

He got more than physical sight. He got to see Messiah. He got redemption. He got to leave behind his old, blind, helpless life back there on the roadside somewhere with his old coat and blanket and begging bowl.

And he got restored into society. He began to walk with them on the road, following Jesus. Instead of catching second-hand news from passers-by, now he was the news. He got up close and personal with Jesus and now people start coming up to him to learn about Jesus. ‘Me… a teacher!’ he thinks ‘That’s funny. That’s redemption.’

They asked him, ‘How did you get an audience with Jesus’? And he told them, “Get things right like I did”.

“What things did you get right?” they ask. So, he tells them,

First, I got His identity right. He was Son of Man, He was Master, the ultimate teacher. You fellows want Him to be Messiah leading a revolt against Rome. But you are wrong. He is Messiah all right, leading a revolt against sin, sickness and helplessness.”

Second, I got in the right position – a beggar needing help. Some of you think you need to be important to get an audience – not with the true Messiah. He looks out for helpless beggars to raise them up. He was in the right position.

Third, he insists, ‘I used the right approach.’ He was actively looking for help. He was not just a passive on-looker. He was hungry for help and he went after it – shouting – loud.

Fourth, ‘I had the right words.’ He told Jesus exactly what he wanted and Jesus listened and heard and answered him.

Fifth, ‘I had the right attitude.’ He had faith that Jesus could heal him and would heal him. And so, He did just as he believed and he got his sight.

Finally, ‘I had the right response.’ He didn’t just go off and do his own thing, but he followed Jesus along the road and continued to follow Him to the end.

“Where are you going now”? they ask. So he tells them that if they follow where he came from to where he was now they will know where he was going. At the start, he was a lonely beggar on the roadside far away from Jesus. Then he tried to connect with Jesus by shouting to Him. Then he shouted louder and was heard. Then when Jesus stopped, and called him he jumped at the invitation and came to Him. Then they spoke, person to person. As He spoke Jesus’ words strengthened him within. Bartimeus believed and he was healed physically. He gained his sight. The first face he saw was Jesus’. This was intimate. But it didn’t stop there. Jesus commended his faith in Him as Messiah and He healed his **spirit**. Then he followed Him along the road and Jesus restored him to the community. He was healed **socially** and **emotionally**.

Where was he heading now? If you follow his progress from being distant to being close and then to being intimate, he was heading on the road to more intimacy with Jesus. He was using his story to tell others about Him and eventually Jesus will welcome him into His eternal home to be with Him forever. That is **redemption.**

A note on the structure of the text

The text has a symmetry pointing to the central message of the story.

What is the centre of the story

For a start, Jesus and His disciples went into Jericho.

Then there was this blind beggar sitting by the road

Then the beggar heard it was Jesus and shouted for mercy

After shouting, many told him to be quiet

Then Jesus stopped and called him



Jesus asked what He could do for him.

He ignored the shouting and said, “Rabbi, I want to see”.

Jesus heard him and said his faith had healed him

Then, he could see and went down the road.

At the end, they left and went to Jerusalem.

Sandwiched between these 5 pairs of contrasting events in his story was one central event, not paired. This was the arrow head of his encounter with Jesus and this was what you can do also.

**🡪 he threw aside his old clothes, everything that held him back, he jumped up proactively and he came to Jesus**.

This is what everyone must do. Throw off any hindrance, get active in seeking Jesus and come to Him in your need. Believe He is your answer and He will do for you what He did for the beggar. He will redeem your life, give you sight and set you on a new course following Him and being in intimate relationship with God.

**Jesus met a Blind Beggar** “Get real” questions

1.

1. What was the blind man’s name?
2. What was his father’s name?
3. Which city was he outside?
4. What title does he shout to Jesus?
5. What did he shout for?
6. What title does he give to Jesus up close?
7. What does he ask for up close?
8. What did Jesus’ say healed him?
9. What attitude did he sense from Jesus?
10. What word includes all the benefits he got from Jesus?

Bartimaeus Compassion faith Jericho Mercy redemption Sight Son of David Teacher Timaeus

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|  | **Questions of the story** | **Personal questions** |
| 2. | What prejudice and disadvantage did Bartimaeus experience? | What prejudice or disadvantage do you experience? |
| 3. | What active steps did he take to get the help he needed? | What active steps have you taken to get the help you need? |
| 4. | What sort of person did he believe Jesus to be? | What sort of person do you think Jesus is? |
| 5. | Why did Jesus ask him, “What do you want me to do for you?” | How would you answer that question? |
| 6. | What role did his faith have in getting him healed? | What do you believe Jesus can do for you? |
| 7. | What commended him to get a private audience with Jesus? | What do you need to do to get on personal terms with Jesus? |
| 8. | What were his stages from distant to intimate? | Where are you on this continuum? |
| 9. | What did repentance look like for Bartimaeus? | What would repentance look like for you? |
| 10. | In what areas of his life did Bartimaeus experience redemption? | What areas of your life do you believe Jesus can redeem? |