

Introduction

One day in the summer of 1992, I was driving my blue Nissan truck on the East West Tollway in Orlando, Florida. I was thanking the Lord for some specific answers to prayer, and all at once the Holy Spirit said to me, "What do you want me to do for you now?" I don't recall the Lord asking me that question, either before that day or since that day. At that time, our family of seven children was living in a house that was 1,450 square feet. So, when the Lord asked me that question, the first thing that I said to the Lord was I would like to have a bigger home for our growing family. The second thing that I asked for was for our church that we were attending. Metro Life was raising money for a new facility. Karen and I were debt free, but we did not have any money to give. I asked the Lord for \$10,000 to give to our church. By the end of the next year, some pretty amazing things had happened. I was on the Callaway Golf PGA Tour staff at that time, and that next year, they offered all of their tour staff a stock option for 1,000 shares of Callaway stock at \$3 below the market price, which was \$35. During the next twelve months the stock went up to \$90 and split, and then back up to \$90 and split. It went up a third time and split. My option for 1000 shares for \$32 went to 2,000 shares for \$16, then 4,000 shares for \$8, and then 8,000 shares for \$4. We were able to pay cash for a new 3,500 square foot home and give our church \$25,000 worth of Callaway stock. God did abundantly above and beyond what I could ask or imagine. I told people that thirty-two other golf professionals got blessed that year because God was making good on His offer to me.

In our text today, Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem to die, and He has to pass through Jericho. As He got to the other side of Jericho, a blind beggar hears that Jesus is coming, and he began to cry out to Jesus. Many people told him to keep quiet, but he persisted in crying out. Jesus summoned him and then asked him the same thing that He asked me. "What do you want Me to do for you?" The blind man asked Jesus to have mercy on him and to help him regain his sight. Jesus did not lay hands on him or say a prayer over him. Jesus told him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately the blind beggar regained his sight, and began following Jesus on the road. In this wonderful account of Bartimaeus' healing, we find four important characteristics of true faith. First, Faith Comes by Hearing. Second, true faith is persistent. Third, true faith is rewarded. Fourth, true faith follows Jesus.

Four Characteristics of True Faith

1. Faith Comes By Hearing
2. True Faith Is Persistent
3. True Faith Is Rewarded
4. True Faith Follows Jesus

(Mark 10:46-52) "Then they *came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar *named* Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road. {47} When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" {48} Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" {49} And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him *here*." So they *called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you." {50} Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus. {51} And answering him, Jesus said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" And the blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, *I want* to regain my sight!" {52} And Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and *began* following Him on the road."

1. Faith Comes By Hearing (Mark 10:46-47)

Our text begins with Jesus and the disciples arriving in Jericho. They were on their way to Jerusalem, where Jesus would be arrested, condemned, handed over to the Romans to be crucified, be crucified, and then be raised up from the dead. They had been in Perea, and had now crossed back over the Jordan and are in Jericho.

(Mark 10:46) “Then they *came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar *named* Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road.”

You will notice that there is a star in front of the word came. In the NASB, the Lockman Foundation gives some explanations of the various symbols they use. “A star (*) is used to mark verbs that are historical presents in the Greek which have been translated with an English past tense in order to conform to modern usage. The translators recognized that in some contexts the present tense seems more unexpected and unjustified to the English reader than a past tense would have been. But Greek authors frequently used the present tense for the sake of heightened vividness, thereby transporting their readers in imagination to the actual scene at the time of occurrence. However, the translators felt that it would be wise to change these historical presents to English past tenses.” What this tells us is that Mark (and the Holy Spirit) wanted to highlight the significance of their coming to Jericho. God wanted to take us back to this scene in our imagination and think about what is happening. So, let’s think about the scene for a minute.

We do not know all that happened in Jericho. There is a large gap in the middle of verse forty-six. They came to Jericho, and now they are leaving Jericho. We don’t know how many came with the disciples to Jericho, but as they were leaving, there was a large crowd. I believe that Jesus preached the gospel in Jericho, and healed those who were sick, and probably cast out some demons. That is what He did everywhere He went. He proclaimed the gospel, and He demonstrated the gospel. His ministry authenticated His Messiahship and it also attracted large crowds. I think there is something else very significant in this passage for us this morning. God wants us to learn a significant lesson about faith from Bartimaeus.

Let’s take a quick look at Bartimaeus. His name is a combination of two words: Bar, which means son, and Timaeus, which comes from the Hebrew word, tame, which means unclean. His name literally means son of uncleanness. We do not know why Bartimaeus was given this horrible name. We don’t know if his father or mother was a Gentile, or if they had leprosy or some other condition that would warrant this name. Let’s look at the implications of this. He is blind, and this could have been a result of a disease or sin. Because of his blindness, he had no way of earning money, so he is poor and does the only thing he knows to do, which is to beg for money. Notice that this encounter with Jesus happens as they were leaving Jericho. Unclean people with leprosy, were not allowed in the towns, but had to live outside the city, usually in colonies. I believe if Bartimaeus would have been leprous, that would have been recorded in our text. But, he is the son of uncleanness, and he may have been outside the town because of his uncleanness. We find him sitting by the road. He was not part of the crowd that was following Jesus; he was sitting there on the outskirts of town waiting for people to come by and give him money. Bartimaeus is a poor beggar, is the son of uncleanness, is blind and dependent on others, and may have been a social outcast. It is no wonder that when he begins to call out to Jesus that the people around him tell him to shut up. They had no respect, regard, or value for this blind beggar.

As Jesus came by, Bartimaeus heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene. When he heard this, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.

(Mark 10:46-47) “When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

I want to look at several points before moving on. We don’t know all that Bartimaeus heard, but he did hear about Jesus. The name Jesus comes from the Hebrew word, Jehoshua (Strong’s H3091), which means Jehovah saves, or the Lord is Salvation.

Bartimaeus heard that Jesus the Nazarene was the one that the crowds were following. The Jews knew that the Messiah would come from Nazareth. In Matthew 2:23, we find that Jesus “came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: ‘He shall be called a Nazarene.’” In John 1:45, when Philip found Nathanael, he said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” So, Moses and other prophets had prophesied that the Messiah would come out of Nazareth.

(Matt 2:23) “and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

(John 1:45-46) “Philip *found Nathanael and *said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

Next, Bartimaeus calls out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” He has obviously heard that Jesus is the Son of David. The Jews believed knew that the Messiah would come from the lineage of David. In Isaiah 11:1, the prophet wrote that “there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.” In Psalm 89, Ethan prophesied, “I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant, I will establish your seed forever and build up your throne to all generations.”

(Is 11:1) “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.”

(Ps 89:3-4) “I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant, {4} I will establish your seed forever and build up your throne to all generations.” Selah.”

When Peter was preaching his sermon at Pentecost, there were Jews from all over the world listening. In Acts 2:30 he stated, “And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ...” Peter was quoting the prophecies from 2 Samuel 7:12, Psalm 89, and Psalm 132:11. These Jews that were listening understood the prophecies that the Messiah or Christ would come from the seed of David.

(Acts 2:29-30) “Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. {30} And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT *one* OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE,”

So, Bartimaeus HEARS that Jesus the Nazarene, the Son of David, was passing by and he called out to him repeatedly, “have mercy on me.” Bartimaeus knows that he is blind. Bartimaeus knows he is poor and cannot buy his way to heaven. Bartimaeus knows that he is the son of uncleanness, that he is a sinner, and his works will not get him to heaven. In light of all of this, something happened to Bartimaeus when he HEARD about Jesus. Bartimaeus HEARD and believed that Jesus was the Messiah, and he pleaded with Jesus to have mercy on him.

In Romans 10, Paul wrote that whoever believes in Jesus will not be disappointed, and that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Then, he asks some questions. “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent...So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word or rhema of Christ. Something ignited inside of Bartimaeus when he HEARD that Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of David, was passing by. Bartimaeus believed the report that he just heard.

(Rom 10:11-17) “For the Scripture says, “WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” {12} For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; {13} for “WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.” {14} How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? {15} How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!” {16} However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, “LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?” {17} So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

In Galatians 3:1-2 Paul addressed the Galatians about how they came to Christ. There were some false teachers who had come in and said that they had to practice the Law to be saved. So, Paul said to them, “This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?” When Paul preached to the Galatians, they heard and believed and were saved. It was hearing with faith. That is exactly what happened to Bartimaeus; he HEARD with faith. He believed and asked Jesus to have mercy on him.

(Gal 3:1-2) “You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed *as* crucified? {2} This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?”

2. True Faith is Persistent (Mark 10:48)

When Bartimaeus started crying out for Jesus, many were sternly telling him to be quiet. They told him to shut up. They gave him no respect. They gave him no opportunity. They essentially told him that he was unimportant and unworthy to be heard from. The devil likes to tell people that they are unworthy, unimportant, shameful, and unclean. But notice Bartimaeus’ response. When they told him to be quiet, he kept crying out all the more. True faith is persistent. True faith does not take no for an answer.

(Mark 10:48) “Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’”

We saw in Mark 7 that the Syrophenician woman whose daughter had an unclean spirit was persistent. Mark records that “she kept asking Him.” She was persistent in her request. When Jesus told her that the children needed to be satisfied first, and that it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs, she did not take offense; she kept persisting. She answered, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children’s crumbs.” She was not going to take no for an answer. She believed Jesus could heal her daughter and she was not going to stop for anything. Notice what Jesus did in response to her answer. He said to her, “Because of this answer, go; the demon has gone out of your daughter.”

(Mark 7:24-30) “Jesus got up and went away from there to the region of Tyre. And when He had entered a house, He wanted no one to know *of it*; yet He could not escape notice. {25} But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet. {26} Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophenician race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. {27} And He was saying to her, “Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” {28} But she answered and *said* to Him, “Yes, Lord, *but* even the dogs under the table feed on the children’s crumbs.” {29} And He said to her, “Because of this answer go; the demon has gone out of your daughter.” {30} And going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, the demon having left.”

In Luke 11, Jesus’ disciples asked Him to teach them to pray. He gave them the model prayer, and then followed up with a discussion on persistence. He gave a parable about a man that had a friend come to his house and he had nothing to set before him. So, he went to a neighbor at midnight and asked him to lend him three loaves of bread. The neighbor told him to stop bothering him because he was in bed. But, the man persisted in asking and because of that the neighbor got up and gave him the three loaves. Jesus was telling about the importance of being persistent in our prayers. He did not have to teach Bartimaeus or the Syrophenician woman; they were already persistent.

(Luke 11:5-8) “Then He said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; {6} for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; {7} and from inside he answers and says, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you *anything*.’ {8} I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him *anything* because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.”

Jesus followed that parable up with some exhortations and promises. He told His disciples to ask, and the verb tense is a continuous action, i.e. keep on asking. The promise is that if you keep on asking it will be given to you. Jesus then said to keep seeking and they will find, and to keep knocking and the door will be opened to them. Jesus wanted His disciples to know the importance of persistence.

(Luke 11:9-10) “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. {10} For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.”

In Luke 18, Jesus gave another parable to teach His disciples about persistence. He told about a widow that kept coming to a judge who did not fear God. She wanted legal protection, and he

was unwilling to give it to her at first. But this woman kept coming to him and bothering him, and he said, “yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.” The woman obtained her legal protection from an unrighteous judge because of her persistence. Notice how Jesus ended the parable. He said, “However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” True faith is persistent.

(Luke 18:1-8) “Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, {2} saying, "In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. {3} "There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.' {4} For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, {5} yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.'" {6} And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge *said; {7} now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? {8} I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”

3. True Faith Is Rewarded (Mark 10:49-52)

Bartimaeus heard, believed, and kept calling out to Jesus. He got Jesus’ attention, and Jesus told them to call Bartimaeus to come to Him. So they told him, “Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you.” True faith is rewarded. Bartimaeus’ faith is getting ready to get rewarded. Bartimaeus threw off his cloak, jumped up, and came to Jesus.

(Mark 10:49-50) “And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him *here*." So they *called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you." {50} Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus.”

Jesus answered Bartimaeus. What had Bartimaeus been crying out? He had cried out for Jesus to have mercy on him, and do Jesus answered him, saying, “What do you want Me to do for you?” That was the question the Holy Spirit asked me that day in my blue Nissan truck. My family had a need for a bigger house. Bartimaeus’ need was for his sight, so he said, “Rabboni, I want to regain my sight!” Jesus said to him, “Go, your faith has made you well.” Immediately Bartimaeus regained his sight and began following Jesus on the road.

(Mark 10:51-52) “And answering him, Jesus said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" And the blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, *I want* to regain my sight!" {52} And Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and *began* following Him on the road.”

In Hebrews 11, we learn that “he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. Bartimaeus heard of Jesus the Nazarene, the Son of David, and he believed that He is the Messiah. He persisted in crying out to Jesus to have mercy on him. He also believed that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. Bartimaeus was going to keep persisting until he got his reward, which he got. Jesus immediately healed him of his blindness.

(Heb 11:6) “And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”

4. True Faith Follows Jesus (Mark 10:52)

Bartimaeus immediately received his sight. His faith had been rewarded. Notice what Bartimaeus began to do; he began to follow Jesus. True faith follows Jesus. Jesus told people that if they wanted to be His disciple they needed to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him. That is what Bartimaeus begins to do.

(Mark 10:52) “And Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and *began* following Him on the road.”

(Luke 9:23) “And He was saying to *them* all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”

I come across a lot of people who tell me that they are Christians. When I ask them where they go to church, they tell me that they don’t go to church. If I ask them what God is teaching them, they don’t know. There are lots of people who think that they said a prayer and that they are now saved. Jesus said, if you want to come after Me, you have to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Me. The word Christian, was first used at the church of Antioch, and it means a follower of Christ. It is only used three times in the New Testament. The three most used words would be disciple, believer, and saint. Disciple, which means a learner, is used 269 times. There are many people who say they are Christians, but are not following Christ, and are not learning the ways of Christ. We learn about Christ by spending time with the Lord in His word, in prayer, and actively fellowshiping with other disciples in a Bible-teaching church. Bartimaeus had true faith, and began to follow after Jesus.

(Acts 11:26) “and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”

Conclusion and Applications

As we come to a close this morning, I want to go back to Mark 10:17-31, where Jesus has an encounter with the rich, young, ruler. This young man had everything that Bartimaeus did not have. He had money, a lot of money. He had position and status; he was a ruler in the synagogue. He had the outward appearance of being righteous. He did not have a name that suggested that he was the son of uncleanness or sin. He had everything, but this man went away grieving when Jesus told him to sell everything, give to the poor and come follow Him.

(Mark 10:21-22) “Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, “One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” {22} But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.”

Bartimaeus was a poor man, who was begging for bread. Bartimaeus had no position or status. Bartimaeus was the son of uncleanness and he was blind. What a contrast! But, Bartimaeus went away full of joy and began to follow Jesus. He had no possessions to sell. Likewise, he had no idol standing in the way of following Jesus. Jesus said to His disciples, How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!”

In John 9, we have the account of another blind man being healed. The Pharisees were furious about this man's healing, and they threw him out of the synagogue. When Jesus heard that they had put him out, He searched and found him. He asked the man if he believed in the Son of Man, and he said, "Lord, I believe." And the man began worshiping Jesus. There were some Pharisees there that heard Jesus, and Jesus told them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin, but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

(John 9:35-41) "Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" {36} He answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" {37} Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." {38} And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him. {39} And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." {40} Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" {41} Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

Bartimaeus was poor, and he had nothing keeping him from following Jesus. Bartimaeus was blind, but he saw his spiritual condition. He saw that he needed God's mercy and forgiveness in his life. He saw that he needed a Savior.

What about you this morning? Have you heard the gospel message? Do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah? Do you believe that He was born of a virgin, was crucified, and was raised from the dead on the third day? Have you asked God to have mercy on you? Have you asked Him to take away your spiritual blindness and your sins? This morning, if that is the desire of your heart, pray with me right now.

Father God, I believe that Jesus is the Son of David, the Son of God, the Messiah. I believe that You sent Him to take away the sins of the world. I believe that You sent Him to take away my sins and to open my eyes. Jesus, I ask You to have mercy on me and to come into my life. Jesus, I want to come after You and follow You. I want to be Your disciple. I confess You as my Lord and Savior this morning. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

There may be some of you this morning that believe and have received Christ, but you have not been following Jesus. The church at Ephesus believed and were persevering, but they had left their first love. They were not following Jesus. They looked religious, but their hearts were far from the Lord. This morning, if you are a believer, but have not been following Jesus, I want to invite you to pray with me.

Father God, I do believe that Jesus is the Messiah. I ask You to have mercy on me and forgive me for not following You. I ask You to forgive me for not loving you with all my heart. Lord, this is the start of a new year, and I want a new start in my journey with You. Help me to persevere. Create in me a clean heart, O God (Ps 51:10-12). Renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take the Holy Spirit from me. Cleanse me and fill me with Your Spirit. Lord, I commit myself to spending time with You, in Your presence, reading, praying, and worshiping You. Help me to love You with all my heart and to follow You this year. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Q & A

Introduction (Mark 10:46-52)

1. **Faith Comes By Hearing** (Mark 10:46-47, Matt 2:23, John 1:45-46, Is 11:1, Ps 89:3-4, Acts 2:29-30, 2 Sam 7:12, Ps 132:11, Rom 10:11-17, Gal 3:1-2)
2. **True Faith Is Persistent** (Mark 10:48, 7:24-30, Luke 11:5-8, 9-10, Luke 18:1-8)
3. **True Faith Is Rewarded** (Mark 10:49-52, Heb 11:6)
4. **True Faith Follows Jesus** (Mark 10:52, Luke 9:23, Acts 11:26)

Conclusion and Applications (Mark 10:21-22, John 9:35-41, Ps 51:10-12)