

## Serve the Savior You See – Mark 10:46-52

If you want to do something, it helps to visualize it beforehand. When you build something, you have an architect sketch out what it'll look like. When you plan your future job or life in retirement, you visualize what it is you're shooting for. We need to have that picture in front of us so we know what it is we're going for. If we didn't have that visual picture, our efforts would probably be misguided or go the wrong way. In this morning's Gospel, we see a blind man named Bartimaeus who did not let his lack of vision stop him from going after Jesus. Although he had probably never seen Jesus, Bartimaeus wouldn't let anything stop him from getting to Jesus. Once Jesus brought his sight back, Bartimaeus would serve the Savior he saw by joyfully following him. In the same way, we serve the Savior we see with the eyes of faith and joyfully follow him too.

To be blind in Bible times was a big deal. There weren't eye surgeons who could remove cataracts or do Lasik. There weren't ramps into every public building or a welfare system for the disabled. To be blind in these days meant that you had to live off the generosity of your family and strangers. As Jesus goes through Jericho on his way to Jerusalem for Palm Sunday, we come across the blind beggar Bartimaeus. He was on the roadside, where the people were, begging for money. He had his cloak spread out before him to gather the coins of the people's generosity. And at the end of the day he would gather his cloak up, pocket his money, and make his way back to wherever he slept. This was Bartimaeus' routine day in and day out and everyone who passed by on that roadside knew who he was. This is how it would continue everyday until one day when the crowds would notice Bartimaeus' absence because he would be too frail to make it out one last time. Can you imagine the hopelessness or despair that Bartimaeus must have felt? Knowing that this was what his life would be like until he died?

Can you imagine the joy Bartimaeus must have felt when he heard that Jesus was passing through town? Everyone knew Jesus could heal people and do miracles. They had seen Jesus cast out demons, feed 5,000 people with only a few loaves and fish, and heal countless people who should have been disabled all their lives. It is no surprise that there was a large crowd in Jericho that day following Jesus. And when Bartimaeus found out that Jesus was in town, he cried out “**Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!**” If you notice, Bartimaeus called Jesus the **Son of David**. This was a big deal because to call someone the Son of David was the same as calling them the promised Messiah whom the Jewish people had been

waiting for thousands of years. And yet, the crowds tried to keep Bartimaeus quiet. But nothing could hold back Bartimaeus' one hope to regain his sight and to meet his Savior. So he shouted all the louder, **"Son of David, have mercy on me!"** And guess what? Jesus heard Bartimaeus' faithful cry for help and had Bartimaeus come forward. The crowds eagerly passed on the word, lifting up Bartimaeus' spirits telling him **"Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you."** And when Bartimaeus heard the news, he did just that. With a heart more cheerful than what it had been for years, he jumped to his feet, left his cloak behind, and ran to his Savior with the help of the crowd. Not just because he believed that Jesus would save him from his physical blindness. But also because he believed that Jesus would save him from his spiritual blindness.

Did you notice how Bartimaeus dropped everything and left his cloak behind so he could go to Jesus while he was near? That cloak would have been one of the few possessions Bartimaeus had. It would have been near impossible for Bartimaeus to get it back if he would have stayed blind. But that did not concern Bartimaeus one bit. He believed in Jesus so much that he didn't let something as simple as a cloak keep him from going to Jesus while he was near. He had nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Imagine you were blind like Bartimaeus. Would you be willing to lose one of your only possessions so you could go to Jesus while he was near? When we consider how difficult the times were for disabled people, I think we would say yes. But bring it to today's time. If you heard at the last minute that Jesus was passing through Tucson, would you drop everything to go see him? I'm guessing we would in general say yes. It isn't normal to see Jesus in the flesh walking around Tucson. But you know what? We don't have to wait for Jesus to be here walking around. He is already here. Ruling in our hearts through faith. All around us protecting us with his angels. But most clearly and most importantly he is here, in the Bible. You don't have to wait for Jesus to come to Tucson on a preaching tour. You can simply open your Bible and listen to God's Word wherever it is preached.

I'm willing to bet that all of us have a Bible at home and could get it open in 30 seconds or so. But I ask you this. When was the last time you read your Bible or a devotional book at home? When was the last time you listened to a sermon on the radio or a podcast on your way to work? When was the last time you turned down the extra shift or the live sports game so you could listen to Jesus instead? I truly

enjoy seeing you all here this morning because you dropping everything and coming to Jesus. But we can come to Jesus more often than just in church! We can come to him in our homes and our commute.

Our lives get so busy at home. Whether it's my own life or when I call to set up appointments, I realize how there just isn't enough time in the day to do everything we want. We need to rush off to work, do the errands, pick up the kids, get our prescriptions, or take time for ourselves. We are in fact so busy that not only do we fail to read our Bibles at home, we're ashamed at how dusty they are. We're embarrassed that we don't have time for home devotions or one of the many Bible studies offered at Grace.

But our problem isn't the lack of time. It's that we don't make the time. We think that we have all the stuff we do here is so important that we don't have the time for God's Word. But I ask you, what good is your 401k if your eternal golden years may not be in heaven? What good is your beautiful house if the Word of God doesn't shine through your windows? What good is your body if your soul is crumbling away? My brothers and sisters, it is God's Word that makes all things meaningful and worthwhile. It is the forgiveness of sins that allows us to have hope and peace in this life. It is the sure promise of heaven that gives us life after we pass away. Bartimaeus knew how important Christ is and he dropped everything so he could go to Jesus while he was near. When we hold the possessions and cares of this world above our Savior, we are the opposite of Bartimaeus. We are like a blind beggar who clutches his cloak for security rather than who rushes to Jesus so we may see again.

But let me tell you, we don't need to hold onto our cloaks or possessions for security. We can let them go and trust in God because he has come to us in our blindness. From the moment we are born, we spiritually blind. And to illustrate this, I'm going to ask you all to open and close your eyes at various times. If you don't want that, that's okay. But if you're willing to play along with me, I want you to close both of your eyes now. This is how we are by birth – completely and spiritually blind. We cannot see God because our souls are entirely corrupted by the darkness of sin. But when the Holy Spirit invades our hearts with God's Word for the first time, then we can see. Open both your eyes now. Isn't it nicer to see? This happened for many of us at our baptisms or when a dear Christian spoke God's Word to us for the first time. And whenever we immerse in God's Word and apply it to our hearts, both of our eyes are open. We can see clearly without any

spiritual blindness. But when we leave church and go back to our regular lives, God's Word quickly goes to the back of our minds. When this happens, we're walking around with only one eye open. So now, close just one eye. You can still see, but not entirely. You are still a Christian, but your trust in your Savior has become subconscious. You go about your life, but it's to serve you instead of your Savior. Now this may be an obvious question, but how would you like to live life? With one eye open or with both eyes? Of course with both eyes so you can see everything. So open both of your eyes. See your Savior who gives you spiritual sight and go to him.

When Bartimaeus asked to see again, he did so trusting in Jesus' power. He called him the Son of David, the promised Messiah who would save him not only from blindness but also from his sins. We have seen how Jesus did just that in the Bible. How Jesus would die on the cross for our sins. While he was on the cross complete darkness came across the land, dark dark in fact, when it should have been shining instead. But that sad darkness would end at the first light of Easter morning when the women found the empty tomb. We have seen how Jesus rose from the dead so he could give us life and the complete forgiveness of all our sins no matter how horrible they may be.

Do you want to live life with both eyes open? Then keep your eyes on Jesus and come to him in the Word. Make time to open your Bibles at home, listen to sermons however you do, read a devotional book, and keep coming to church and Bible studies. Do all this asking Jesus to help you see. To see your Savior who has come to you in your spiritual blindness. To see your Savior who has given you spiritual sight. To see your Savior in everything you do in life as you give glory to him. Serve the Savior you see by following him and encouraging others to follow him. Serve the Savior you see and trust that he is indeed the Son of David. Amen.