

The calling of blind Bartimaeus. (Quality: good)

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[0 : 00] As the Lord may be pleased to help us, we will turn to Mark chapter 10, reading verses 49 and 50.

The Gospel according to Mark, chapter 10, verses 49 and 50. And Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called.

And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee.

And he, casting away his garment, rose and came to Jesus. What a sad plight this poor man was in.

He was not only blind, but because he was, he was compelled to beg. He could not earn a living.

[1 : 26] His infirmity was such that he was incapable of doing that. And therefore he had no alternative but to sit there in the highway by the side of the road begging.

Begging, begging, asking people to give him something. Some money, probably, with which he could buy the necessary things of life, food in particular.

And I say, what a sad plight he was in. How he had to rely upon his hearing.

He had his hearing. That was a blessing. Sight, hearing, the senses and the faculties with which God has blessed us.

Why, what great blessings they are. And how true that sometimes they have to be impaired, if not removed from us, before we begin to value them.

[2 : 46] Oh, that we could value the blessings we have, my friends, while we have them. We shall not always have them. And so, we can picture, in our mind's eye, this blind beggar sitting there.

And hearing the commotion, I suppose, footsteps, perhaps the rustle or movement of clothes, and certainly I feel the voices of people passing by.

Who was it passing by? A great number of people. A great number of people. Well, he made an inquiry.

Who was this passing by? And as I believe is recorded elsewhere, the answer was given him. Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

What a great thing for Jesus to pass by. To come near us. The Lord Jesus, you know, went near, as well as through villages and towns, such as when he took his last journey to Jerusalem to be crucified.

[4 : 17] And the people would not receive him. But you know, the kingdom of heaven came very close to them. And was it not his disciples whom he instructed to, his ministers, his servants rather, to, he instructed them to tell these people who would not hear them, that there was no doubt that the kingdom of heaven was come nigh unto them.

As we might say, so near and yet so far. How solemn. So near and yet so far.

And indeed, whilst we love to think of the Lord Jesus passing by, the solemn thing, if he really passes us by, doesn't bless us.

Mind you, if you are praying for him to bless you, he won't pass you by. He won't ignore you. He'll come to you sooner or later.

As he came to this poor blind man. And he stood still, did Jesus. Which seems to signify much.

[5 : 46] The Lord Jesus to stand still, just for the sake of a beggar, a blind beggar. As though everything can stop.

You see, as though everything can stop for the sake of a poor blind beggar. Doesn't this show how the Lord cares for such?

And has compassion upon such? And pities their infirmities? Pities them? That's how it is, my friends.

And a mercy it is for you and me. That the Lord has compassion. Now as soon as this poor blind beggar heard that it was Jesus, he began to cry out.

And say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. Have mercy on me.

[6 : 48] Is this your prayer? Is it your daily prayer? That the mercy of God really sums up all your desires, all your need, your whole case.

That if the Lord have mercy on you, then it will be well with your soul. But if he should not, it never could be well with their souls.

But remember this, in this connection, the Lord delights in mercy. That means he delights to have mercy, to exercise mercy upon those who cry to him for it.

Where do we read, for example, in the whole word of God, that God delights in anger and in wrath? Of course, mention is made in his word of those two things.

Both the wrath of man and also the wrath of God. But have you never noticed this, that God is reluctant to exercise wrath?

[7 : 57] He holds back his wrath until he can no longer do so. And then it is poured out upon the wicked.

My friends, whilst he is slow to anger, he is quick to have mercy upon poor sinners.

He doesn't delight in anger. You see, there's so much in God's word warning us to keep away from the angry man.

But there is more hope of a fool than an angry man. Now that alone teaches us that the Lord doesn't take delight in such things as anger and wrath.

And therefore, do we read that he is slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and truth and redemption? There's no doubt about it, dear friends.

[9 : 03] Even if you have doubts about it, there's no doubt about it really that the Lord loves to have mercy upon sinners. He never turns one away.

He never says to a guilty, repenting, coming sinner, be gone. He never says to such, I never knew you because he does know these.

He knows every one of them. The Lord knoweth them that trust in him. Does that mean that he knows you and knows me?

I do hope so. In fact, I believe. I believe it is so. we seek his mercy. Mercy is the sum total of our pleas if we're taught of God.

And it can never be a vain thing. It can never be an unsuccessful plea, my friends, when we plead the mercy of God.

[10 : 09] But now notice this. Many charged him that he should hold his peace. They said, in effect, be quiet, be silent.

I don't want to read in this what is not there. But they charged him to hold his peace. Now that simply means be quiet, hold your peace, hold your tongue, be silent.

Suggestive of this, that they thought that the Lord had more important things on hand, more important things for him to do than to take notice of this crying blind beggar.

But you see, the more they charged him to hold his peace, the more he cried. he cried, he cried the more a great deal. Though son of David, have mercy on me.

Friends, does the enemy try to silence you? Do some charge you to be quiet, to hold your peace?

[11 : 25] What effect does it have upon you? Do you say very well, I will then, I will comply with your request, this blind man didn't speak like that.

It seems that the more they tried to silence him, the less they were able to do so, and therefore the more he cried a great deal, though son of David, have mercy on me.

Now at this juncture we find that Jesus stood still, and he stood still for this poor blind beggar.

He stood still, as though everything must stop to bless, to cure that poor sinner and to grant him his request, that he might receive his sight, that he might have his petition granted.

I do feel as much in this. Jesus stood, and the dying martyr Stephen looked into the open heavens shortly before he was stoned to death, and he saw the Lord Jesus standing, standing.

[12 : 44] it makes us feel this, that he was looking upon his dying servant Stephen, and waiting to receive him, not only receive him, but to welcome him into heaven.

It is not that these words were used in his case, but they were in another, although it is true of Stephen, as in the case of the other. Today shalt thou be with me, in paradise.

How wonderful. Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, be of good comfort.

Now they've changed their attitude now, haven't they? Instead of trying to silence him, they say, be of good comfort. How quickly the Lord can change enemies into friends.

Alas, that so often friends take on the appearance and the attitude of an enemy. Of an enemy.

[14 : 03] Be that as it may, we do well to remember this, that when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Now notice this next. The Lord Jesus did not call him by name or call him in a personal way, but gave commandment for him to be called.

He gave commandment for him to be called. And they call, saying he calleth. So that impersonal command really amounted to a personal one, a direct one.

They call the blind man, saying he calleth thee. Surely there's much by way of teaching and instruction in this.

For example, their minds go to John chapter four, the woman out of the city who was a sinner and a great sinner. How after the Lord had wondrously convinced her of her sin and blessed her soul, given her of that water of life, why she went into the city, as you know, and said to the men, come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did.

[15 : 37] Is not this the Christ? Now what effect did that have upon the men? By the woman's testimony, they believed in Jesus, that he was the Savior, the promised Messiah, the light of the world, who, if a man follow him, that man shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

But others believed after they had come to him, and their testimony was, now we believe, not because of thy words, not because of the words of the woman, but because we have seen him ourselves, and we too, this is what it amounts to, we too can testify that this is the Christ, the promised Savior.

Now, you see, there were some who did not receive that personal touch, that personal command, or that personal word.

It was through the woman, but it amounted to the same thing. They, they called a blind man, saying unto him, be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee.

Let it be remembered that at this stage he was still blind, as he was when he cast away his garment, rose up and came to Jesus.

[17 : 21] He was still blind. He hadn't yet received his sight. Now, be of good comfort. Where does good comfort come from?

Who are those who need it? Poor sinners need good comfort. This man could not get any comfort, could he? He must have been pleased and thankful when someone was kind enough to stop and give him something he needed, but he still retained his blindness.

However much was given him, he was still blind. He was still in need of begging. He was still dependent upon the arms of others and their generosity.

It didn't cure him of his blindness to receive a few coins. No. He did not put him in the position where he was no longer a beggar.

They might give him a lot of money, but so long as he was blind, he would be a beggar, needy, needing mercy, needing the Lord's gracious touch, needing this call.

[18 : 42] Be of good comfort, said they to him. Rise, rise. He was sitting then, sitting, yes, sitting there and waiting and hoping.

Now he's begging in a different way. He's begging that the Lord would have mercy upon him. Yes, the two ways of begging then, he had to beg for the necessities of life, now he begs for the Lord to have mercy upon him.

Now these beggars are the ones for whom there is ordained heavenly consolation and divine comfort. Do you spend many an uncomfortable day, dear friends, because of your sins, because of the burden of sin, because of temptation, because of your weakness, because of your wretchedness, your state as a sinner?

You know, if we are never uncomfortable within, how shall we come to receive that comfort which comes from God only?

You see, this divine comfort is for certain characters. There's no question about this. Certain characters, certain types of people, certain persons, not for all.

[20 : 23] Who amongst this crowd accompanying the Lord Jesus, cried for mercy, as this blind beggar did. They weren't blind. They were not begging.

They could earn their own living. And in a sense that this poor blind beggar needed mercy, they did not. No, they weren't in a position to be comforted.

Do we read of these being called? Do we read that Jesus stopped on their behalf? No, he stopped on his behalf.

Be of good comfort. Good comfort comes from God, my friends. He's the God of all comfort. There is heavenly comfort, divine comfort for you for uncomfortable or dis comforted sinners.

You who can get no rest in your souls, you who cry day and night unto him, he bears long with you, or you say to him, Lord, when wilt thou come to me?

[21 : 35] When wilt thou answer my petition? When wilt thou take my case up and deal with it? When wilt thou show mercy to me?

When shall I know the pardon of my sins? When shall I be shown infallibly and in such a persuasive and convincing manner that my heaven is made secure for me through the offering once for all of thy dear son, Jesus Christ?

These are blessings you want. These are things you seek, dear friends. No, you're not comfortable in your soul. The fact that you are a praying person doesn't afford you very much comfort.

I'll tell you what will when you get answers, answers of peace. When the Lord looks upon you and smiles, gives you to feel and believe that your sins, which are many, are all forgiven.

This is your comfort, isn't it? The Holy Ghost is the comforter of poor sinners. Is he your comforter?

[22 : 58] Does he draw near to you at times? And with his still small voice whisper in your ear, saying to you, fear not, for I am with thee, saying to you, perhaps, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

There's no comfort like that which comes from God. No, next, this man must rise. He mustn't stay where he is. He must rise. He must get up.

because of this divine and effectual calling, he must rise. And he, casting away his garment, rose and came to Jesus.

It's remarkable that he didn't go to someone else, because he couldn't see. But he came to Jesus. You see, the Lord says, I will leave the blind by a way which they knew not, in paths that they have not known.

These things will I do unto them and will not forsake them. It's a wonderful thing that the person knowing he is blind is for all that effectively called by the Lord Jesus and effectively comes to the Lord Jesus and doesn't go elsewhere.

[24 : 34] isn't this amazing? Who is blind but my servant? But my servant. All the blindness that we poor men are so continually conscious of and weakness and ignorance, sometimes not knowing what to do, and yet the Lord leads.

He doesn't mislead, he leads the blind. He doesn't lead those you see who have light and wisdom and worldly prudence and so on.

in fact, the Lord doesn't reveal these heavenly things to such, but he reveals them to babes, to the blind, to the poor, to the needy, to the ignorant.

He gives strength, my friends, to the weak, so that out of weakness they are made strong. Now he, casting away his garment, this would of course mean his outer garment, and you know, putting it plainly, he couldn't have been very smart, he wasn't a well-dressed man, how could he have been?

I feel he must have been somewhat in rags and tatters, perhaps dirty garments, soil, after all he was sitting, sitting, I suppose, upon some dusty roadside or bank, those parts are very dusty as a rule, when the rain comes in a monsoon, it is soon a sea of mud, however he was sitting.

[26 : 39] Now he must cast away his garment, cast it away. why did he do this? Was he told to do it? No, he wasn't told to do this.

Why did he not come to the Lord Jesus with that garment of his on? Surely there's something of a spiritual nature here, dear friends.

he seems to set forth the filthy rags of our righteousnesses. I'm not going to say our unrighteousnesses.

We take it for granted such are filthy, but then so are our righteousnesses as filthy rags. There's a lot to be cast away before sinners effectually and savingly come to Christ.

Cast away. What have you lost, dear friends? What have you lost? Was it not David who said like this, that God forbid I should give him or offer him that which cost me nothing?

[28 : 01] That which cost me nothing? What about Cain and Abel, by the way? Both made an offering to God by way of sacrifice or simply an offering, the one of the firstlings of his flock.

The other, the fruits of the ground, that which grew out of the ground. There's no blood in that that could be shed, but there was in the animal taken from the flock.

All typical, you see, of the great, the one, the once for all sacrifice of Christ on behalf of poor sinners, making that blood, as it were, a way for the ransomed to pass over, to be acceptable to God and accepted by him that he should be well pleased in them because of that offering of his own dear son, casting away his garment.

I say, what have we lost? Was there a day when you thought yourself so good, so righteous?

You were puffed up with pride? You thought there was no one to match you? You were head and shoulders above the rest? And you liked to be looked upon by man?

[29 : 43] Oh, this dreadful pride, this abominable pride, my friends. You see, one in the condition of the blind beggar could hardly be charged with this pride.

What had he got to be proud of? Just look at it simply, very, very simply. What had he got to be proud of?

His appearance? No. Had he been, he wouldn't have cast away his garment. he must have been ashamed, ashamed. He must have realized, perhaps all of a sudden, what he might look like to the Lord Jesus.

He dare not come to the Lord Jesus with his garment. He must cast it one side. There is a lot in this, isn't there?

speaking for myself, I'm sure I have a lot that needs to be cast aside yet. And I believe we shall have right until the end of their lives to have somewhat that needs to be cast away.

[30 : 59] And he casting away his garment. what did the Lord Jesus once say to his hearers?

Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

What does that teach us? It teaches us first that there is a righteousness infinitely superior to our own, if we had any, I say if we had any, infinitely superior to that of Saul of Tarsus of the Pharisees who were so particular, so very particular concerning such things as clean hands and clean plates from which they might eat.

not knowing what they were within. Rottenness, putrefaction, outwardly like whitewashed sepulchres, but very different within.

You see, God looketh upon the heart, as well as the outside appearance. But man looketh on the outward appearance, God looketh upon the heart.

[32 : 28] And if you are conscious that God has looked upon you, if you are conscious, my friends, of being a guilty sinner before a holy God, you'll have some thoughts about your garments.

You'll have some solemn thoughts as to how you really appear in God's sight, as to how he regards you, as to what respect he has for you.

He casting away his garments. You see, air garments must go, as it were, to make way for that glorious, perfect robe of the righteousness of Christ.

Notice that the righteousness of Christ is not put over their filthy garments. garments. Their filthy garments must go. Or shall we put it like this, for the sake of simplicity, there must be confession of sin.

There must, my friends, be this telling of everything to the Lord, confessing all, like the woman who, when she knew that she was not hid or could not be hid, she fell at Christ's feet and told him everything, told him all.

[33 : 58] And you see, then she had that wonderful word from Christ, like this poor blind man did, when he was about to receive his sight, or had rather, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole.

And that dear woman who touched the hem of his garment, you see, until she had touched, heavenly virtue did not flow from Christ to her, in order to heal her, to effect that cure, she so much stood in need of, and had so long been hoping for, but in vain until she touched the hem of Christ's garment.

he casting away his garment, casting away, we must cast away, the Lord hates to put away.

Friends, have you been brought to this place of casting away your garment, of saying, as it were, get thee hence, thou art an offence unto me.

Divine grace brings this to pass, but nothing but divine grace in its effects and operations upon the soul. I had to confess to my own little people only last evening, that even now, even now, my friends, if there should be presented to me at the same time, that which is abominable and that which is holy.

[35 : 45] If left of God, I would every time choose the unholy, the abominable. It's my nature so to do. Now, what can affect the most needful change?

What can cause me, my friends, and you too, to choose that which is good and to refuse the evil? It is divine grace, nothing else.

It's a sad confession to have to make in public, but it's a true one. It's a true one. I would not deceive you or mislead you.

That is how bad I am. And you see, my fallen nature is still at enmity with God, and I still have in me a wicked and a deceitful heart, desperately wicked and deceitful above all things.

Who can know it for what it is, for the depths of iniquity and sin in the human heart? What a mercy then if God has brought us to be willing, to be willing, to be anxious, most anxious to cast away all that which is an offence unto him, not to harbour the accursed thing, much less, my friends, to stand before him as we really are, I mean apart from his beloved son standing between as their mediator, as the one who stands in garments dyed in blood.

[37 : 33] God stands between you and God when you approach to him.

Next, we read that he rose. He cast away his garment first, then he rose. He didn't rise first and then cast away his garment which seems to teach this.

these garments really are answerable to that which we read of elsewhere about sinners covering themselves with thick clay, laden with thick clay.

Clay is very heavy as you know, very, very heavy indeed. sin is a heavy thing. It seems to me that he must cast away his garment first in order to be able to rise.

And if he should rise in coming to Christ with his garment on, it will be an awful hindrance to him. I'm not suggesting this because this would be wrong to suppose that we are to be rid of their sin before we come to Christ because we have to come to Christ in order to be rid of sin.

[39 : 00] And we might say in this case that his sin is indicated by his blindness. He was still blind. So he comes to Christ for sight, for healing, for mercy.

But in doing so, he first casts away his garment and then he's in a position to rise. And once risen, he's in the position to come to Jesus.

There's a wonderful order here. We do well to observe it, to remember it in our petitions, to remember it in the way, as the way in which the Lord, usually, as a general rule, blesses his people.

This is so, my friends. Now he rose. What a wonderful word we have, I believe, in Isaiah. Rise, shine, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

There's something of that here, surely. Rise, shine, shine. This man later on was to be a radiant man, setting forth, I'm sure, the wonders of the Son of God in his gracious and merciful dealings with him.

[40 : 28] He was to show forth the praises of his God, listen, who had brought him out of darkness into his marvelous light. And now he was to let his light so shine that men may see his good works and glorify his Father which is in heaven.

He rose, he rose. There is a proper sitting still. We learn of that in the book of Ruth, sit still my daughter, and so on.

But there is also a proper rising up and a following, a following, a coming to Christ and a following of Christ.

Christ. No, he came to Jesus. He came to Jesus. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, says Jesus.

They shall come to me. They shall. Nothing shall prevent them. Others crying out, trying to cause them to hold their peace, shall all be of no avail whatever.

[41 : 40] Wasted breath, vain, futile effort, says Christ himself. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.

Every one of them, every one of them, great or small, every one of them, they shall come to me.

My friends, nothing can prevent this. No one can prevent this. The enemy of souls cannot prevent this. And the Lord himself will see to it, that those the Father gave to him shall come to him.

And says he further, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out, in no circumstances whatever, however black, however vile, however filthy and corrupt, says he, I will in no wise cast out.

What a mercy. Now if that's true, and dare we question the truth of it, seeing that the word is spoken by him who cannot lie, for God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent.

[42 : 58] Now that's true, therefore, and it shall be made effectual in sinners coming to Christ. this poor man, he came to Jesus.

He came to Jesus. In a sense, he came to Jesus as he was blind, as he was a beggar, as he was in need of mercy.

That's how he came, but without his own garment. Now, before we close, we must say something else, and that is this.

You will remember where we started our reading in verse 32. They were in the way going up to Jerusalem.

In the way. This man, after he had received his sight, followed Jesus in the way, going up to Jerusalem.

[44 : 07] Verse 32, again, Jesus went before them, and they followed. Here again, Jesus went before this man, because we read he followed Jesus in the way, blessed, healed, his prayer answered, the mercy he sought granted to him.

It would be a very strange thing if after being thus blessed and receiving his petition, receiving his sight, that he would not follow Jesus in the way.

Sad thing when sinners are blessed, but they hold back from following Jesus in the way.
Very sad thing. is this thy kindness to thy friend?

You know where that word comes from, don't you? In the Old Testament, book of Samuel, I believe, I think the second book of Samuel, but however, what a word.

Is this thy kindness to thy friend, the one who has had compassion upon you, blessed you with divine life, a hope of glory, the forgiveness of sins, the love of God shed abroad in your heart, gracious help, merciful appearances, plentiful provision, the hope of heaven, a place in heaven?

[45 : 44] Is this thy kindness to thy friend? He followed Jesus. You see, the Lord Jesus is our forerunner, the captain of our salvation, made perfect through sufferings.

Are we following him, or are we not following him? The Lord Jesus says, you know, follow me.

He doesn't say to all, to whom he says that, for I will make you fishers of men, but he does to his servants, but he still says to his people, follow me, follow me.

Well, may we follow him, my friends. Because you see, they followed him in the way going up to Jerusalem.

I'm thinking here of the new Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem, or the heavenly Canaan. How do sinners get to glory by following Jesus in the way, in the way everlasting, in the way of life, in the way of righteousness, in the path of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

[47 : 06] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.