Research on: Healing of Blind Bartimaeus

Mark 10:46-52

“Notice in this passage the striking contrast: on the one hand, a great multitude; on the other, one lowly individual, as low in the social scale as a person could get, as near to a social cipher as possible, a blind beggar. It is tremendously impressive to see Jesus turn his attention from the many to the one. No crowd was ever big enough to blind him or render him deaf. His was not only an amazingly sensitive ear and eye; there is evidence of something deeper: the priority he gave to persons, to any person, at the point of need” (*IB 7.819*).

“Remember that Jesus was now on His last journey to Jerusalem. That night He would sleep at Bethany; Calvary was but a week off. He had paused to win Zacchaeus, and now He has resumed His march to His Cross. Popular enthusiasm is surging round Him, and for the first time He does not try to repress it. A shouting multitude are escorting Him out of the city. They have just passed the gates, and are in the act of turning towards the mountain gorge through which runs the Jerusalem road. A long file of beggars is sitting, as beggars do still in Eastern cities, outside the gate, well accustomed to lift their monotonous wail at the sound of passing footsteps. Bartimaeus is amongst them. He asks, according to Luke, what is the cause of the bustle, and is told that ‘Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.’ The name wakes strange hopes in him, which can only be accounted for by his knowledge of Christ’s miracles done elsewhere. It is a witness to their notoriety that they had filtered down to be the talk of beggars at city gates. And so, true to his trade, he cries, ‘Jesus . . . have mercy upon me!’” (MacLaren’s Expositions, www.biblehub.com).

46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.

“Jericho had been rebuilt by Herod the Great as the location of his winter palace, and by the time of this incident it was a place of great beauty. It was five miles west of the Jordan and a little more than fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem. The sight of a blind beggar just outside the city gates would be a common experience” (*AB Mark* 421).

“Matthew says there were two. Mark mentions but one, though he does not deny that there was another. He mentions this man because he was well known—Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus” (Barnes 168).

*Blind* in Greek is *typhlos* and means blind; mentally blind; to raise a smoke or darkened by smoke (Thayer 5185).

47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

**Cry out**. In Greek is *krazo* which means “cry out aloud, speak with a loud voice, entreat, scream” (Strong’s 2896, www.blueletterbible.org).

With this name for Jesus, the blind man meant “Messiah, or Christ” (Barnes 94).

“They learned who he was by inquiring. They heard a noise, and asked who it was. They had doubtless heard much of his fame, but had never before been where he was, and probably would not be again. They were therefore more earnest in calling upon him” (Barnes 94).

“In the insistent cries of Bartimaeus we can hear a man saying over and over to himself, ‘here’s my chance.’ Of course nothing could stop him. He was jumping at the chance of a lifetime. Probably it was the venture of desperation, more of a wild hope than of any considered faith. But it was hope acted upon. Jesus is here” (*IB* 7.820).

48 And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

**Charged** in Greek is *eptimao* which means “to admonish, to forbid, to censure, rebuke” (Strong’s 2008, [www.blueletterbible.org)](http://www.blueletterbible.org)).

**Hold his peace** in Greek is *siopao* which means “be silent, hold one’s peace, used of one’s silence; hush; properly to mute; involuntary stillness or inability to speak; to be dumb” (Strong’s 4623, [www.blueletterbible.org)](http://www.blueletterbible.org)).

“The crowd (they were pilgrims going up to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover) did not appreciate Bartimaeus’ loud shouting and tried to silence him, but he shouted all the more. Why they wanted him to keep quiet is not clear. Perhaps the title he gave Jesus offended them, or they did not want anyone to delay their journey to the feast” (*EBC* 8*.*722).

“It was a callous thing to do; but, as we know, crowds, with their swift intolerance, their undisciplined emotions, can do heartless and cruel things. The interruption annoyed them. They were interested in Jesus. That was the big excitement, the focus of attention. This beggar was unimportant; his eager thrusting of his insignificant self into the center of the stage was a nuisance. They met it with stony indifference, and the command to be quiet” (*IB* 7.821).

49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.

“**stood still** in Greek is *histemi* which means “to stand, to set, stand still, establish, to stand in the presence of others, in the midst, to uphold or sustain the authority or force of anything; to stand immovable, stand firm, be of steadfast mind, one who does not hesitate, does not waiver” (Strong’s 2476, [www.blueletterbible.org)](http://www.blueletterbible.org)).

“The loud cry stopped Jesus. Had the messianic title caught his attention? So he asked them to call the beggar to him. The crowd’s complete change of attitude toward the beggar is remarkable. Instead of trying to silence him, they encouraged him. The word translated ‘cheer up!’ is *tharsei*” (*EBC* 8*.*722).

“Here Jesus pays the ultimate tribute to a person in need. He stopped and gave the whole of his attention, his mind and heart, to a blind beggar. His stopping said clearly, ‘You count’” (*IB* 7.821).

“Take heart; Rise, He is calling you.—Here the expression is used by people in the crowd. It was a conventional word of encouragement. It meant ‘you’re in luck. The Teacher is going to stop and help you after all’ ” (*IB* 7.821).

50 And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

“*Casting away his garment*. That is his *outer* garment; the one that was thrown loosely over him. He threw it off, full of joy at the prospect of being healed, and that he might run without impediment to Jesus” (Barnes 68).

*Casting away* is *apoballo* in Greek and means “to throw off, cast away” (Thayer 577).

“As the blind Bartimeus threw off his ‘garments,’ so sinners should throw away everything that hinders their going to him—everything that obstructs their progress—and cast themselves at his feet. No man will be saved while *sitting still*. The command is, ‘Strive to enter in;’ and the promise is made to those only who ‘ask,’ and ‘seek,’ and ‘knock’ “ (Barnes 95).

51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

“Jesus did not immediately heal the blind beggar. Jesus first asked him a question to stimulate faith” (*EBC* 8*.*722).

*Receive* *my sight* is *anablepo* in Greek and means to look up; to recover lost sight (Thayer 308).

“ ‘What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?’ As he could not *see* him, the Lord takes this way of awakening through his *ears*, the expectation of relief, and gives him an opportunity of presenting in explicit terms the desire of his heart. ‘Lord,’ is his ready answer, ‘that I may receive my sight’” (Jamieson 3.310).

52 And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

*Faith* in Greek is *pistis* and means “the conviction of the truth of anything; the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things; a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation” (Thayer 4102).

*Whole* uses the Greek word *sozo* which means “to keep safe and sound from danger or destruction; to save one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health” (Thayer 4982).

Sources:

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Abbreviation key:

*AB = The Anchor Bible*

*EBC = The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*

*IB = The Interpreter’s Bible*