

Blind Bartimaeus

#0616

Study given by W D. Frazee—October 24, 1969

I am so glad that the Lord had Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John write the story of the life of Jesus. Each one supplies a few details that are not quite the same with the others.

“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. 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. 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. 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. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. 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. 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” Mark 10:46-52.

I am impressed as I read this experience that it makes Jesus happy to give people what they want. That is what He has been working at through the history of this world. He has been trying to help people to find out what they want, and let them have it.

“It is made manifest that a life centered in God is a life of completeness. Every want He has implanted, He provides to satisfy” *Education*, page 41.

Do we get hungry? Oh, yes. Is there anything to satisfy hunger? Plenty. Apples, oranges, dates, raisins, beans, lentils, bread, milk, and so on through the long list. Blessed be the Lord who daily loads us with benefits. Do we have thirst? Oh, yes. Is there anything to satisfy that? The river of the water of life. Literal and spiritual. So we might go on with the long list of human wants. But here is this sweeping statement, every want He has implanted, He provides to satisfy.

Do you mean that everything I want I am going to have? That is true if I will let the Lord run my life. That is true if I will come to Him with my wants. Not only all the things I have found out about, but many more that I don't yet know about.

You and I don't yet know how many things we want. I can illustrate that. Are there any of you who want some things now that you didn't know about ten years or twenty years ago? I was thinking not long ago how little it took to satisfy me fifty years ago. A big red ball. My, that just thrilled my soul. Even a nickel would just make me smile from ear to ear. It takes a bit more than that now.

Yes, I have found out a good many things I want that I didn't know about. And as time goes on I find new stars appearing in the firmament of desire. Whole galaxies coming into view. And I am as sure as can be that it is going to continue that way on through eternity. On and on and on we are going to want more and more.

That's too bad. People get so discontented and restless that they riot. Do you know why? They don't know what they want. That is the problem. Every want He has implanted, He provides to satisfy.

Our blind friend is sitting by the roadside. He has heard of Jesus. For a long time he has been wishing he could meet Jesus and get some help. And as desire can do, his desire increased as time went on.

One reason why the Lord delays to answer our prayers is so that the real sense of want can build and increase; that we can become more conscious of our need. The desire can be greater, and thus the joy can be larger when we get the answer.

All the longing of the soul of Bartimaeus was focused in that great desire that he could be healed of that blindness. As he heard the crowd passing, he said to those by him, What is this? They said Jesus was passing by, and at once he began to cry out, Oh Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me, and he kept repeating it.

The people told him he had better keep still. That only made him more anxious to cry out. He didn't stop. One heard that call. That ear that is ever sensitive to the cry of the human heart. Jesus stopped. The great procession stopped. That poor blind beggar was told to be of good cheer for Jesus was calling for him. You have been calling for Him, and now He is calling for you. He threw away his outer garment and rushed to where he heard the sound of Jesus' voice. Then came the question that I want each of you to hear tonight, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" What is it you want Me to do for you? What would you like? You have been calling. You have been crying.

Tell me, friends, did Jesus know what the blind man wanted? Then why did He ask him? Because He wanted to give him the opportunity to put into words the longing that had been growing in his heart.

Instantly the answer came, "Lord, that I might receive my sight."

Did he get what he wanted? Exactly. That is what Jesus wants to do for everyone here tonight. I have been impressed to study this with you, for I have the feeling that there is more than one heart that is looking forward to sometime in the

future when you hope that some wonderful thing is to be done to you. Well, I hope so too, friends. But the good news I bring is that in this very hour your deepest longing can be satisfied. Your greatest desire up to this point can be met.

What is it you really want? If you could have anything in the universe, what would you like? The blind man knew what he wanted, and he got it.

There is the story of another man who also was in a crowd of people who got close to Jesus like the blind man did. There were so many people in the crowd that they “trode one upon another,” but this man got close enough to ask Jesus a favor. What does he ask for?

“And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me” Luke 12:1.

A family quarrel. This man thinks he has been cheated. As he sees the power that Jesus has with that great audience, he thinks that if he could just get Jesus to talk to his brother, his brother would come through and give him what was coming to him. So he has the one opportunity of his life to express his greatest desire to the Master. Did he get what he asked for? No.

“And He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you? And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” Luke 12:14-15.

Why didn’t Jesus give that man what he wanted. There are several reasons. In the first place, it would not have satisfied him. He didn’t know what he wanted. He just thought he did.

A wealthy woman had a maid taking care of her little boy. The woman heard her son crying in the next room. She called to the maid, “Give him what he wants.”

The crying ceased, and then burst out louder than before.

She called to the maid, “I told you to give him what he wants.”

The maid answered, “I did. It was a wasp.”

There are two kinds of unhappy people in this world. Those who are crying for the wasp because they haven’t been able to get hold of it, and those who are crying because they have been able to get hold of it. That takes in nearly all the human family.

Still as of old, the gold bug sings
The song he has ever sung;
Men reach to grasp his gilded wings,
Stung, stung.

This man in the crowd didn't know what he wanted. Jesus was trying to help him to see that what he really wanted was not what he thought he wanted. He was trying to divert the man's mind from the selfish, covetous, grasping spirit. There is something far more wonderful, higher, deeper, richer.

Jesus is saying to everyone as He did to the blind man, What would you like Me to do for you? What do you want more than anything else. And if it is something He sees that you really want and will really satisfy you, He is ready and anxious to give it to you. It makes Him glad to do it.

“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?”
Luke 11:9-13.

As it was given in the Sermon on the Mount:

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?”
Matthew 7:11.

The greatest gift in the universe, the gifts that brings all others in its train, is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

If Jesus were to pass up and down these isles tonight and stand before each one of you and say, What would you like, what would you ask for?

I wonder if anyone would ask, Oh Lord, give me the Holy Spirit. I wonder if someone would say, Master, my heart has been burdened so long with guilt. I have been troubled over all the failures I have made. Oh Master, if you could just give me tonight the assurance that my sins are forgiven.

Does the Savior delight to hear a request like that? And when does He wants to grant it. Right now.

Not with hatred's undertoe
Doth the love eternal flow;
Still thy heart, Oh, Christ arisen,
Yearns to reach the souls in prison.

Through all depths of sin and loss,
Drops the plummet of Thy cross;

Never yet abyss was found
Deeper than that cross could sound.

It does not matter how bad your sins have been. They can be forgiven tonight. It matters not how many times you have failed. They can all be forgiven, and you can stand before God accepted just as if you had not sinned. If you have accepted this gift of pardon and acceptance, you know that you have found the pearl of great price, and nothing you could ask for could compare in value with that. If you have not received that gift in its fullness, why not ask Jesus for it tonight. As by the Jericho road, Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. He is here tonight. He is within calling distance. Why not, like the blind man, say, "Jesus, Thou son of David, have mercy on me." Then Jesus says, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" What do you want Me to do for you.

Oh, let the longing of your heart be poured out to the One who understands and can do something. Say, Oh Lord, that I might receive my sight. That my spiritual vision might be increased. That the darkness of sin might be taken away. That selfishness might be cleansed from my life. That everything that would keep me from You shall be taken away. Oh, how He loves to answer that prayer.

"All who feel their need of Christ as did blind Bartimaeus, and who will be as earnest and determined as he was, will, like him, receive the blessing which they crave" *SDA Bible Commentary*, Volume 5, page 1111.

There is a check we can present for payment. How many is all? Does it take you in? I can get in on it too. But there is a condition. "All who feel their need of Christ as did blind Bartimaeus, and who will be as earnest and determined as he was."

That other man felt the need for money. That is what he talked about. Is money bothering you tonight? Ah, there is something you need far more. There is something infinitely more valuable. It is the riches of the grace and love of Jesus in your heart. To know that your sins are forgiven. To know that Christ has hold of your hand. To know that He is guiding in your affairs. To know that all things are under His supervision. This is worth everything.

"Many have a deep sense of need—a need that earthly riches or pleasures cannot supply; but they know not how to receive that for which they are longing" *Evangelism*, pages 552-553.

I believe there is someone here tonight who is in just that position. You have a longing for peace, for assurance, for forgiveness, and to know that you are accepted.

"Full and everlasting salvation is within the reach of every soul. Christ is waiting and longing to speak pardon, and impart the freely offered grace. He is watching and waiting, saying as He said to the blind man at the gate of Jerico,

‘What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?’ I will take away thy sins; I will wash you in My blood” *Ibid*.

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