

Jesus of Nazareth Is Passing by - Part 1

by Brian Long

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and overcoming spiritual blindness, which can lead to a false sense of salvation and eternal separation from God.

Duration: 27:03

Scripture: Mark 10:46

Topics: "Faith And Humility", "Spiritual Blindness"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the story of blind Bartimaeus from Mark chapter 10, highlighting his desperate cry for Jesus' mercy despite opposition, illustrating the importance of genuine faith and humility in seeking salvation. It delves into the dangers of spiritual blindness, focusing on hypocrisy, false assurance of salvation without transformation, and the necessity of acknowledging Jesus as both Savior and Lord. The urgency of responding to God's mercy and grace when He passes by is underscored, as seen in Bartimaeus' decisive moment of faith.

Transcript

Now we're told in Mark's Gospel, Mark chapter 10, that this blind man that we just read about is blind Bartimaeus. His name was Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus, his life consisted of sitting off by the roadside, begging.

That was the only way for a beggar to get by in those days, unless he had a family to take him in to take care of him, but obviously he didn't. And so imagine this life every day, day in and day out. Imagine how terrible it would be to be physically blind.

You've never saw the light of the sun. You've never seen the colors of a rainbow. Someone tries to describe to you the beauty of a sunset.

You can't imagine it because all you've ever seen is blackness, darkness. You've never seen the faces of your children. You've never seen the face of your wife.

Imagine how terrible to be physically blind and every day his life was the same. I go out to the streets and I beg. Day after day after day after day.

Here's a hopeless, helpless cause. Try to give him a pair of glasses. That's mockery.

It won't help him. Send him to the doctor. The doctor has nothing to say.

He can't help him. Here's a man beyond any human help and beyond any human hope. But one day, everything changed.

One day, as his same routine, he's out by the roadside begging, but this day something's different. He hears some commotion going on. Imagine this.

He can see nothing, but he hears there's a massive crowd. There's a lot of noise. There's people shouting.

What's going on? And so he asked someone next to him, what is it? What's happening here? And someone says to him what I long for you to hear tonight. These precious words, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. How precious are those words to you? They are precious words to someone who knows their only hope is Christ.

They are precious to someone who knows their only need can be met in Christ. They are precious to those here tonight who have not come to meet with a man, not come just to hear music as wonderful as it is, but they're precious to the one who has come tonight to meet the one we worship, the one we serve, the one we love, the one we know. Folks, if you haven't come to meet Jesus, you've come for the wrong reason.

If you haven't come tonight to glorify Christ, you've come for the wrong reason. Every time you come to the church house, if it is not for the glory of God to meet with the Lord Jesus Christ and to worship and adore him and praise him and get closer to him, listen to him, obey him, you've come for the wrong reason. Amen? How precious are those words? Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.

They were precious to him because he knew, he had heard of this Jesus of Nazareth. Here is the one who can make the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dumb talk. Here's the one who could raise the dead.

Here's the one who delivered from sin, who saved. And so he pulls out all the stops and he cries out with everything that is within him, even when there were religious people there telling him to shut up. He cries out with every fiber of his being, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

Shut up, Bartimaeus. This is an important man. Be quiet.

Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. You won't shut him up. Why? Because he knows this is my only hope.

Christ, he's my only hope. He is my only salvation. And I'm going to cry out with everything that is within me until he stops.

And the Bible says when Jesus heard Bartimaeus cry out, he stood. Mark's Gospel said he stood still. Did you know that's revival? We've been talking about revival.

Revival is when Jesus passes by and then stops because he's heard a humble cry. He's seen a heart that's crying out and calling out for him. He stops and he visits someone because someone actually believes him.

He's looking for that kind of faith, someone to trust him. Well, what happens? We just read it. Jesus stopped.

He heard Bartimaeus's cry. He commanded him to be brought to him. And when he was come near, he asked him saying, What wilt thou that I shall do? And what do you want me to do for you, Bartimaeus? Lord, I want to see.

I want to see. And Jesus said unto him, Receive your sight. Thy faith has saved thee.

By the way, that's when Jesus stops. Without faith, it's impossible to please God. It's impossible to please God.

Did you know the Bible says in more than one place, Mark chapter six is one of them, but that there were certain places he could not or did not do mighty, many mighty miracles. Why? Because of their unbelief, he's looking for a heart of faith tonight. Someone tonight that says, Lord, I am in total darkness, but I believe this.

I believe you can save me. I believe, Lord, you can revive me. I believe you can meet my need.

I believe you have come to bring hope to the hopeless, and I'm hopeless. Apart from you. Well, he was healed, and he's so rejoiced.

His Bible says in Mark's gospel, he threw out his garment. He followed Jesus, and he glorified God and all the people. It says, Praise God.

Now, what does this mean for us tonight? This is what God has really put on my heart. It's not gonna be an easy message for some of you to hear. But if you will hear it, you will let the word of God cut you and convict you.

It is for our very good. Anytime the Lord cuts us with his word, convicts us, makes us uncomfortable. It's for the purpose of us coming to Christ and finding hope and salvation.

But here's what God's putting on my heart as terrible as it would be to be physically blind. Can I tell you something much, much, much more terrible? That is to be spiritually blind, spiritually blind and in the dark, spiritually blind and deceived. You can be physically blind and yet be saved and go to heaven.

You cannot be spiritually blind and die and go to heaven. If you die with spiritual blindness, you die in your sins. You do not go to heaven.

You go to hell for all eternity. Spiritual blindness is very, very, very serious, especially the spiritual blindness that is that is holding us in darkness and sin, a person that's never been saved. But there's other kinds of spiritual blindness that even a saved person can backslide back into.

And we're going to see some of those tonight. I want you to look at one of them right now with me. Matthew chapter 23.

What does the Bible say? What did Jesus say about spiritual blindness? Matthew chapter 23. This is where Jesus is rebuking the Pharisees. Jesus was so kind and gentle and compassionate with the broken, but he was very hard and stern with the religious Pharisees.

And I want you to hear this. Some of us need to hear this word tonight. Matthew chapter 23.

He says, first of all, in verse 15. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. Now, before we go on, we need to understand who the scribes and Pharisees were.

If we lived in those days and somebody said, Brian, who's a holy man around here? Who would you say is religious and just a good, good man? You know who they appointed to? A scribe or a Pharisee. These are religious men. They quote the scripture.

They've memorized scripture. They fast. They pray all the time.

They've tithed. They're always meeting in the city halls. They're upstanding citizens.

They keep the law. And to these good men, religious men, Jesus said, you hypocrites, you hypocrites, he says in verse 15. Woe to you, you compass sea and land to make one cross of life.

And when he is made, you make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you. What? You blind guys.

Were they physically blind? No. Spiritually blind, you blind guys. In other words, you you are claiming you are claiming to follow God.

You are claiming to know God. You know the scriptures. You're doing all these religious acts, but you are leading people to hell and you're leading people to hell because you yourself are going to hell.

You're blind, spiritually blind. You cannot see. They were so spiritually blind that the Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God himself, is standing before them and they don't recognize it.

They reject him. Can Jesus pass by a letter Paul Baptist Church tonight and some not even recognize his presence? You can if you're blind, if your heart is so hard, he can come to meet with you tonight and you not even recognize it. Pity the person when Jesus passes by and you don't even recognize his presence or his voice or tonight that he's speaking to you.

Pity the person who is here tonight who says, thanks be to God. I'm here, but I'm not blind. And everybody else needs this message he sent for me.

You need revival more than anybody else. You need salvation more than anybody else. If you think the word of God is not for you, but someone who is sitting next to you, blind guides, he says.

He's rebuking them very sternly. Verse 17, he says it again, you fools and blind. Verse 19, you fools and blind.

And then he says in verse 24, again, you blind guides restrained in a nap and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you may clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, clean first that which is within the cup and platter that the outside of them may be clean also.

I ask the Lord myself, Lord, I know I'm saved. I know I belong to you, but I also know I can be deceived. I could have a spiritual blindness.

Lord, Lord, what is it in me? Is there anything in me that breathes your spirit? You know what the Lord has shown me? And at times hypocrisy, hypocrisy. Now listen, hypocrisy is not someone who is seeking the Lord and you stumble and fall. You lost your temper.

You said you sin. It is sin, but you're willing to call it sin. You're willing to ask forgiveness and confess.

That's not hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is this preaching one thing to your Children and living another preaching one thing to others and living another brother and sister. When God shows us any hint of hypocrisy in our lives, we better fall on our knees and humble ourselves before God and cry out.

God have mercy upon me because there's nothing like hypocrisy to blind your eyes. Hypocrisy is wearing a mask. That's what the Greek word means.

Hypocrite means actor. It means all I put my clean suit on on Sunday and I come to church and I look so religious and so holy. And God knows that during the week you're committing adultery in your heart.

You are lying with your tongue. You are deceiving. You are cheating someone else in business.

You are speaking ungodly things to your wife. You're treating her like dirt. You are a hypocrite.

Better to say, Lord, I'm not living right. I exaggerated there. I did take the other glance.

I did this and that. Confess your sin to God. A hypocrite is not someone who stumbles and falls.

None of us are perfect yet. A hypocrite is someone who's continually living that way and acting another way. God have mercy on you.

Let's tonight. Let the Lord Jesus take off the mask, the religious mask and be real. But you know what it requires? It requires honesty.

It requires humility. Do you understand and realize how much humility it took this blind beggar to cry out the way he did in such an undignified way? You don't cry out like that, especially if you're a blind beggar to an important person. Jesus was very important.

That's what the religious man said. Jesus loves to hear such a cry. I love the way he was so undignified.

I love the way he didn't care what anybody else thought about him. I love the way he pulled out all the stops and because he knew Jesus, you're my only hope. Are you willing to get honest with God tonight? If there's hypocrisy in your life and say, Lord, God have mercy upon me.

Remove this blinder from my eyes. There is hypocrisy in my life. Did you know Jesus will stop and meet with you because you're honest, because you're willing to be humble before him? You're willing to call upon him? That's one kind of spiritual blindness you and I can be delivered from tonight, if you're willing to cry out to Jesus.

Here's another kind. Another kind of spiritual blindness is, and many don't know that the problem with blindness is you don't know you're blind. The problem with being deceived is you don't know you're deceived until it's revealed to you.

Here's another kind of spiritual blindness, a person who thinks they can be saved and yet not changed. Here's what I mean. One brother shared this with me yesterday.

This is happening all over the country. You're in a meeting and the preacher says, say this after me. Jesus, save me.

Jesus, I need you. And you said those words. And people all over the congregation say those words, but 99% of them didn't mean it from the heart, didn't have any intention of turning from sin and turning to Christ, but they said the words.

And then the preacher says, you're saved. And it's a lie. And you have multitudes today who think they are saved when they are lost.

Because some preacher told him, can I give you an example of this? I was preaching one night and we were praying for a certain man because her husband was a Christian. He'd never would come to church. One night he came.

And you could tell the spirit of God was really dealing with him. And that night as everybody was leaving, it was dark outside. I was walking away.

I felt somebody grab me by the back of the arm. And Bob said, Brian, I need to talk to you. I said, okay, let's talk.

Not right now, he said. Can you come to my house sometime? I said, I'll be there tomorrow morning. So I go tomorrow morning.

The conviction must have started growing cold. Well, he said, I wanted to talk to you, but I'm doing a little bit better now. I said, well, what's the problem, Bob? Well, I was wondering, you know, whether or not I was really saved.

I said, well, let's talk about it. Well, I know I'm saved. How do you know you're saved, Bob? I know I'm saved because when I was 18 years old, I walked down the aisle and I said a prayer.

The pastor told me, you're saved. I said, okay, Bob, did you know the Word of God has so many tests for us to tell us whether or not we're truly saved? Number one, the Holy Spirit will bear witness with your spirit that you're a child of God. But let me just give you a few.

In Peter it says, and Peter it says, to you who believe, Christ is precious. Can you honest before God tonight, today, say Jesus Christ is precious to you? Be honest. No, not really.

Anyone who has been saved comes into a relationship with Christ. If you have a relationship with Christ, with Jesus, you talk to him. Do you pray, Bob? No, not really.

Never has been a baby born who didn't cry out for milk and hunger for milk. Never has been a sinner who was born again and didn't have some hunger for the Word of God. You ever read the Bible, Bob? Never opened it.

First John tells us if you love God, you love your brother. If you love God, you love his people. Do you want to come to church? Do you love being around the people of God, Bob? Can't stand it.

That's why I never come. Bob, you're not saved. You're not saved.

That's a blindness. That's a blindness. Are you saved tonight, child? Are you saved tonight, ma'am? Are you saved tonight, sir? If you're saved, you've been changed.

Some of those tests I just gave you, they are true of you. You love Jesus when you're saved. You're different than you were before the day you got saved.

The Bible says if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. All things are passed away. Behold, all things have become new.

You receive a new heart. You receive new desires. You receive a new mind.

You have a new appetite. You do read the Word of God. You want to know what he says.

This is our milk and this is our meat. This is our food. You begin to love people because he gave you a new heart.

Bible says in First Corinthians chapter six, be not deceived. Don't be blind. Be not deceived.

Neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of mankind, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor culprits. All this list of sinners, he said, don't be deceived. If you're continuing in this, you will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Doesn't mean that you're perfect. You know, I'm not talking about that. We can slip, we can fall, we can breathe the Spirit of God, we can sin.

But if a Christian sins, the Bible says that God chastens those he loves. He will discipline you. He will give you a good whipping.

He will get a hold of you. He will, he will chasten you because he loves you, because you're his son, his child. If that's not happening in your life, you have every reason to doubt, you have every reason to know you've been blind, spiritually blind.

And Jesus can take those blinders off tonight, if you're willing to repent, if you're willing to turn to him. One more area of spiritual blindness, those who think they can have Jesus as Savior, but not as Lord. How do you separate Savior from Lord? Is Jesus Christ Savior, but not Lord? He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

He is Savior and Lord. When I come to Jesus and I cry out to him, Lord, save me from my sins. Blind Warren Mayes was saved, he was, the blinders were removed, the Bible says he did what? He followed him now.

When Jesus saves you, he's Savior, now he's calling you to follow him as Lord. That means he's my boss, he's my Lord, he commands me, he tells me, I follow him. He's in charge.

You cannot separate that. I'll give you an example of this. He used to come to me constantly.

I love this man. His name was Gary. And Gary, he knew the Bible.

He'd read the Bible. He knew much, and he knew the gospel, the good news of Christ. But he was a miserable, miserable man.

And he came to me time and time again, and nothing ever seemed to help. One day he came in, he talked to me. We were getting nowhere.

I said, Gary, Jesus asked the blind man, what do you want me to do for you? That's what we just read, actually. And the blind man said, I want to see. If Jesus were here right now, and I believe he is, and he asked, what do you want me to do for you? Be honest.

You know what he told me? He paused. He said, if I was totally honest, I want to be able to smoke a pot, drink beer, live the way I want, and still go to heaven. I said, Gary, go smoke your pot and drink your beer and live like you want to, and you'll go to hell.

I have no good news for you. Goodbye, Gary. We just sat there in deathly quiet.

He said, I don't want that. I said, all right, come with me. We walked to the back of the building, the educational building of the church.

We went back in the nursery. There was a lock on that door. It was getting dark.

We sat down on the couch and I said, now, you seek God until you find Him. And I walked out and locked the door. Don't come out until you find Jesus.

And I meant it, but I was praying. I went back to my office and I was praying with all my heart. He said, I'm done.

He comes out, but he's not saved. He goes to get in his truck to leave. And I'll never forget this.

The church was right on a crossroads and they had a drug dog. They were stopping every car and had a drug dog there. He said, oh no.

I said, what's wrong? I got drugs in my truck. You better get back there and seek God some more. He goes back to the road.

I shut the door. He stayed. One hour went by.

Two hours went by. Three hours. I come back.

Gary, anything happen? No. I sat down next to him. I started crying out to God.

Lord, please save this man, we pray. I said, Gary, why don't you call out loud, Jesus, save me. I wasn't manipulating.

I was just encouraging him. Say it, Jesus, save me. Did you know when he called out the name of Jesus, it was as if a dam broke and the water came forth.

And he cried out to the Lord to save him. And God did save him. And you know how I know God saved him? Because he's preaching the gospel today.

At least the last time I heard. He moved to Colorado. He was singing in the praise team and he was sharing the gospel.

He was a new creation. He could not be a new creation with just wanting Jesus to save him but not be my Lord. Don't be deceived.

Jesus is Savior and Lord. And you cannot separate Savior from Lord. Now, I'm going to leave you with one final thing.

Did you know, I've studied this many times, I've preached from this text before. And I didn't know this until actually the last time I studied it. This was the last time that Jesus went through Jericho.

That's where he was. That's where Bartimaeus was. The last time that Jesus passed through Jericho before he went to Jerusalem and on to the cross.

He never went that way again. This was Bartimaeus, blind Bartimaeus, only final, last call. Suppose Bartimaeus would say, oh, that's wonderful, Jesus is coming by.

I should cry out to him. I should probably call out to him. I should probably pray, but today's not a good day, besides they're telling me to shut up.

I'll wait another day. He would have missed it. The last time he went through Jericho.

Every time in the Bible that you read God passing by, he's doing so in mercy. Every single time.

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