

Let Me See

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Preacher: Rev. Calum Murdo Smith

[0 : 00] We can turn back then to our reading in the Gospel of Mark. We can read again in verse 49 in chapter 10.

And it says there, Jesus stopped and said, Call him. And they called the blind man saying to him, Take heart, get up, he is calling you. And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, What do you want me to do for you? And the blind man said to him, Rabbi, let me recover my sight. And Jesus said to him, Go your way.

Your faith has made you well. And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way. Every time we come under the word of God, every time you gather to worship God together, Jesus is always at the heart of everything that is said and everything that is done.

But a communion weekend has, I don't say more significance, but there's a greater reminder to us of just what Jesus has done for us.

[1 : 10] In particular, we come remembering his death, remembering why ultimately he came into this world. He came for sinners.

As we read here in Mark's Gospel, chapter 10, the first part we read, verse 32, Jesus reminds the disciples again why he has come, he has come.

To give his life as a ransom for many. His death is foretold. And we see that he came into this world with that in mind to save his people, to give them life and life abundantly.

In John's Gospel, Jesus there, when he describes himself as a good shepherd, he also says there in verse 10, the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

But he says, I came that they may have life and have it abundantly, abundant life. So tonight as you come here, or as you hear the word of God proclaimed, ask yourself this, do you have this life? Do you have this abundant life?

[2 : 22] Even in the midst of us, we've already mentioned, we can come feeling weary and tired with all of these things. So much going on in our lives, but do we have that abundant life?

That joy in the Lord that is our strength no matter what. As you look at the life of Bart Amaze, as we look at Bart Amaze together this evening, ask yourself what kind of life did he have?

Did he have much of a life as he was sitting there begging by the side of the road, just relying on others for help to live? But then you see the life that he found as he heard that Jesus was passing by, as he cried out, and as he was pleading with him to recover his sight, and as Jesus said, your faith has made you well and fallen to me now on the way his life was completely transformed.

And that's the wonder of God's grace, how it transforms people's lives. If you are a Christian tonight, your life has been transformed.

You've been brought to life and life that is abundant in Christ. Maybe you're not a Christian here tonight, maybe you've not professed your faith, and you're saying, well, what is this life? What does it mean?

[3 : 43] How do I have it? Well, it is to follow Jesus on the way, following Him in a way that is not always easy. Sometimes it's hard. A missionary society once wrote to David Livingston, a famous missionary who went to Africa, and they asked him, have you found a good road to where you are?

And if so, we want to know how to send other people to join you there to help you in the work. David Livingston wrote back to that missionary society, and he said this to them, if you have men or women who will come, only if they know that there is a good road, I don't want them.

I want men and women who will come if there's no road at all. It's not about being easy. It's about even in the difficulty, even in the challenges that we are following Jesus, that we are honouring Him and living for Him as we go on, on the way.

At this point in Mark's Gospel, things are moving at pace towards Jerusalem. You see that in verse 32, they were on the road going up to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was high up, so that's why it says they were going up to Jerusalem. And this was Jesus, and He tells them here just why He's going. He's going to be delivered into the hands of those who will spit in Him, who will mock Him, and who will ultimately kill Him.

[5 : 11] And on this way, they're passing through Jericho. And in the midst of everything that's going on here, it's hard to imagine what was going through the disciples' minds.

Hard to imagine it was going through Jesus' own mind, as they're making their way up to Jerusalem. He knows exactly what's in store. He's telling them again the reason why they're going. He's going to give His life. And you might think, well, this is the only thing going on in His mind. This is the only thing He can focus on.

And yet you're given this wonderful reminder of just why He came. It's about people. It's about sinners. It's about the lost. It's about those who need a Savior. So that even in the midst of going up to Jerusalem, you have this wonderful account of Jesus' meeting with Bart and Maes.

And in all the accounts of Jesus' meeting with people and healing people, this is one that just stands out for me. I just love the story of Bart and Maes.

[6 : 16] In some ways, I can resonate with them. I'm sure many of us can, lost in this world, blind in the things of this world. And yet the wonder of Jesus meeting us as He passes by.

And when you see what's going on, it just makes this account even more amazing. When you think of the timing and the attitudes involved, the timing, as we've said, is just on the way up to Jerusalem.

He's going to be crucified. And yet He has time for Bart and Maes. He has time to stop and tell Bart and Maes to come. Your faith has made you well. Follow me.

But in the midst of all the different attitudes you see here as well, the attitudes of those who are telling Bart and Maes to be quiet, to be silent, just to stay where you are, or even more so, the attitude of James and John.

In the section that we read in verse 35 down. Because there's something very similar in what happens with James and John and what happens with Bart and Maes.

[7 : 23] Because you see, Jesus asks the same question of James and John as he asks of Bart and Maes. In verse 36, teacher, well, verse 35 they say, teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask.

And verse 36, Jesus says, what do you want me to do for you? What do you want me to do for you? And what do they ask for? Of all the things that they could have asked for of Jesus.

They asked for glory. One decided your left, one decided your right in glory. How selfish. Jesus has just told them what he is going to do.

And this is what they want. Glory. And yet when it comes to Bart and Maes in verse 50, 51 there, you see Jesus asks the same question, what do you want me to do for you?

But the response is so different. And that's what we want to see. The difference in this response. And the difference in what Bart and Maes asks for compared to what James and John ask for.

[8 : 32] Because a right attitude towards Jesus. A heart towards Jesus achieves so much more than self-promotion, self-glory. Humbling ourselves before Jesus, he lifts us up.

When we feel unworthy, when we feel our sin, when we feel the weight of life, it is Jesus who says, but your faith has made you well. Come and follow me on the way.

So we want to see just three things from Bart and Maes' life. We see first of all his condition. His condition. When you look at Bart and Maes, the diagnosis for him was bleak.

You see that straight away in verse 46, as they were going up to Jerusalem, as they came to Jericho, as he was leaving Jericho, his disciples on a great crowd, Bart and Maes, a blind beggar.

A blind beggar. You think to yourself, the disciples on the crowd were right. Don't bother yourself with this man.

[9 : 39] A blind beggar isn't worth looking at. A blind beggar isn't worth bothering yourself with just now. There's more important things. And that was the attitude of society at the time, towards beggars, not just Bart and Maes, but those who had a disease that couldn't be cured, something that they became a burden upon people or upon families.

They were put away. Blindness was not uncommon in Jesus' day. And it was something that left people with little hope in life.

That's what's leaving him here, the side of the road. A blind beggar. He had nowhere else to go, he had no benefits he could get. Families just couldn't support.

They were a burden. And so there was nowhere to turn. He's blind and he's begging. He's dependent on others for his survival.

That's how it would seem in our eyes and in the eyes of the disciples and the crowds. When they say, don't bother him.

[10:47] In verse 48 it says, many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. Be quiet, don't be a pest. Don't bother Jesus. He's got more important things to do.

That's maybe how it seems in our eyes, but not in Jesus' eyes. That's not how Jesus sees people. That's not how he sees us, thankfully.

Because if he looked on us with what we deserve, we would have nothing. We're no better or no worse than Bartimaeus. We're all the same in the eyes of God.

We're all sinners who fall short. But we see with Bartimaeus there was something about him. He may have been blind physically and a beggar, but there was something about him that stood out. Because you notice, when he heard it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

[11:54] How did he know? He was just a beggar at the side of the road. How did he know what to cry? Well, he may have been blind, but he was not deaf.

And he's been hearing the crowds passing by. Remember this was a time of Passover. So there was large crowds of people coming and going from Jerusalem, coming in and out of the city. And Jesus' name was being spoken about at this time all over the place because of the different things that he was doing. And at some point along the way, Bartimaeus had heard about Jesus. And now it says he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth that was passing by. They were speaking about Jesus. And he knows this is Jesus passing by.

And so he knows that here is an opportunity. Here is a moment that could change his life if he's listening and if he does something about it.

[13:00] And ask ourselves this. Are we like Bartimaeus in that sense? We're blind. We're in so many ways. We're sinners in this world that sin is just weighing heavy upon us.

But are we listening? Are we listening and hearing that Jesus is still passing by? That Jesus is still here for us?

That Jesus is the one that we can cry out to as well. That we can know the grace of God. John Newton, who wrote that famous hymn, Amazing Grace, if you read his life story you find out just how far away from God he was.

Involved in the slave trade, a drinker, one who would swear every second word, no interest in God until he was caught up in the midst of a storm at sea and all of a sudden he finds himself recognizing how blind he is.

And that's how he could write Amazing Grace. Because it is amazing. Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now I'm found was blind but now I see.

[14:26] And if you can do it for John Newton, if you can do it for any Christian here, myself included, you can do it for anyone. We are all in the same condition.

We are all blind but Jesus is able to open our eyes. You think to yourself, I'm alive. How do you tell you're alive today?

You've got breath, you've got a pulse. You're able to move and live but are you alive? Do you have that abundant life, that life that only Jesus can give?

Our condition is that without Christ we are dead. Even when we may be breathing and living as we might think in this world, we are dead in our sins.

God who is rich in mercy is able to make us alive in Christ. So our condition and his condition is clear before us. But we then we secondly see his cry.

[15:32] How he cries out. And when you look at his cry, you see just how he recognized who Jesus was. When he heard it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.

It's amazing just how much is there in that cry. How much he knows. I mean you may think this blind beggar at the side of the road, what's he going to know? What's he going to be able to say to Jesus?

And yet here he says something that just makes so much sense to us. Jesus, Son of David. He has an understanding of who Jesus is. He's heard about who Jesus is.

He's the Messiah. This is the savior of the world who has come to save sinners. This is he who is passing by just now. It is Jesus. Jesus, the word, become flesh and dwelling among us.

This is Jesus who's passing by and he's not going to let this moment go. And he knows what Jesus can do. He says, Jesus have mercy on me.

[16:39] Jesus is able to save. And you notice he doesn't say, Jesus make me well immediately. Make me see immediately. It's have mercy on me.

That is our greatest need to know the mercy of Jesus. And the first step for us to come to Jesus is to realize who it is we're coming to.

He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He is the one whose lives, who our lives are in his very hands. He is the one who came to lay down his life as a ransom for many.

He is the one who will come, God willing, on the Lord's day to remember his death. To see the bread and the wine. And what they signify is not just bread and wine.

It's not just something we are to do out of a ritual. You're remembering Jesus. Jesus who gave his life for sinners.

[17:45] And he is the one who we need to cry out to constantly. Constant, not just once. Not just Jesus have mercy and I'm saved and that's it.

Jesus who is passing by and Jesus who says follow me on the way. We have to keep crying out to him. He realized what Jesus could do.

And even when they say, they rebuke him and tell him to be silent. What does he do in verse 48? He cries out all the more.

All the more he's not going to let this opportunity pass him by. He knows that this could be his last opportunity. In fact, would Jesus pass this way again while he was going up to be crucified?

But he passed by Bartimaeus on this day for this very purpose. That Bartimaeus could cry out. And as Jesus passes us by in this world, he is there to be cried out to us well.

[18:53] And you say to yourself, I'll do it another time. I'll call him again and we see the warnings in Scripture of that. A more convenient time is a warning that we see in Scripture.

Another time when things are easier, not so busy, or all of these things. We make our excuses. Bartimaeus didn't. He didn't say, I'll leave him just now.

He's busy. He won't be interested in me. No, he cries out all the more. Son of David, have mercy on me. In the midst of people telling him to be quiet, to go away, seen as a pest in many ways.

He cries out all the more. He wasn't going to let tomorrow just be another day. It's a story of a young university student.

And he'd been troubled by the Word of God. He'd been hearing the Word of God. And he was being pulled in different directions. I'm sure many of us can enter into this time in our lives when we're hearing God speaking, but the things of this world are still pulling us back in that direction.

[20:02] And he liked to go out with his friends, go to the parties, but God's Word was still troubling him. And so what he thought he would do is, I'll ask one of my Christian professors for advice.

And so he went to this Christian professor with a question. And the question he asked the professor was, how long can I safely put off following Jesus?

Well, the professor replied, it seemed rather odd at first. He said, well, until the day before you die, you can put it off till then. But the boy replied, but I cannot tell when I will die.

And the professor replied, well, you must decide now. How long can you put it off? That's a question. Maybe you've had in your own mind, how long can I leave it?

How long can I just go on living my life the way I want and then eventually maybe decide about Jesus? How long can you put it off? Well, until the day before you die, when will that be?

[21:09] You don't know. So today is the day. Today was the day for Bartimaeus here. He wasn't going to let this opportunity pass by.

He was crying out all the more, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And then what we see is, we see his cry. We see what happens next is the cure that comes.

In verse 49, Jesus stopped and said, call him. And they called the blind man saying, take heart, get up here, he is calling you. You can almost sense a mocking tone in this.

So he obviously cloaked, he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, what do you want me to do for you? And I'd love to have seen James and John's face at this time.

We've just asked him, or we've just been asked by Jesus, what do you want me to do for you? And oh boy, we got it wrong. And the other 10 that jumped on their back saying, how stupid of you. [22 : 14] But at the time, they were probably thinking, if only we'd asked that first until they saw Jesus rebuking them because you don't know what you're asking. And so as Jesus asks this question, what do you want me to do for you?

Suddenly there's this interest. What's he going to say? What's he going to say? He is calling you. And Jesus is speaking. What do you want me to do for you? And the response of Bartimaeus is so simple and so humble. Rabbi, he says, let me recover my sight.

Let me see. Would you be a James and a John when Jesus, if Jesus asked you that question, what do you want me to do for you?

I want to be with you there in glory. I want to be near to you in glory, on your left or on your right. Is that how you would reply? What response would you give to that question if Jesus asked you?

[23 : 15] What do you want me to do for you? Well, answer it tonight. Because Jesus is still asking that question of us.

What do you want me to do for you? Tonight, what do you want Jesus to do for you? Would you answer like Bartimaeus?

Lord, let me see. Wouldn't that be a great thing, even for this weekend, to be able to see Jesus all the more clearly, to see Him through His Word, to see Him through the sacrament, to see Him through fellowship with one another, to see Him through others and their love for Christ, to be able to see Jesus.

To be able to see Him in all His beauty, in all His glory, in all His suffering, in light of all our sin, that we would see what Jesus has done in giving His life as a ransom for many.

Because the more we see Jesus, the more we see how unworthy we are. We would never ask to sit at His right or at His left, because we would say, I cannot.

[24 : 43] But He invites us to sit. He invites us to come. And it is your faith that makes you well. It's not the size of your faith, it's not the strength of your faith, it's not your knowledge of faith, but it's your faith in Christ.

Bartimaeus knew more than enough. Here was Jesus, son of David, passing by. That was enough for him.

It is Jesus. I want to see Him. It's that your longing tonight, to see Jesus.

And Jesus says, your faith has made you well. Immediately He recovered His sight and He followed Him on the way. Where was Jesus going?

He was going to Jerusalem. He was going to be spat on, to be mocked, to be beaten and to be put to death. And so, he said, Bartimaeus followed Him on the way.

[25 : 53] That wouldn't have been an easy way to go. You see, when Peter was in the crowd, how he denied knowing Jesus, I wonder if Bartimaeus, what he was saying, that is Jesus who gave me my sight.

That is the one I am following on the way. Even when He was going to the cross, I will follow Him, He said, mercy on me. So you follow.

You follow through all the different trials. You follow through all the ups and downs, but you follow the one who is the Son of God.

The one who has mercy on his own. What do you want from Jesus today? Do you want to see Him? There's a prayer. It's often said that it was Francis Drake, the English explorer who said this prayer at some point. He said, disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves.

[27 : 02] When our dreams have come through because we have dreamed too little. When we arrive safely because we have sailed too close to the shore. Disturb us, Lord.

When with the abundance of things we possess, we have lost our thirst for the waters of life. Having fallen in love with life, we have ceased to dream of eternity.

And in our efforts to build a new earth, we have allowed our vision of the new heaven to dim. Isn't it so true that when we have an abundance of things we possess, we lose sight of Jesus?

And sometimes we need to be disturbed. To have that disturbing move of the Spirit in our hearts, to shake us up, to awaken us up to the reality of what we truly need, that is the faith of Bartimaeus.

Not to sit one at his right and one at his left in glory, but to simply say, Rabbi, Lord, let me recover my sight.

[28 : 13] Let me see you in all your glory. Because when we see, we will be satisfied. We will see what he has done.

We will weep over our sin, but we will rejoice in the one who has mercy and who by faith we can follow on the way.

May we see Jesus tonight, tomorrow, in all our days, and follow him. Let us pray.