

Luke 18:35-43

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 10 April 2011

Preacher: Kenny MacDonald

[0 : 00] The Gospel of Luke chapter 18, Luke chapter 18, and we'll read verses 35 to 43. Luke chapter 18, verses 35 to 43.

We read, as Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening.

They told him, Jesus of Nazareth passes by. He called out, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.

Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet. But he shouted all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me. Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him.

When he came near, Jesus asked him, what do you want me to do for you? Lord, I want to see. Jesus said to him, receive your sight.

[1 : 03] Your faith has healed you. Immediately, he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

Now, there are many people deep down, and they know that they lack something in their lives, and they don't know what it is, but they know that there is an empty space in their hearts, and they won't admit, even to themselves, that Jesus Christ is the answer to their problem.

They have a vague fear that the good things that they hear about from the gospel message, that these things, that they are just not for them.

And so they busy themselves with the things of the world, and they fill their lives full of everything, and they assume a veneer of contentment, and sometimes convince themselves that everything is all right, and that it doesn't really matter, and that they don't know anything about the Lord Jesus Christ, or the life that is to come.

These people are on the defensive all the time, and they try their very best to justify their own lives without Christ.

[2 : 33] Well, really, when we look at it, these people are very sad, very sad indeed, because their hearts are crying out, because they don't really understand Jesus, and they don't understand the truth about Jesus.

They really don't know that they need the comfort, and the love, and the joy, and the companionship of the best friend they could ever have, a friend that would fill the gap in their lives.

Our Lord and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Well, this account of blind Bartimaeus, and how Jesus treated him, and gave him back his sight, is full of encouragement, full of encouragement to us all, but particularly is full of encouragement to those who are still on the highway of life alone.

It's particularly encouraging to them. We read about them, that Jesus was on the road going through Jericho with a large crowd following him.

There was always a crowd following Jesus, his friends who'd be there, the ones who'd be watching, hoping that they would see a miracle, would be there, and enemies of his would be there as well, and people who were just naturally curious about this man from Galilee.

[4 : 01] And Bartimaeus was a blind man who sat by the wayside begging, we read. He had probably been brought there early in the morning by his friends and placed in what we would call a good pitch, that is, where he would be within reach of the crowd that would be passing along the road because he was depending on arms and money and things that they would give him from the passersby so he'd be in a good place.

The day had begun for Bartimaeus in the usual way, as every other day he could remember. It began in darkness. And he was led to a place where he depended on the world's temporary sustenance, that he was depending on the world's givings.

And we pause and think there, is that not how it is with everyone who doesn't believe or accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior? Those who look to the world to sustain them, and to give us enough, as it were, to exist, whether we're in a seat of power in a boardroom or even sitting on the pavement begging that we depend on the world to sustain us.

Ah, but this day was going to be, in the mercy of God, this day was going to be different for Bartimaeus. This was not going to be an ordinary day. This was going to be a great day for him, a great day in his life.

Because his wayside seat was going to, you could call it, become a church. And the crowd passing by, they were going to preach him a sermon.

[6 : 02] In his lonely darkness and deep poverty, he heard something. He heard. You'll notice that all those eyes were blind. His ears were all right.

He couldn't see, but he could hear. And he heard this, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. Well, my friends, what a sermon. What a sermon.

So plain, so simple, and yet so powerful that it went straight to the heart of Bartimaeus and took control of him.

Because the whole sermon that the people preached to him was about Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. Bartimaeus hears this.

Notice that he hears it. Now, there are only two ways of hearing the gospel message. There's a hearing that leads to life, and there's a hearing that leads to death.

[7 : 04] There's no other hearing. There's no neutral hearing. There's no hearing that doesn't matter. No, the hearing that we do is important because there's no in-between hearing.

There's no hearing to indifference. There's no sort of other kind of hearing. Because the hearing that you do in here just now, there's one of two things.

And everyone who comes in under the word of God, one or two things happen when they hear the word of God. They go out there softened in their hearts or they go out there hardened. You can't say that, well, I'm here.

I'm in church. That's all right. I'll listen, but it doesn't really matter. It'll go over the head as usual. No, it makes a difference. And the difference is between life and death.

And that means that it is eternal life in heaven with Jesus or eternal death with the other non-believers in the pain and suffering of hell.

[8 : 26] So the hearing you do in here, the gospel message leaves no soul untouched. No one goes out of this door, this church in the same way as they come in.

Soften or hardened. Jesus and his saving work is preached from the pulpit and we pray that we will be able to accept it in such a way that it will lead to us being saved.

Jesus is speaking to us and he's speaking about our immortal souls. Bartimaeus' hearing led him to do something.

It led him, it roused him, it led him to call out. That's a sure sign of right hearing. Jesus was passing by.

Bartimaeus heard he was passing by and he called out, Son of David, have mercy on me. Well, my friends, the Holy Spirit of God is telling us that Jesus is passing by now.

[9 : 44] That he's passing by and that he's here now and he's passing by. For far too long, maybe our hearts and our minds have been full of other things.

All the things of the world natural and maybe proper enough in themselves but filling your hearts with them may be of what? Play? Our house, our car, our garden, our ambitions, what we're going to do.

Well, we've got to examine ourselves and see what our life is completely taken up with. What will our thoughts be on our deathbed as we leave in this world? Will we wish that we had done something else to the garden or something like that?

Or will our minds be on something more important? Where am I going? What's going on? I wish maybe. Maybe for too long Jesus and the gospel message have been sidelined by things concerning this world because they are important enough in themselves but must be put in the proper place in our timetable.

We see constantly thousands flocking to sporting events, thousands going on shopping trips all on a Sunday. Jesus of Nazareth is passing by and nobody care.

[11 : 10] The sin of our age, indifference, apathy to the call of Christ. Jesus of when Jesus came to Golgotha they hanged him on a tree.

They drew great nails through hands and feet and made a calvary. They crowned him with a crown of thorns, red were his wounds and deep for those were crude and cruel days and human life was cheap.

When Jesus came to Birmingham they simply passed him by. They never heard a hair of him. They only let him die. For men had grown more tender and they would not give him pain.

They only just passed down the street and left him in the rain. Still Jesus cried, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

And still it rained, the wintry rain that drenched him through and through. the crowds went home without a soul to see and Jesus crouched against the wall and cried for Calvary.

[12 : 25] Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was passing by and he immediately calls out. The message heard leads to prayer. The first thing that an awakened sinner must do is pray.

the soul is in danger. Cry out for help. A distress signal to heaven, the SOS to heaven. And notice the promptness of Bartimaeus' action.

He heard and he called out. It was immediate. Jesus was walking, walking past. Bartimaeus could have said, oh, he's walking past here now, it'll give me a little time to walk all this way down and I'll get my arms and I'll call to Jesus just before he goes out to earshot.

I'll wait and gather all I can and then I'll call him. Ah, but Bartimaeus, no, call. Call out now because we know that Jesus Christ is not going to pass that way again.

He's got an appointment to keep on a cross on Calvary and he will not be passing that way again. So, Bartimaeus, call out and call out now or you'll always be blind.

[13 : 38] Jesus will not pass that way again. None of us can say when Jesus is going to pass by close to us for the last time.

So, my friends, all we can say and plead with you is call out to him. If you haven't called out to him already, call out to him and call out to him now.

Don't let any of the earth's considerations or your own circumstances keep you from calling out to Jesus. You remember the story about the devil interviewing people for work in this world and he had three people up in front of him and he asked the first one, what will you do if I send you into the world to work?

and the devil said I will preach and teach that there is no God and he called the second one in and the second one says I will preach and teach that there is no hell and the third one was asked and he said I will teach and preach that there is no hurry and he got the job.

no hurry. But notice Bartimaeus cried out in faith. Amazing that way he had heard we don't know because he heard that an ordinary man Jesus of Nazareth passing by a carpenter from an obscure village with obscure parents.

[15 : 18] But Bartimaeus knew and he believed that this man from Galilee was more much more than a man much more than a carpenter.

Jesus son of David Lord he cries out. And there he was a dust covered blind beggar crying out to Jesus surrounded by people as Jesus was walking past.

But Bartimaeus made no pretense no tidying up of himself for trying to get in a proper position no. He cried out just as he was just as I am and waiting not to rid my soul of one dark lot.

To thee whose blood can cleanse the lot who am of God I come I come. And notice the reaction of the crowd.

Of course there was a reaction from the crowd because there is never a knock at heaven's door but it is heard in hell and devils rush to silence it.

[16 : 26] Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet. So my friend don't be surprised if in your first leanings towards the Lord Jesus Christ that they should be counteracted by circumstances and obstacles placed in your way by people or something else.

Because determination is required you must be really wanting Jesus if you are coming to do business with him. Determination is necessary because we can't hope for salvation if we're half-hearted about things.

We don't come to Jesus as we go sometimes shopping saying just looking. We come to Jesus to do business with him. The cross at Calvary demands that it's real business we do with him.

Half-hearted attempts are soon dampened and muffled and quietened. But if we must have mercy then we will have mercy.

Oh there are many obstacles placed on the way to Jesus. There's our own pride which is probably the major one. Maybe there's our own weakness.

[17 : 47] Maybe our friends, what would they say if we became Christian? Maybe our very own family would hold us back. Our lifestyle is not conducive to Christianity.

Well we've got to recognize these obstacles and do what Bartimaeus did. He shouted all the more. The very difficulties put in our ways should make us more determined.

Jesus is not a super slick salesman. He doesn't cover anything up. He doesn't tell us that life's going to be easy, easy and that once we become Christians and follow him that everything's going to be smooth.

No, he said pick up your cross and follow me. If you wouldn't bear a cross you cannot wear a crown. The cause of Christ needs determined single-minded Christians.

Bartimaeus cried out and Jesus stopped. Notice the concern of Jesus for sinner. A proof is required about Jesus' reason for leaving his happy home in heaven, leaving the love of her father and the adoration of angels to stoop and to come to this life in order to love and care and suffer for poor lost creatures like us.

[19 : 21] Then surely we have the proof that we need here in this stopping of Jesus to hear the cry of this dust-covered beggar by the roadside.

his life's work in miniature is here. Christ's life's work in miniature. The whole gospel message is here that Jesus stood still when he heard the cry of this.

There were important people around him. There were people milling about when he heard the cry of this poor lost sinner by the wayside, a dust-covered beggar, and he stopped.

He has time. And is he not demonstrating to us that he has time for poor lost souls throughout the world? That's his work. That's the name given to him by heaven itself.

Thou shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. That's his family name, the name given to him by heaven. Jesus here was on his way to Calvary.

[20 : 23] He was on his way with the turmoil of mind that must have caused him. the human weakness that was in him. And he's surrounded by people, and he hears the cry of this unhappy beggar, and he stops, and he stands still.

Oh, Jesus always hears such cries. He's consistent. He always does that. He's faithful. We read about him in Scripture, how he hears the cry of people.

God always listens through the Lord Jesus Christ, God here. Sodom and Gomorrah, they were held back for a while, till Lot was said. The children of Israel, the Red Sea, was held back, split asunder, and held back until the last one was across.

The sun and the moon stood still, while Joshua fought and prayed. He has all of these things. There's time. God has time to hear the cry of poor lost people.

He has all the responsibilities in the world, all responsibilities, countless children throughout the world that need to be cared for by him, Africa, Korea, India, Australia, America, Britain, France, all of these prayers going up from believing Christians throughout all the world, and he hears them and he answers them and he deals with them as if there was nobody else but that single cry that comes from a poor sinner somewhere in the midst of all that.

[22 : 04] And he has time to come down amongst us. He's with us now. He's standing still beside each one of us now.

He's standing still beside you, my friend, who maybe hasn't taken him in yet. How long has he been standing, waiting? A hundred years maybe.

Jesus stopped and ordered Bartimaeus to be brought to him. Well, he's still the same, isn't he? He tells his people, he tells his preachers, he tells Christians, he tells converted people, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

Tell them that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoso of it believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. Tell them, tell them about Calvary, tell them about my arms reaching out to them saying, I love you, I love you this much.

Tell them, that's what he tells every one of us, tell them all there's a crucified savior for each and every one of us. And there's a savior within reach of you now.

[23 : 26] And he's standing still beside you. And he's commanded me to call you. So it's your call my friend, it's your invitation. It has your name on it, it has a personal message from heaven.

Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. That's the message from heaven to you today. My friend, don't think, I'm just preaching a sermon. I'm not preaching into the air.

No, I preach for eternity. That's what the preacher preaches, for eternity. And Jesus is standing waiting for you. And he doesn't want you to be lost.

He really doesn't want you to be lost. His love for you is like no other love. He has the scars of Calvary to prove it.

The other gods were strong, but you were weak. They rolled, but you did stumble to a throne, but to her wounds. Only God's wounds can speak. Another god has wounds, but you alone.

[24 : 33] Artemis came straight away. It's interesting that he left everything. We don't read that he took his wee tin of money with him. No, he left his coat even. Left everything, left all, it says, and he came to Jesus.

And the Lord blessed him by giving him back his sight, and giving him more than he asked for, because we read that he followed Jesus in the way of rejoicing, and we read about the effect it had on people.

They saw this, and they understood, and they were overcome, by the sheer power and majesty of the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they also believed and followed Jesus, praising him.

Oh, may each one of us see the beauty of Jesus once again. Those of you who know him already, that you will relive the moments when you first came to know him.

And those who do not know him, my friend, come and see him, call him. Oh, Lord Jesus, we give you thanks for all that you are, and we ask that we would be able more and more to show people your loveliness and your desire that people should be saved.

[25 : 56] But we ask, Lord, that in our efforts that we might obscure the glorious message. so help us, we pray, oh, Lord. We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.