

Intro:

The Bible surveys the panorama of human history. It is unique among all books of this sort for it is the only one that truly identifies the single most pressing problem mankind faces: the problem of sin.

Sin alienated man from God, plunged all men into a state of hostility or 'enmity' towards God, and doomed all men to an eternity without God and without hope in themselves.

Since the first rebellion from God, all men have looked for someone to lead them to a promised land where the curse is reversed and men's labors and toils will be over. This longing is behind every movement of men in human history, following some mad dictator or potentate who inspired them with a hope of something better ... something that never comes as imperfect men never fail to disappoint.

Men make their choices for the ideal leader based on the things they can see, but they are inevitably disappointed by the things they can't see – the human heart and the forces that affect the decisions every leader is confronted with.

In spite of the brokenness of this world, God did not leave it empty and without hope – the Deists were wrong about God! God is not disinterested; God is directly involved in human history with the intention of providing the perfect rule and perfect reign men long for, but look for in all the wrong places.

Out of all humanity, God began by selecting a family, then a man from within that family, and then promised that man that someday a son would come from him who would rule the world in righteousness.

That family is the family of Abraham. The man is David the King. The son is Jesus the Messiah, the Anointed One, the One who will yet be King over all.

When he came to earth the first time, he was announced as the son of David:

- The New Testament opens with these words: "The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:" [^{NAU} Matthew 1.1]
- The Angel Gabriel said this to Mary before she was pregnant: "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." [^{NAU} Luke 1.32-33]
- Amazingly, the unbelieving priests announced it to the unbelieving Herod when the wise men visited Jerusalem: "They said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:⁶ 'AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST

AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH
A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.’’ [^{NAU} Matthew 2.5-6]

Last week we noted the rising interest in Jesus and what he was doing among the people – his works declare him to be the Son of David, the promised Messiah, and when this term was on the lips of people around him, he *did not deny it* – in fact, it is quite clear by the Triumphant Entry to Jerusalem that he completely accepted the designation.

So Jesus is the Son of David.

Well, what does that mean for you and me?

We are going to look at a passage in Mark that has parallels in Matthew and Luke. Each Gospel writer has his own unique twist to the story, but I want to focus on Mark’s account.

Read Mk 10.46-52

A brief sidenote: There are two apparent discrepancies especially with Matthew in this account – turn there for a moment: Mt 20.29-30...

- Matthew – leaving Jericho; Mark – entering Jericho
- Matthew – two blind men; Mark – one blind man

Archaeology tells us there were ‘two’ Jerichos... old Jericho and new Jericho, built by Herod the Great. They were about one mile apart, so one could be ‘leaving Jericho’ and ‘entering Jericho’ at the same time.

There probably were two blind men, but both Mark and Luke focus on just one (not unusual in the parallel gospels). And in Mark’s account he is named, a significant point we will touch on later.

This, then, is our climactic passage in our ‘Son of David’ series. I have entitled the message with the words of Bartimaeus:

Title: *Son of David Have Mercy on Me*

Subtitle: *Lord, that I might receive my sight*

One last introductory word: I am not going to turn this story into an allegory, but I am going to make some comparisons from the story of blind Bartimaeus to universal human need for the Son of David and all he offers mankind.

And that brings us back to our question: What does the fact that Jesus is the Son of David mean for you and me?

I. The condition of the blind man in the 1st century world

A. The Roman attitude towards poverty

1. The Romans were an elitist society, with those who were ‘free men’ largely consisting of the wealthiest men
2. To the Romans, “the majority did not count, and the word ‘poor’ took its meaning as a relative term within the minority we would consider rich. The poor were the rich who were not very rich.”¹
3. Horace, a Roman poet, made a virtue of poverty and said “he was prepared to see his ambitions come to nought, for his poverty would serve as life raft. This ‘life raft’ consisted of two estates, one ... where the master’s house covered some 6,000 square feet.”²
4. The really poor weren’t on the Roman radar screen at all.

B. The Jews had a more enlightened view, inspired by the OT

1. The Lord rebuked Israel for mistreating the poor over and over again in the OT
2. The people of Israel in the first century had a better record of taking care of their poor, especially those of their own family

C. Roman taxation was exceedingly heavy, most Jews were not wealthy

D. The infirm were especially vulnerable to poverty, especially so if they had no family

1. Our text mentions one blind man, Matthew two – they were begging by the side of the road
2. Could not work at anything that could support them
3. Apparently had no family, were reduced to begging to survive

You and I have seen beggars by the side of the road, but none in such conditions as Bartimaeus and his companion would be in
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¹ Paul Veyne, “The Roman Empire,” in *A History of Private Life: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, ed. Paul Veyne and Georges Duby, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, vol. I (Cambridge, MASS: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 141.

² Ibid.

E. Not an allegory, but a comparison

1. Our text is not meant to teach something about spiritual realities by using the ‘metaphor’ of a blind man: but we can use the picture to speak to man’s deepest need
2. Every man is born a spiritual beggar
 - a. We are born under the curse of Adam
 - b. We are born with a willfulness of heart that produces sin
 - c. We all have actually committed sins that alienate us from God
 - d. We have no means by which to gain God’s approval
 - e. We are spiritually dull and blind and can’t see our spiritual needs without God’s revelation

We could list the overt sins that exist in our society as proof of human depravity and spiritual need, as Paul does in Romans 1.

Some would say, well, I haven’t done any of those terrible things ... ‘I haven’t murdered anyone...’ But God rejoins that our inner sins, our pride, our lusts, our selfishness are equally reprehensible.

Romans 1-3 proves the absolute desperation of all men in their sins. All are sinners, all are spiritually blind, all are utterly destitute and under the condemnation of God.

II. The insight of the blind man into the person of Jesus

- A. Consider, however, the insight of the blind man
 1. He heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth
 2. He immediately began to cry, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.’
 3. Matthew puts it this way, ‘Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us.’
 - a. The word, ‘lord’, can be simply a term of respect as we might say, ‘sir’
 - b. In this case, is it something more? Especially coupled with ‘Son of David’

4. By 'Son of David', the blind man clearly means to identify Jesus as the Messiah
 - a. Messiah = Christ
 - b. Both mean 'Anointed One'
 - c. Reference goes back to the words of the prophets who believed the Davidic Covenant
 - d. The Davidic Covenant is the promise of God to David to put a Son of David on the throne of David to rule Israel forever
5. The blind man is certain that this Jesus is that Son of David who is promised, and that Son of David can do something for him that he can't do himself

B. The Bible presents the Son of David as the healer of the nations

1. That means a healing of the wars and troubles and even diseases that plague mankind
2. That means a healing, not only for Israel, but for all the nations (read the prophets)

Wouldn't you like to live in a world where there was no poverty, no war, no hatred, no evil, and absolute safety and peace?

That world, the Bible says, is coming – it is not yet.

But there is a way that the coming world can be your world

C. Jesus is indeed the Son of David, sent by God to restore the poverty of mankind

1. He didn't come simply to solve men's material problems and hand out cash to everyone
2. He came to meet humanities deepest need
 - a. Blind, and unable to see or comprehend God until God makes himself known in the person of Jesus Christ
 - b. Poor, and unable to save one's self from the awful penalties due because of his sin until God took on himself his own wrath and suffered the penalty all men deserved – infinite, eternal separation from God, experienced by the infinite Christ in that moment on the cross when God forsook him

D. Bartimaeus saw Jesus as the one answer to his deepest needs

Do you see Jesus that way?

III. The importunity of the blind man the consequence of a faith decision

A. Bartimaeus would not be silenced (48)

1. Bartimaeus: "Son of David, have mercy on me"
2. A voice from the crowd: "Shut that guy up"
3. Bartimaeus: "Son of David, have mercy on me"
4. Another voice: "Be quiet, you!"
5. Bartimaeus: "Son of David, have mercy on me"
6. Still others: "If you know what's good for you, you'll keep quiet"
7. Bartimaeus: "Son of David, have mercy on me"

B. What is your attitude towards Christ? Do you demand the healing he offers?

1. Do you believe he is the Son of David?
2. Do you believe that in him is the possibility of real forgiveness of sin?
3. Do you believe that He came into this world precisely for this reason: to enable the forgiveness of your sins?
4. Have you begged him for your salvation from sin?

"Son of David, have mercy on me"

- Has he heard your cry?

Conclusion:

There were two blind men. After the healing, both of them followed him. Mark puts it this way in our passage:

^{NAU} **Mark 10.52** And Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and *began* following Him on the road.

Well, what did that mean? Did it mean that Bartimaeus simply followed him because Jesus had done something tremendous for him in a physical way? I mean, if you had been blind for years and someone healed you... what would you do?

But notice v. 46: “a blind beggar *named* Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus...”

Why is he named? Is Mark just a stickler for details?

Remember that Mark is the last of the synoptic gospels to be written: Matthew is first, written to the Jews, about AD 45. Luke is next, written to the Greek Christians, about AD 57. Mark is last, written to the Roman church, about AD 64ish.

Why name Bartimaeus? Why identify his father?

Could it be that Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus is *known* to the Roman believers?

This is over thirty years later. It is hundreds of miles from where the event happened.

“Son of David, have mercy on me.”

Blind Bartimaeus believed in the Son of David, and I believe you will see him in heaven...

That is, you will see him if you join with him in his cry of faith to the Son of David: “Son of David, have mercy on me.”