Questions God Asks  
Week 3: What Do You Want Me To Do For You?  
Scripture Focus: Mark 10:46-52

Introduction
Do you believe in miracles? Have you ever experienced a miracle in your own life or been a part of seeing God do one in someone else’s? If so, what miracle did you see God do? How did it change your faith in who Jesus is and how much He cares about the intimate details of your life?

Examining Scripture

Today, we’re going to look at a miracle that Jesus did. But before we read the story, it’s important to understand where it takes place. Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem and this will be the last time He will make this journey. He is going there to celebrate the Passover with His disciples, and then He will be betrayed, arrested, tried, and crucified.

A large crowd of Passover pilgrims were following Jesus and His disciples to Jericho, which was about 15-18 miles from Jerusalem. Also, the streets and roadways were lined with people (who could not or did not make the trip to Jerusalem) just to view the travelers.

The reason there were so many travelers was because there was a law that every male Jew over twelve years of age who lived within fifteen miles of Jerusalem must attend the Passover. So there were always a lot people around. When a distinguished Rabbi or teacher was on such a journey, it was the custom that he was surrounded by a crowd of people composed of disciples and learners who listened to him as he walked and talked. This was one of the most common ways of teaching at that time.

A side bar here: There were actually two cities named Jericho during the time of Jesus, one in ruins that God had destroyed with Joshua, and the new Roman Jericho one mile from the ruins of old Jericho where Herod the Great and his successors had built a lavish winter palace. Jesus was leaving the one in ruins and entering the newer Roman Jericho.

According to Matthew 20:30, there were two blind beggars sitting beside the road, one was named Bartimaeus. Both Mark and Luke focused more on Bartimaeus because he was the more vocal of the two. The beggars heard that Jesus of Nazareth, the Healer, was passing by; and they did their best to get His attention, thinking that He would be merciful to them and heal them.

Mark 10:46-52 (NLT)

46 Then they reached Jericho, and as Jesus and his disciples left town, a large crowd followed him. A blind beggar named Bartimaeus (son of Timaeus) was sitting beside the road. 47 When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus of Nazareth was nearby, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

48 “Be quiet!” many of the people yelled at him.

But he only shouted louder, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

49 When Jesus heard him, he stopped and said, “Tell him to come here.”
At first, we see the crowd tried to keep Bartimaeus quiet, but when Jesus stopped and called for him, the crowd encouraged him. Bartimaeus threw off his garment so that it would not trip him up and hurried to Jesus. When he got to where Jesus was, Jesus asked him “What do you want me to do for you?” Bartimaeus quickly said, “My Rabbi, I want to see.” Jesus quickly and simply said, “Go, for your faith has healed you.”

In Matthew’s account of this miracle in chapter 20, he says that Jesus was moved with compassion and touched their eyes; and immediately they were healed. Out of gratitude to Jesus, the men joined the pilgrim band and started toward Jerusalem, following Jesus. This is the last miracle of Jesus that Mark records in his Gospel. Keep in mind that Mark’s purpose for writing his Gospel was to show Jesus as “The Suffering Servant,” and this miracle certainly fits his theme. We see Jesus, God’s “Suffering Servant,” on His way to the cross. And yet, He stops to serve two blind beggars.

Questions to Discuss:

1. What kind of faith do you see demonstrated in Bartimaeus?
2. How does your faith and experience measure up to that of Bartimaeus?
3. How can you grow your faith and begin to experience the power of God in your life?
4. What was the key to Bartimaeus’ miracle receiving faith?

Unpacking the Scripture

On the way to Jerusalem, a blind man is healed. It is a wonderful story of faith and action involving a blind beggar by the side of the road. It tells us a lot about the persistence of faith and the subsequent immediate action that took place that demonstrates believing faith. As William Barclay puts it, “The story contains the conditions for a miracle.”

From this story it is evident that the conditions for a miracle are:

1. Persistence.

   Here is a blind man, helpless and needy, who depends upon others for much of the things he needs. When he realized that Jesus was near he starts crying out, “Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!” At that moment, the people he had depended upon previously to help him around tried to quiet him, but to no avail. Bartimaeus continued to shout, “Son of David have mercy on me!”

   Bartimaeus may not have had much class, but he had persistence and determination. Desperate people do not allow the crowd to keep them from Jesus. In the mind of Bartimaeus religion was not just a wishful, sentimental, idea about God; it was a way to satisfy the desperate need of a lifetime.

   Oftentimes today, when all else fails, we go to Jesus. Bartimaeus knew that Jesus was the only solution for him, and he was out to make sure the solution noticed him.
In the end, persistence got the job done.

Charles Spurgeon has said: “Take the gates of heaven and shake them with thy vehemence, as though thou wouldst pull them up post and bar and all. Stand at Mercy’s door, and take no denial. Knock, and knock, and knock again, as though thou wouldst shake the very spheres, but what thou wouldst obtain an answer to thy cries. ‘The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.’ Cold prayers never win God’s ear. Draw thy bow with thy full strength, if thou wouldst send thy arrow up so high as heaven.”

Bartimaeus must have been the inspiration for these words. He was persistent with every ounce of his strength. He drew the bow with all his might and let the arrow go straight to the heart of Jesus.

Question to Discuss: Is there an area of your life that you need to persistently pursue Jesus in? If so, what is it? What is hindering you from running after Jesus like Bartimaeus did?

2. Self-examination.
Get rid of those things that hinder your needed miracle. For Bartimaeus, it was his coat. He wanted nothing between him and his miracle. He did not want to stumble and fall before he was in position for Jesus to touch his blind eyes.

There are at the very least two things that hinder a miracle in our lives:

• Sin. When we have things in our lives that keep us from intimacy with Jesus, a miracle can never happen. Sin is one of the basic hindrances in a personal relationship with God. Unconfessed sin will eventually build a wall that will block the disciple’s prayer channel to God. It is like a clog in your kitchen sink. Just as the water will not drain down a clogged line, prayer cannot find its way to God through unconfessed sin.

• Lack of faith. Even though we do not like to mention the idea that the amount of faith matters, in several of the miracle stories recorded in the Scripture, Jesus said, “Your faith has healed you or your faith has made you well. Because of your faith your sins are forgiven.” Faith is the operative word in any miracle. If you believe, you will receive. Bartimaeus got rid of the thing that would hinder him and so must we if we want a miracle in our lives.

3. Knowing the need.

The blind man knew what he needed from Jesus. He needed mercy. He didn’t come thinking that God owed him. He came in faith believing that Jesus would treat him as He had treated others in his position. He had obviously heard what Jesus had done for others and he just knew He would do it for him. All he wanted from Jesus is mercy.

Yet why did Jesus ask the question, “What do you want me to do for you?” Wasn’t it obvious? There was real power in both the asking and in the answer that Bartimaeus gave to Jesus.

God may ask us the same question, and we should be able to articulate an answer that glorifies
Him. I want to see. There is something important to notice here. Bartimaeus did not say, “Whatever you will give me.” He did not say, “Lord, if it’s your will.” He did not say, “Just bless me, Lord!” He said, “I want to see!”

The specific nature of Bartimaeus’ request is a good example for our prayers. “Have mercy on me” is general, but his prayer moved from the general to the specific request, “I want to see.”

Charles Spurgeon said, “Rest assured that those are the best prayers in all respects, if they be earnest and sincere, which go most directly to the point. You know there is a way of praying in the closet, and praying in the family, in which you do not ask for anything. You say a great many good things, introduce much of your own experience, review the doctrines of grace very thoughtfully, but you do not ask for anything in particular. Such prayer is always uninteresting to listen to, and I think it must be rather tedious to those who offer it.” Bartimaeus went away seeing because his sincerity, his persistence, his humility, and his faith, according to Jesus, had healed him.

4. Personal faith.

In the New King James Version of the Bible, when Bartimaeus called Jesus “Lord,” he used the word “Rabboni,” meaning “My Master.” The only other person in the gospels who used that word “Rabboni” was Mary in John 20:16 when she saw Jesus at the Garden Tomb on Resurrection Day. The beggar had twice called him “Son of David” which was a national messianic title, but “Rabboni” was an expression of personal faith. He was expressing his humble submission to Jesus. Personal faith is the prologue to a miracle from our Lord. He wants us to know Him intimately and to cultivate an intimate relationship with Him.

Miracles aren’t one-sided. Jesus wasn’t a genie who granted peoples’ wishes and then sent them on their way. He requires something of us in return. There is always an action to be taken when you have received a miracle.

1. Go. Jesus said, “Go. Your faith has healed you.” How did Bartimaeus’ faith save him? It saved him because it was:

- Faith that was determined to reach Jesus (but he shouted all the more)
- Faith that knew who Jesus was (Son of David)
- Faith that came humbly to Jesus (have mercy on me)
- Faith that humbly submitted to Jesus (Rabboni)
- Faith that can tell Jesus what it wants (I want to see)

2. Obedience. As he went, immediately he received his sight. You get the distinct impression that Bartimaeus was healed, saved, and followed all in an instant because of his obedience to move. This is the progressive way of discipleship. For some it is a progression of time; and for others, it is an instantaneous experience. The way of Jesus became Bartimaeus’ way, and it also will become your way. He must have figured, “Now that I have my sight, I always want to look upon Jesus.” Someone has said, “Apply to the Son of David; lose not a moment; he is passing by, and thou art passing into eternity, and probably wilt never have a more favorable opportunity than the present.” I am always reminded when I think time --- today is the day of salvation. Do not risk the moment --- believe and be healed.
Question to Discuss: What is your greatest need? Do you, like Bartimaeus, need healing? Take some time right now to share the area(s) of your life that you need healing in. Be specific. Pray in faith for one another, asking God to take action.

Application

There are many of us who call ourselves disciples that need to have our spiritual eyes opened to the power and grace of God. William Barclay says: “Bartimaeus began with need, went on to gratitude, and finished with loyalty --- and that is the perfect summary of discipleship.” We have been blessed abundantly by the power and grace of God. The only appropriate response is to go and share the story with others.

This week, our prayer is that you’ll find ways to keep this Scripture alive in your everyday life. Here are some ways you can do that:

1. Read and study the Scripture daily.
2. Regularly share your story with some else.
3. Worship at every opportunity.
4. Give yourself in service to others.