

Palms Sunday, You, and Your World: Open Your Eyes!
Mark 10:46-11:11

Go your way; your faith has made you well. (Mark 10:52)

Mark is the shortest and simplest of the four Gospels. It gives the reader a vivid, compelling account of the life of Christ. With no editorial comments, Mark lets the narrative tell the story: Jesus is a Servant constantly on the move, and the pace is exhausting. He never rests, never ignores a hurting heart, and never avoids controversy, opposition, or danger. He just keeps moving and serving toward His reason for coming to earth—to suffer and die for the sin of the world.

Mark divides his book geographically: Jesus' ministry in Galilee (1:1-8:21) and Jesus' departure to and ministry in Judea (8:22-16:8). Jesus' movement to the cross dominates the second half of Mark's Gospel. From the time they leave the north, Jesus and His disciples were "on the way" to Jerusalem (9:33; 10:32). Mark bookends this section with two separate healings of a blind man—the first in Bethsaida on the north shore of Galilee (8:22-26), the second in Jericho, just before He enters Jerusalem for the last time (10:46-52). Mark's careful placing of these miracles demonstrates that Jesus was endeavoring to open His disciples' eyes to the truth of the necessity of the cross and suffering. ***All who follow the Suffering Servant must be prepared to lay down their lives and serve others in His name.***

Over a third of the book is devoted to the eight days following their arrival in Judea—from His entry into Jerusalem (11:1-11) to Christ's resurrection (16:1-8). As thousands streamed into Jerusalem for the Passover Feast, Jesus stayed in the house of Mary and Martha two miles east of the city in Bethany. The next morning, in fulfillment of ancient prophecies, the Son of Man rode into Jerusalem on an unbroken colt as the fickle masses cried "Hosanna" ("save now"), and spread garments on the road before Him as they waved palm branches in blessing.

The sharp contrasts between the faith of blind Bartimaeus and the rejecting nation of Israel, and between what He "saw" without eyes that the disciples still failed to "see", challenges every believer to open his or her eyes to the full majesty of the One worthy of our trust and devotion:

***When you open your eyes to the majesty of Jesus Christ,
you will trust Him enough to follow!***

Next Easter Sunday is an awesome opportunity to invite your friends to Church of the Open Door. Wouldn't it be awesome if God could use you in opening their eyes to the majesty of Jesus?

- I. The Servant teaches His followers the need to open their eyes to His majesty (10:46-11:11).
 - A. Deep Faith in Jericho: Blind Bartimaeus trusts in Christ as the Messiah/Deliverer, is made completely well—physically and spiritually—and follows Jesus (10:46-52).
 1. Context of the Lesson: Ancient Jericho, eighteen miles northeast of Jerusalem, was the last safe outpost before a dangerous day's journey into Jerusalem. Crowds are streaming toward the city for the Passover Feast.
 2. Tension of the Lesson: The last miracle of Mark as Jesus transitioned from the training of the twelve to fulfilling the only-now disclosed purpose of His coming—to give His life a ransom for many (10:45)—occurred as He was poised to enter Jerusalem. Jesus ended His lessons on the Cross in the same way He began them—healing a blind man (8:22-26). He is opening the eyes of His disciples, and every reader, to the truth of the necessity of the Cross and suffering. ***All who follow the Suffering Servant must be prepared to lay down their lives and serve others in His name.***

3. Contrasts in the Lesson: The sharp contrasts between the faith of blind Bartimaeus and the rejecting nation of Israel, and between what He “saw” without eyes that the disciples still failed to “see” challenges every believer to open his or her eyes to the full majesty of the One worthy of our trust and devotion.
 4. Example of the Lesson: “Bartimaeus pictured discipleship clearly. He recognized his inability, trusted Jesus as the One to give him God’s gracious mercy, and when he could “see” clearly, began to follow Jesus.” (John Grassmick, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p 155)
- B. Shallow Faith in Jerusalem: The fickle crowds praise Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah who could save them now while still being blind to the truth that He is coming to them humbly as the Suffering Servant who must die to ransom them from their sin (11:1-11).
1. Jesus demonstrated His sovereignty over nature by riding an unbroken colt (Genesis 49:8-12) triumphantly into Jerusalem, fulfilling Zechariah 9:9 and entering the city as their lowly and just King bringing salvation.
 2. The masses enthusiastically receive Him chanting Psalm 118:25-26, one of the six “ascent” psalms the Jews chanted at the annual Passover festival (Psalm 113-118). They shouted “Hosanna” or “save us now”. Most were caught up in the expectation that Jesus was not their lowly Messiah come to save them from their sin, but the military and political deliverer who would restore the Davidic kingdom now (2 Samuel 7:16). But some were identifying Him correctly, as the events of the next week would demonstrate.
 3. After entering Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple to see if it was being used appropriately, and returned with the twelve to Bethany.
- II. If you want to follow Jesus, you must open your eyes! Following Jesus begins and ends with our appreciation of **Who** He already is, **What** He has already done for us, and **What** He has already said following Him involves.
- A. You must open your eyes to the majesty of the Person of Christ.
 - B. You must open your eyes to the purpose of His coming.
 - C. Could today be your “Jericho” experience?
 - D. Could you open your eyes to His love for the people in your world who do not know Him?