

Jesus Stopped

WRCOB_ 8-21-2022

Mark 10:46-52

Prayer

Question:

‘Who is the most important person in your life?’

Introduction

We all lead busy lives; spouses, children, parents, siblings, jobs, community obligations and church commitments. Life is busy. Just think of what it took for you to get here today. And many of us are already retired. But we’re still busy. And we’re busy doing good things too. We’re not wasting our lives.

Most of us have a list of people that we meant to call, meant to visit, meant to drop by to see, meant to send a card.....But Life....we just got so busy. Sound Familiar to anyone.

Well let’s spend some time with Jesus and see what Jesus has to say about busyness and being.

Text

Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem, ostensibly to celebrate the Passover, but more importantly, to give His life to redeem all of us.

Jesus is on his way to the crucifixion, but they didn’t know or understand Jericho lay along the Jordan River, just north of the Dead Sea,

- and was the last stop pilgrims made on their way from Galilee to Jerusalem.
- The city would have been crowded with pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover.
- Pilgrims formed the crowd with Jesus

Custom – Distinguished Rabbi or teacher was on a journey, taught as they walked – people surrounded them, staying close, hoping to clearly hear what they had to say.

BARTIMAEUS

Blind beggars were a common sight in Palestine. Like pan-handlers today who stand at busy corners or freeway exits, beggars then sat at high traffic areas, like the city gates. It's probable that as blind Bartimaeus took his usual spot, he joined a group of blind beggars that were long-time friends. "Hey Bart! Good to see you!"

Bartimaeus couldn't see, but he could hear fine,

- and before long, he heard the tramp of feet and the sound of voices that told him a crowd was coming.
- He hollered to someone going by, "What's going on?" and was told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

Advantage of begging at the City Gate - you heard all the news.

- For almost three years Bart had been hearing stories about this young rabbi from Nazareth, stories about Him healing the sick, even the blind.
- Bart had made up his mind that if he ever had the chance to meet Jesus, he would ask Jesus to heal him.
- Suddenly, here was his chance! So, he began to yell, as loud as he could, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Son of David was a term that was widely used in Jesus' day for the Messiah.)

CROWD

- Jesus is trying to teach; people crowded around to hear
- Bart is screaming
 - "Son of David, have mercy on me!"
- Some – Be Quiet, you're making a scene
- Others – shut up, we can't hear

JESUS

Hears his cries and says 'CALL HIM'

- So, the people who had just tried to silence him now called him to Jesus. They went from “Shut up” to “Cheer up...and get up and come!”
- Jesus could have called Bartimaeus himself;
 - Teaches the people a lesson re hindering people from coming to Jesus – doubtful that they got it
- I think he was teaching the crowd that you don’t ever keep people from coming to Jesus—**you help them come. Jesus wants us to be ushers, not bouncers**—people who help others come to Jesus, not keep them away.

COMING to Jesus

- Throws his cloak aside – not a good move for a blind beggar – gonna need that
- Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?”
- Come On! He’s Blind!! But Jesus asks the obvious question; Why,
- Because He wants to.....Essence of Prayer
- Does God know what you need before you pray? Yes. Jesus said in Matthew 6:8, “your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.” Jesus knew what Bart needed and wanted, but He wanted Bart to ask, and to ask specifically.

RESPONSE

“Rabbi, I want to see.” The Greek word literally means, “to see again.” Perhaps Bart had been able to see at one time, but had lost his sight.

With a word, Jesus healed him and Bart saw again, and the first thing he saw was the face of Jesus.

The story ends with the words, he “followed Jesus along the road”. The beggar who sat by the road became the disciple who followed Jesus along the road. **Christianity begins with a response to Jesus.**

I want to focus on one thing: two little words in verse 49. “Jesus stopped.”

The Big Idea: Jesus stopped, and we must too. The most important person in the world is the one you’re with right now.

Jesus stops for you

Jesus stopped for people. Jesus stopped for blind Bartimaeus, a beggar in a ditch.

Mark places the story of Jesus healing Bartimaeus right after James and John ask Jesus to be His vice-presidents in His new kingdom. If your Bible is still open to Mark 10, look at the verses just before today's story. Jesus answered James and John's request this way:

Mark 10:42-45 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

- They were seeking power; Jesus taught them to seek service.
- They wanted greatness; Jesus offered them sacrifice.
- They were thinking only of themselves; Jesus told them to think of others.

But then He showed them how. **Jesus stopped.**

On His way to the Cross, He stopped to help a blind beggar.

"Whoever wants to be become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

Remember where Jesus was going. He was on His way to Jerusalem to die for the sins of the world. If anyone had a lot on His mind, if anyone had a full plate, if anyone deserved to be preoccupied, it was Jesus.

Illustration

Man at a leadership conference where one of the guest speakers was President Bill Clinton. Speaking to thousands of pastors and leaders, the man introducing President Clinton told us that one reason he had invited Clinton was so that we could hear his thoughts on leadership. Then he

said, “You may not agree with him, but he is a leader. If you think you lead a big deal, his deal is bigger than yours.”

I think that about Jesus on His way to die in Jerusalem to save the whole world: His deal is bigger than yours. If you think you are busy, His deal is bigger than yours. If you think you are carrying a load on your shoulders, if you think you’re stressed and overwhelmed, His deal is bigger than yours. We talk about carrying the weight of the world on our shoulders—Jesus did. He was God’s Son, the Savior of the world, doing the biggest and hardest and most important thing that would ever be done in human history. But He stopped. His deal is bigger than yours and He stopped for one man.

Look who He stopped for: a poor blind beggar! Bart wasn’t a VIP, a very important person; he was a Z-I-P, a zip, zero, nada, nothing. Bart was a nobody. He was at the bottom of the food chain—literally, living off the scraps of others. Bart was a nobody by anybody’s measure...anybody but Jesus. Bart mattered to Jesus. He mattered so much that Jesus stopped—on His way to the Cross, Jesus stopped for this man.

Let that sink in, and let it amaze you, awe you, humble you. Because when you cry out, when you call His name, Jesus still stops. You matter to Him. Yes, He’s busy running the universe. Yes, there are millions of people calling His name, sometimes all at once. But He hears you, and He stops because you matter to Him.

You see, God is in the people-business. People are God’s top priority, His highest value, His big deal. People are what matter to God. All kinds of people: rich and poor, black and white, Republican and Democrat, single and married, gay and straight, Americans and Cubans and Iraqis and Chinese and Ethiopians...you name it. People matter to God. Every single one. That’s why He went to that Cross. That’s why He let soldiers strip His back with a whip, and spit in His face, and press the thorns in His scalp. That’s why He suffered, and bled, and died. For you. For me. For all of us. Because God’s in the people-business.

That’s why He stopped.

You matter to God. He stops for you! It could have been you or me in the ditch by Jericho's gate. It often is. We get ourselves in all kinds of ditches, big and small. What do you do when that happens? I hope you'll do what Bart did. Call on Him. "Jesus, over here! Have mercy on me! Help me!" I'll bet I do that at least a dozen times a day. I'm always calling on Him.

"Help me with this kid, Lord."

"Help me love my wife."

"Help me know what to say to this hurting person."

"Help me lead this church, these people You love."

"Help me speak."

Help me, help me, help me! Do you think God ever gets tired of it? Do you think He has other, bigger things on His mind? Do you think He ever walks on by? No. He stops...for you, just like He stopped for Bart.

Maybe you're thinking, "Look, this is one story—what does it prove?" But I want to show you that this was not an exception; this was the rule. Time and again, we see Jesus stopping for individuals, people that didn't matter to anyone else.

The woman at the well in John 4. The disciples were amazed to find Jesus talking with her because she had three strikes against her: she was a woman, she had a bad reputation, and she was a Samaritan. But Jesus stopped for her because she mattered to Him.

The Gentile woman with a demonized daughter in Matthew 15. She wasn't a Jew, but she was a nuisance, so the disciples asked Jesus to send her

away because she was pestering them. But Jesus stopped, and healed her daughter.

The woman with the bleeding problem who touched Jesus' cloak in Mark 5. Jesus was on His way to heal Jairus' daughter, a VIP, when this woman, a nobody like Bart, touched Him. And Jesus stopped, for her.

There's Zaccheus, the vertically-challenged tax collector who climbed a tree to see Jesus in Luke 19. When Jesus saw him up there, He stopped, and Zack's life was changed forever.

That was Jesus. And it still is. He's in the people-business. He stops for us.

Can you see the heart of Jesus? It's a heart that beats for one thing: people. It's a heart that beats for you, and when you call, Jesus stops. (Say it)

But I want to take that thought one step further. I want to challenge you to have the same heart as Jesus. I want to challenge you to make people your top priority, your highest value, your big deal. I want to challenge you to stop for people.

We Must Stop For Others

Jesus made heroes of those who stopped for people. He did it in one of His most famous stories in Luke 10, the story of the Good Samaritan. You all know it: a Jewish man is ambushed by robbers, stripped, beaten and left for dead. A priest (the equivalent of a pastor) comes along but just walks on by the man; he doesn't stop. Then a Levite (the equivalent of church staff member) comes along and does the same thing. Neither of these two religious professionals stopped. Then along comes a Samaritan, a hated half-breed (the equivalent of an irreligious person). He stops, helps the man, and takes him to a hospital. Who is the hero of the story? The one who stopped.

We get so busy that we're often like the priest or Levite. We just walk on by. We don't have time. We can't be bothered. We're late. We've got

other more pressing business. But God is in the people-business and we ought to be too. We need to learn to stop: stop for our spouses, kids, friends, neighbors, family, co-workers and classmates, strangers, and the poor. We've got to remember that the most important person in the world is the one you're with right now.