

How Faith Rises Victorious.

Text: Mark 10:46-52

Suggested Hymns:

321, 205, 395, 158, 330

1) Over Misrepresentations Of Jesus

2) Over Obstacles And Rebuffs

3) Over Ills And Woes

4) Over Self

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Mark 10:46-52, ***“Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.”***

“And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”⁴⁶ Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

“So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, “Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.”⁴⁷ And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

“So Jesus answered and said to him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” The blind man said to Him, “Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.”⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road. (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Faith is not of human origin. Man is spiritually helpless. We read in 1 Cor. 2:14 that ***“the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him.”*** Man is dead in trespasses and sins.

Anybody may by his own ability go through some of the outward expressions of faith. He can confess with the mouth, recite the Creed, and gain a knowledge of what man must believe to be saved.

But the true faith, which is trust in the merits of Jesus and the grace of God in Christ, the faith which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,¹ is beyond man's power even in its smallest beginnings.

True faith is the work of the Holy Spirit, performed through the means of grace. *Luther's Small Catechism* sums it up so well. *I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and kept me in the true faith.*

Of this faith St. John says that *this is the victory that has overcome the world.*² The conduct of Bartimaeus recounted in our text, as well as the nobleman in the Gospel lesson, shows us *How Faith Rises Victorious*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Faith Rises Victorious Over Any Misrepresentations Of Jesus

Our text begins, *⁴⁶ Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.* Jesus is on route to Jerusalem to begin His Passion. Had left Perea, crossed Jordan, and reached Jericho.

A great multitude accompanied Jesus, thinking that the time had come when He would establish His kingdom, expel the Romans, exalt the Jewish nation to the position of a world-power, and make all the other earthly dreams of the carnally minded Jews come true.

By the wayside sat a blind beggar, *blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus*. Bartimaeus had heard of Jesus and His works, for the report of Jesus and His mighty deeds was well known among the Jews. He was greatly in need of the help which Jesus could give. But being blind, he could not come to Jesus himself, and it seems, had no one to lead him.

He was helpless. He was waiting. Then he heard a great noise. A multitude was passing by. He asked one of the passers-by what this meant. He received the answer that it was Jesus of Nazareth..

The answer contained a partial truth. "Jesus of Nazareth" was equivalent to the great prophet who, contrary to expectation, had arisen in Galilee. He was the

mighty miracle-worker, who commanded the winds and the waves, healed the sick, made the blind to see, cast out demons, and even raised the dead (for example, daughter of Jairus).

Jesus was the man whom the Jews wanted to make king after they had been fed. It was Jesus whose deeds caused the people to glorify God, who had given such power to men, as we read in Matthew 9:8, ***8 Now when the multitudes saw [that Jesus healed the paralytic], they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.***

But the partial truth was in reality a total misrepresentation. It omitted any mention of the essential thing about Christ: His divinity, the very thing that Jesus sought earnestly to impress on the Jews in the discussion reported in John chapter 8 and 9.

It omitted the essential item of Peter's confession, ***"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"*** which elicited the Lord's praise in Matt. 16:17, ***"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven."***

It omitted the great fact that Christ had come to seek and to save that which was lost.³ "Jesus of Nazareth" — good enough as far as it went, but not going far enough, so it was worthless, and worse, even harmful.

But the faith of Bartimaeus rose victorious over the misrepresentation. Our text says, ***47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"*** Physically blind, Bartimaeus had received spiritual sight and understanding from the Holy Spirit and exercised keen insight, seeing that which the multitude did not see.

Addressing himself to Jesus, he did not say ***"Jesus of Nazareth,"*** but ***"Jesus, Son of David."*** Son of David was the technical name of the expected Messiah.⁴ Son of David implied a confession of Christ's divinity; for David had in spirit called this Son of David, LORD.

In His miracles, which to the general population only recognised a display of power, Bartimaeus saw God visiting His people. In the person who performed these miracles he saw the Christ who was sent by the Father. Thus his faith rose victorious over the misrepresentation.

True faith always rises victorious over all misrepresentations of Jesus. Similar misrepresentations of Jesus are common today. People take pleasure in praising the rich humanity of Jesus: sympathy for the poor and oppressed, ready to help, prudent counsel, a noble example, hatred of sham, hypocrisy, and formalism. But with that they stop.

Hence the names they apply: Jesus of Nazareth, the Carpenter's Son. Such praise misrepresents Jesus. It misses the essential points: His divinity, and His Messiahship.

The true believer sees all that in Jesus self-evidently. But he sees more. What is the more? It is what Bartimaeus saw: David's Son and David's Lord, true God, one with the Father, the beloved Son in a unique sense, *very God of very God*.

It sees in Jesus the *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*, the Saviour who was *"delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification,"*⁵ *"the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."*⁶

What do you see in Christ? True faith rises victorious over any misrepresentation and centres attention on Christ's divinity and Messiahship.

2. Faith Rises Victorious Over Obstacles And Rebuffs.

Our text continues ⁴⁸*Then many warned him to be quiet*. The people had not understood the real purpose of Christ's coming. For all their enthusiasm they had not appreciated the real significance of His miracles. Satisfied with their own spiritual condition, feeling no hunger and thirst for righteousness, they looked only for bread and for earthly glory.

Hence they thought it inappropriate that misery should be thrust upon them. Consequently they rebuked Bartimaeus. They put obstacles in his way. But the faith of Bartimaeus rose victorious over these obstacles, *he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

He was also victorious also over inward obstacles. The people thought that Bartimaeus was unworthy to associate with Jesus, a disturbing element in the general joy of the occasion. Bartimaeus concedes this. His cry, *"Have mercy!"*

is the cry of the beggar who has no claim on the favour he asks. It excludes all notions of worth and merit.

Bartimaeus knew and admitted that he had done nothing to deserve the favour and help of Jesus. The only claim he had on Jesus was that Jesus had come to save the lost. When he came forward he had nothing to say for himself. His faith rose victorious over these obstacles and rebuffs because he considered only the known goodness and mercy of Jesus.

So we can see that faith always rises victorious over obstacles. To all people who feel their sins, who are conscious of their utter unworthiness in the sight of God, Satan says, as he said to Cain: *Your sins are too great to be forgiven. You don't belong among the saints; yours would be a disturbing presence.*

But true faith rises victorious over such obstacles. Trusting in the mercy of Jesus, which did not ridicule Mary when she was possessed by seven demons and did not despise the thief on the cross, true faith exclaims with Paul, ***“where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.”***⁷

Faith rises victorious over the sense of its own unworthiness. The believer freely confesses his guilt. He pleads guilty of all sins and admits that he daily sins much and deserves nothing but punishment. The hymnist expresses this though in the words, *“Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling.”*⁸ Another hymnist writes, *I am all unrighteousness; False and full of sin I am.*⁹ Blind Bartimaeus finds in Jesus a fountain of mercy gushing forth plenteous grace to cover all his sins. His faith is victorious!

How about your faith? Can you still list any reasons why God should be gracious to you, and why He should not condemn you to hell? Then you may have come into the courtyard, but you have not entered into the Holy of Holies of faith.

Does the difference seem slight to you? It is the difference between true faith and sham faith. A house built partly on rock and partly on sand is insecure. A faith resting partly on Christ and partly on human merit cannot weather the storm. *“Have mercy on me, the sinner,”* is the prayer of true faith which rises victorious over rebuffs, obstacles, and the sense of unworthiness.

3. Faith Rises Victorious Over Ills And Woes.

Our text continues ⁴⁹ *So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, “Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.”* ⁵⁰ *And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.*

⁵¹ *So Jesus answered and said to him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” The blind man said to Him, “Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.”* What a confident statement! He requested what was far above human power. Yet blandly uttered, without apology or hesitation. To Bartimaeus it is self-evident that Jesus can grant the petition.

It is equally self-evident that Jesus is willing to restore the sight of his eyes. Nor is the request in vain, ⁵² *Then Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.”* His sight was restored. The faith of Bartimaeus rose victorious over his great ills and woes.

A true believer should never hesitate to approach the Lord with great requests. He holds the Lord to His promises, as recorded in John 16:23, *Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.*

The believer especially asks for pardon and forgiveness. Sins are the greatest evil. The gift of wealth lies in the power of a rich man; the gift of knowledge, in the power of a good teacher; the gift of health, at least partly, in the power of a skilful doctor.

But who can forgive sins? wash away the stains of conscience? break the habit of sin? remit the consequences of sin? Yes, who except God?

And yet, if you truly believe, you rise victorious over the tremendous guilt and power of iniquity. What you confidently expect and ask in Christ’s name God will also surely give you. Sins red as crimson become white as snow the moment you believe that Jesus has borne your sins in His body on the tree.

Overhead and underground wires send a continuous current of electricity into our houses; through faith a continuous, never-ending stream of divine mercy, pardon, and power flows into your life with healing effects, creating in you a clean heart and renewing in you a right spirit. As faith lifted Bartimaeus over his ills and woes, so will true faith also make you rise victorious over your ills and woes.

4. True Faith Rises Victorious Over Self.

Our text concludes with these words, *And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.* His sight is restored, and Bartimaeus consecrated himself to Jesus. He used his newly received power of walking independently for no other purpose than to that of following Jesus. He followed Jesus even though the actual appearance of Jesus may have contradicted the picture which he had constructed of Him in his imagination. Happiness and satisfaction is only in the company of the Saviour. Thus his faith rose victorious over self.

To this there is no exception. You confess the faith which Bartimaeus displayed. Your faith has brought you pardon and the love of the heavenly Father. By your faith you have wafted yourselves up and have obtained a glimpse of the heavenly Jerusalem; of the kingdom of joy prepared for believers; of the rivers of mercy flowing at the Lord's right hand forevermore; of the Rock of Ages, from which gushes forth the water of life, so that each can drink and be satisfied; of the marvels that eye has not seen, ear has not heard, and that have not entered into the heart of man.

Do you also evidence this faith? Are you habitually on the side of Jesus? Are you fond about your Father's business? Do you on Sundays and week-days listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd? Do you go about your daily work in the shop, the office, the kitchen, the farm, and endure your daily trials in patience as if you were under the eye of the Lord? True faith rises victorious over self, crucifies it, sees Jesus only, and follows none but Him.

In all this we are weak. Much sin, much carnal-mindedness, must still be swept away. God's grace and power must still be made perfect in our weakness and turn our weakness into strength.

So in conclusion let us rejoice over the faith which God has created and kept within our hearts. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Heb. 11:1

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- ² 1 John 5:4
 - ³ Luke 19:10; 4:18
 - ⁴ Matt. 22:42
 - ⁵ Romans 4:25
 - ⁶ 1 John 2:2
 - ⁷ Romans 5:20
 - ⁸ Hymn 330
 - ⁹ Hymn 158