

Series: From this Day Forward
Date: April 26, 2026
Rev. A. Barry Bruce

Mark 10:46-52
Argyle Road Baptist

Read Mark 10:46-52

Intro: My wife, Michelle and I heard about your church many years ago through Dr. Jean Weir, who delivered all four of our children. Before our last boy was born, she said she would deliver him if she wasn't playing the organ on Sunday morning.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, this morning we want to thank you that You are faithful, that you are good, that you are compassionate and that you are slow to anger. You are the Lord who always keeps his promises. We thank You for Your mercies that are new every morning and every day! You have extended mercy to this church for many years and I pray as we read your word this morning that we will always be the first ones to extend mercy as you have extended mercy to us.

Me part: I can't tell you how many times that I have said the same words that this blind man by the name of Bartimaeus said on number of occasions, "have mercy on me, God." Even when I was just a teenager, I can remember when I did something wrong or I said something I shouldn't have said, or I did something that I was ashamed of or I did something that I didn't anyone to find out, I would call out to God and say, "have mercy on me, God." Whenever our family faced a crisis or a loss, we called out to God, "have mercy on us, God." When my grandson Axel was born he had trouble breathing and due to medical error and immature lungs the doctor hit a major artery and he began to bleed severely and he flatlined! While all this was going on I was present with my daughter and her husband, praying for Axel, "God have mercy!"

We part: I would imagine almost every person here has uttered those same words that Bartimaeus said: "have mercy on me, God." When you are in a distressful situation or if you experience a loss in life or if you lose a job or if you are in any financial difficulties or if you have a child in the hospital, you call out to God and say, "have mercy on

me.” When we are in a difficult time in our lives, everyone calls out to God. We bow our heads, we fall to our knees and we call out to God to “have mercy on me”. Regardless of who you are, in your distress, in your pain and in your grief you will call upon God to have mercy on you. It’s true for some of us that the first time we called out to God was in our distress, in our pain and in our grief.

- When your health or your loved one’s health is threatened
- When one of your children rebels
- When your marriage is falling apart
- When your finances are out of control
- When you lose a loved one through death
- When you see all of the violence, chaos, greed and hate in our world

In your distress, no matter what you believed about God before, no matter what you have convinced yourself about God before, in your distress, you call out to God for his mercy. When you are broken, when you’ve been found out, when you have been discovered, when your back is against the wall, you urgently call out to God for his mercy.

God Part: When we read this story about Bartimaeus, there are three scenes that I want to bring to your attention. All three scenes tell us about Bartimaeus’ physical posture. In the first scene he is sitting by the roadside, in the second scene he throws aside his coat, jumps up and comes to Jesus, and in the final scene he follows Jesus down the road.

Every single day of his life, Bartimaeus would take his one possession, his coat, and go to the same spot that he was familiar with, and beg in order to stay alive. He was needy, he was helpless and his blindness had reduced him to poverty and begging. To make matters worse, the religious system of the day would have forced people like Bartimaeus to feel very, very far from God. He belonged to a category of people that would have been excluded from society and considered religiously impure because of his blindness. Rather than move people like blind Bartimaeus closer to God, their religious system forced people away from God. Some of the religious people believed that Bartimaeus was blind because of his sin. They would not come in contact with Bartimaeus for fear that his sin might rub off on them. He was not able to participate in the synagogue to worship God because of his blindness, which just drove home the point that

he was far from God. After you experience and hear a message like this long enough from religious people, you begin to feel and think that because you are nothing like them, God could never accept you.

One of the reasons that I am so amazed at Jesus is that Jesus loved people and accepted them and Jesus spent time with them. Jesus' love had the power to rub off on everyone!

That's one of the main reasons why Jesus came into our world. He came to explain God in such a way that people who were nothing like Jesus could have a personal relationship with his heavenly Father. Jesus came to reach out to people so they could reconnect with God. Bartimaeus was one of those individuals who would have been considered nothing like Jesus, but Jesus sent out an invitation and called Bartimaeus to follow him. When people accepted this invitation to follow Jesus, they found themselves captivated by an extraordinary love that led them to adopt a lifestyle that turned the world upside down. When you make a decision to follow Jesus from this day forward, he will change your life.

“When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus of Nazareth was nearby, he began to shout out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” (47) Somehow the word on the street gets to blind Bartimaeus that Jesus of Nazareth is nearby, so he begins to shout out, *“Jesus, Son of David have mercy on me! Jesus Son of David have mercy on me!”* Let's pause here for a few moments. Bartimaeus refers to Jesus as “Jesus, Son of David” on two occasions. Now, that title may be new to you, but to Bartimaeus the title “Jesus, Son of David” indicated something special about the messianic identity of Jesus. The only other time when someone uses a messianic title for Jesus is Peter in Mark 8:29-30 when he confesses that “Jesus is the Christ,” the anointed one, the Messiah. After Peter makes this confession about the identity of Jesus, Jesus warns his disciples not to tell anyone.

This is what is so amazing about this story: we have a blind beggar who is unable to see, who has been labeled by the religious people as unworthy, far from God and to be avoided. But it's blind Bartimaeus who knows the true identity of Jesus. Blind Bartimaeus sees what the physically sighted religious leaders never see. In calling “Jesus, Son of David,” Bartimaeus shows that he knows that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, the anointed one of God. A blind man sees.

But you have to take a look at this next verse in this story. You're not going to believe this, but there were some people with

Jesus who said to Bartimaeus, *“Be quiet! Many of the people yelled at him.”* (48) Can you believe that! Hard to believe that some people could be so calloused towards another human being in need. I find it hard to believe that people can be so merciless towards another human. It’s a lot easier to receive mercy than it is to extend mercy. Receiving mercy is often easier than extending mercy.

- When I’m driving to work and another car cuts me off I have a hard time extending mercy.
- When my daughter was playing volleyball and she had to sit on the bench, I found it difficult to extend mercy to that coach.
- When I played hockey and someone intentionally gave me a cheap shot, I had a very difficult time in extending mercy. It’s a lot easier to receive mercy than it is to extend mercy.

Who are the people in your life that you have a hard time extending mercy to? What about an ex-boss, ex-partner, ex-husband, or ex-wife, or an ex-friend? Whose calamity do you secretly celebrate? Who do you secretly wish would get what you think they have coming to them?

These are people who need God’s mercy and someday God may assign you the task of extending mercy in their direction. When we receive God’s mercy, we can extend God’s mercy to others.

But the people yelling and screaming at Bartimaeus are not showing him any mercy whatsoever. I would imagine that Bartimaeus has been yelled at before. But here’s what I love about this man. He just shouts louder. I love this man’s persistence, his courage, his faith, even when everyone is telling him to be silent. Jesus was always amazed at people who expressed persistence, courage and faith in him. No matter how big of a step of faith or how little a step of faith, Jesus was always amazed when people expressed their faith in him. When people acted upon what they knew about Jesus, they got Jesus’ attention. “When Jesus heard him, he stopped and said, ‘Tell him to come here.’ So they called the blind man. ‘Cheer up,’ they said. ‘Come on, he’s calling you!’ So Bartimaeus threw aside his coat, jumped up and came to Jesus.” (49-50)

Bartimaeus takes that first step of faith and he comes to Jesus. He’s no longer sitting by the roadside. “He threw aside his coat, jumped up and came to Jesus.” That invitation that Jesus gives to Bartimaeus is an invitation that Jesus has been giving out since the beginning of time. No matter what your church experience is like, if you have been in the church for twenty years or twenty minutes,

Jesus sends out an invitation to all of us to follow him and to take that first step of faith.

If you are a person who would consider yourself disconnected from God because of the baggage of the past, or your lack of belief or whatever you're thinking that says, I will never connect with God because of what I have done in my past, you need to listen because when you take the first small step of faith, Jesus extends his mercy to you – his unlimited mercy. Notice that Bartimaeus leaves his coat behind. Sometimes when we follow Jesus, he asks us to leave some things behind that we don't need anymore. This is Bartimaeus' coat that kept him warm at night. This is his coat that he would place on the ground where he hoped someone would come along and give him a few coins to buy his next meal. But he leaves it behind and he takes the initiative and he jumps up and comes to Jesus.

Look at what it says in verse 51-52, *“What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked. “My Rabbi,”* (another important title that he gives to Jesus, for he recognizes that Jesus has the power and authority to heal him) *“My Rabbi,” the blind man said, “I want to see.” And Jesus said to him, “Go, for your faith has healed you.” Instantly the man could see and he followed Jesus down the road.”*

I imagine that Jesus could have said a lot of other things to Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus, look at what you have become. This is what you have done in your past and this is why you are begging and living a life of poverty. Jesus could have just dumped the whole load on him. Jesus could have buried him by reading him his entire history of sin. Jesus could have done that!

But Jesus doesn't say that to Bartimaeus and neither will he say it to us. Jesus came to earth in order to be followed. When Bartimaeus made that decision, from this day forward to follow Jesus, his life changed.

You Part: When you make that decision to follow Jesus from this day forward, he will change your life. Here's what we can learn from this story: every day God is extending an invitation to you, calling you to come to him. Whatever you think you have done in the past, I want you to know that Jesus loves you very much.

Jesus is here for you. Jesus has come for people in those honest moments of their lives, when they realize that there is something wrong in their life and they can't fix it.

Jesus extends an invitation to people who look in the mirror and say, nobody knows this about me but me.

Jesus sends out an invitation to a married couple when they have run into some serious problems that they just can't fix.

Jesus sends out an invitation to parents who can't seem to fix their relationship with a son or daughter.

Jesus sends out an invitation to people who can't seem to fix their finances.

We Part: When you make that decision and say, "From this day forward I am going to follow Jesus," he will change your life. When you take that first step of faith, as Bartimaeus did, you will begin to see God differently. You will see your marriage relationship differently, your relationship with your friends differently. You will see how you spend your money differently. When you say to God, "from this day forward I am going to follow you," he will change your life. You will begin to read God's Bible; you will begin to offer up prayers to God and you will begin to change on the inside. As you read the Bible, as you pray, as you come to church, as you get involved in the ministries of this church, over time you will fall in love with Jesus. And when you fall in love with Jesus, you begin to do things differently in your life.

You will be the first one to extend mercy and forgiveness, as Pastor Ryan spoke about two weeks ago.

You will be the first one to say to your spouse, children and friends, "I am sorry, will you forgive me? I have made a decision from this day forward to follow Jesus and he's been changing my life." Can you imagine what that would do in your relationships?

You will be the first one to say to your children, "You know I haven't been the best father or mother, but today I have made a commitment. From this day forward I am going to follow Jesus and he's been changing my life." Can you imagine what that will do in the lives of your children?

Can you imagine if your son or daughter came home and said, "Mom and Dad, from this day forward I am going to follow Jesus." As they take the first step of faith, you will begin to see a real change in their lives.

Can you imagine what your church would be like if everyone here made that decision and said, "From this day forward I am going to follow Jesus." Your church life will be changed forever.

As conflict continues across parts of the Middle East and the surrounding region, during these difficult days, the underground church network in Iran is serving in their communities: caring for wounded, supporting grieving families, and bringing practical aid and hope to people around them.

One mother of three fled an area under heavy bombardment. She encountered the living Christ through the care she received during her displacement. "One day people came with food ... but they also brought dignity. They treated us like family. I knew they were Christians, because only people whose hearts belong to God act like this. Their love was a gentle touch from God upon the wounds of my soul." (Story from the Alliance Canada Global Emergency Response in Iran, April 16, 2026)

When you make that decision to follow Jesus, he will change your life. As followers of God, our love, our mercy upon people's lives is like a gentle touch from God upon the wounds of their soul. When Bartimaeus experienced that gentle healing touch from Jesus upon the wounds of his soul, he followed Jesus down the road that led to Jerusalem. When you say, "From this day forward I am going to follow Jesus," your life will be changed forever.

I want to close with a song. Some of you know this song and for some it will be new. It's called "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus." As we sing this song, make this your song today. From this day forward, I will follow Jesus.