**Lesson for September 19, 2021, “Glorifying God”**

Background Scripture: Mark 10:46-52 and Luke 18:35-43

Everything we do should glorify God!

We glorify God by living lives that honor Him.

When one bears suffering faithfully, God is glorified and honored.

We glorify Christ when we live for God, trusting, loving and obeying Him.

Our voices, our service, and our abilities are to be employed, primarily, for the glory of God.

Prayer serves a dual purpose; the blessing of man and the glory of God.

Our dress, our posture, our actions should all be for the honor and glory of Christ. Much of our talk as Christians is secular, not spiritual. It is easy to fall into conversations of the world and spend an evening discussing politics, new cars, and the latest entertainment. We often forget that we are to edify one another with holy conversation and that our conversation should be on heavenly, and not exclusively on earthly things.

One of the joys of heaven…will be discovering the hidden ways that God in His sovereignty acted in our lives on earth to protect and guide us [that we might] bring glory to His name, in spite of our frailty.

The setting for this week’s lesson is just before Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time. He had recently been in Capernaum teaching (Mark 9:33-37) and then moved on to Judea teaching and healing as He went (Mark 10:1-27).  Jesus and His disciples headed to Jerusalem, and once again, the Master took His disciples aside to instruct them about the events that would shortly take place (Mark 10:32-34).  Knowing that the Messiah would have a great kingdom, the disciples focused only on that truth and seemingly cast aside everything that Jesus said about His approaching crucifixion which was part of God’s plan (Luke 24:44; Acts 2:23).  Believing that Christ was going to set up His kingdom immediately, James and John came with a special request for prominent places in the kingdom (Mark 10:35-37).  Matthew’s account informs us that their mother was also involved in making this request (Matthew 20:20-21).  Jesus responded to their request by declaring who would be the greatest in His kingdom when He said *“*And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”(Mark 10:44-45)*.*This is where our printed text begins.

As Jesus and His disciples made their way to Jerusalem for His last time which would end in His crucifixion (Mark 10:32-34), “they came to Jericho.” The city of “Jericho”has a long and interesting history in the Bible.  Most notably was the destruction of the city under Joshua (Joshua chapter 6).  The city was rebuilt in a nearby location and is mentioned several times in the New Testament (Luke 10:30; 19:1).  Some scholars speculate on whether or not Jesus actually stopped in with Zacchaeus at this time, the gospel writers don’t give us enough information to make that determination.It appears that when “they came to Jericho,”Jesus may have simply came near the city which was about fifteen miles from Jerusalem and continued through it since the rest of this verse says that He “went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people.”  In Luke’s account of this incident, he writes that Jesus healed “Bartimaeus” when He came near to Jericho (Luke 18:35), and then He entered and passed through the city and then met with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-2).  Luke is the only gospel writer who tells the story about Jesus’ meeting with Zacchaeus.As Jesus left “Jericho,” He was followed by His disciples, and a large “number of people.”  Some of them were probably sympathetic to Jesus’ cause, while others may have been pilgrims making their way to Jerusalem for the Passover (Matthew 26:2, 17; John 13:1).  As Jesus and His followers were making their way out of “Jericho,” we are told that “blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.”The name “Bartimaeus”actually means “son of Timaeus”just as Simon Barjona means *“Simon the son of Jona”* (Matthew 16:17).  “Bartimaeus,”a “blind” beggar was sitting by the roadside “begging,”hoping to gain the sympathy of anyone who passed by.  In Luke’s version of this incident, he doesn’t give his name, he simply refers to “Bartimaeus”as *“*a certain blind man” (Luke 18:35).  In Matthew’s account, he informs us that there were two “blind” men and both were healed (Matthew 20:30, 34).  Only Mark gives us the man’s name.

In verse 47 the phrase “when he heard” refers to the commotion caused by the passing crowd who followed “Jesus” (Luke 18:35-36).  Undoubtedly, Bartimaeus asked what was going on and was told by someone in the crowd that “Jesus” was passing by.  “When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.” To distinguish “Jesus” from others who had the same name (Acts 13:6), He was called“Jesus of Nazareth.” Although “Jesus” was born in Bethlehem, He grew up in “Nazareth” (Matthew 2:22-23; Luke 2:39).  He was widely known as “Jesus of Nazareth” (Matthew 26:71; Mark 1:24; 14:67; 16:6; Luke 24:19).Learning that it was the presence of “Jesus of Nazareth” that was causing all the commotion, Bartimaeus began to shout out, “Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.”  Addressing “Jesus” by the title“thou son of David,”indicates that Bartimaeus believed that “Jesus” was the promised Messiah of Israel.  Since God had declared that one day Christ will occupy David’s throne (II Samuel 7:16), this was a popular designation for the Messiah.  Even though Bartimaeus had never seen “Jesus,” he had heard enough about Him as a miracle worker and healer (Mark 6:54-56; 7:36-37) to form a conclusion about who He was.  So he begged the LORD to “have mercy on me.”  Probably the most widespread stories about “Jesus” concerned His miraculous healing powers. It should be noted that even though Mark’s account focuses on just one blind man, Bartimaeus, according to Matthew’s account, there were two blind beggars; they both cried out to “Jesus” to “have mercy;” both of them were rebuked by the crowd; “Jesus” called for both of them; they both asked for their sight; and they both received their sight and followed “Jesus” *(*Matthew 20:20-34)*.*We must remember that each gospel writer wrote what was pertinent to their particular message.

In Mark 10:48, as Bartimaeus shouted out to Jesus for “mercy” or compassion, many in the crowd “charged him that he should hold his peace.”The word “charged”here translates a Greek word that means *“*to rebuke*,”* or “to censure severely,” or “to warn.”  The point is that they rebuked or scolded Bartimaeus trying to get him to be quiet.  The crowd was implying that the blind beggar was not worthy of Jesus’ attention.  But the last thing he was going to do was “hold his peace.”  Instead, he “cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.”In other words, he ignored the rebuke from the crowd and shouted out even more saying “Thou son of David, have mercy on me.”Unable to see, Bartimaeus and his unnamed blind partner, according to Matthew used their voices to get Jesus’ attention.  Without stating at this time what act of “mercy” they wanted Jesus to perform, they simply cried out for it.

In verse 49 having heard the desperate cry of the “blind” beggar, “Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called.”It certainly is a great comfort to know that when we call upon the LORD, He stops to listen to our cries.  “Jesus…commanded” those who were near Him to “call the blind man” bringing him to Jesus’ side.  In response to Jesus’ command, the very ones who had moments before told “the blind man” to be quiet now changed their attitude toward him.  They obeyed Jesus’ command, “and they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.”  Because “Jesus” took notice of the “blind” beggar, those in the crowd went from rebuking him to offering him words of encouragement.  The words “Be of good comfort”was the same as saying “cheer up” or “take courage.”  In the Greek, this phrase is in the present tense which indicates that those in the crowd were telling “the blind man” to be full of cheer and keep on being full of it.  They encouraged “the blind man” to “rise” or get up and come to “Jesus” because “he calleth thee.”

In verse 50 the blind beggar threw off “his garment”which was probably his long, loose outer robe and the most valuable thing he owned.  This was a sign of his faith in Jesus’ ability to heal him.  Then he came directly to “Jesus.”Someone may have led him to “Jesus,” but it seems more likely that he was so excited that he was led to “Jesus” by his own ears. We must remember that there were two blind men so both of them “came to Jesus.”This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and these blind men were not going to let it pass them by (Isaiah 55:6).

In verse 51, “Jesus” knew what “the blind man” wanted most from Him because He had divine insight into the thoughts of man. But still in response to his request for mercy, “Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?”We might wonder why “Jesus” asked “the blind man” what did he want Him to do for him since we know that “Jesus” already knew.  Jesuswanted to get Bartimaeus to express his need and give evidence of his faith that “Jesus” could, in fact, give him his sight.  Then “the blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.” Bartimaeus wasted no time in asking “Jesus” to give him his sight.  The Greek word translated “Lord”here is not the same word as *“LORD”* or Jehovah, but is a transliteration of the Aramaic word *“Rabboni.”*  It was a term of reverent respect applied only to the greatest teachers.  It can be translated as *“my Master.”*  This was the term Mary used for “Jesus” when she recognized Him after the resurrection (John 20:16).

In verse 52, the blind man showed a boldness that showed his determination to get help, and faith that Jesus could give him that help.As a result, “Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.”  Faith was the key element necessary to release the power of healing.  Jesus’ response indicates that unlike other healing miracles (Matthew 8:3; 9:28-30; Mark 7:32-35; Luke 22:50-52), there was no touch of the Master’s hand.  Matthew’s account reveals that the Master “touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight” (Matthew 20:34).

There is no contradiction here, for the Holy Spirit inspired each writer to pen what he did (II Timothy 3:16-17).  Each of the three synoptic gospel writers (Matthew, Mark and Luke) includes different details about how “Jesus” worked to perform the miracle.  Matthew added that “Jesus” had compassion on both men, and that He, being moved with compassion, “touched their eyes.”  Luke, the beloved physician recorded that “Jesus” said to Bartimaeus, “Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee” (Luke 18:24); and of course, Mark in this verse wrote that “Jesus” said to him, “Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.”  As soon as “Jesus” told Bartimaeus (and his fellow beggar) that his “faith” had made him whole, “immediately he received his sight.”All three synoptic gospel writers recorded this, and they also recorded that Bartimaeus “followed Jesus” after “he received his sight.”  The Holy Spirit inspired Luke to include an additional detail: *“A*nd immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God” (Luke 18:43).

In this week’s lesson we have seen the desperate faith of blind Bartimaeus who cried out to Jesus and was rewarded with his sight. Bartimaeus’ experience should remind us of the infinite power of our LORD.  We will benefit from His power as our desires conform to His will.  There are others like Bartimaeus.  They come to Jesus, the Light of the world and are healed of spiritual darkness.  Then as Bartimaeus did, they also follow Jesus.

**Closing: For the love that casts out fear, the faith that sustains and the hope that never perishes, be with us now and forever more. Amen.**

Next week’s lesson September 26, 2021, “Believers Praise God”

Background Scripture: Acts 2:32-33, 37-47

Sources for this lesson: The Bible, Quotes by Billy Graham, International Sunday School Commentary, Adult Sunday School Lessons, by Nathan Johnson, and The Present Word Lesson.