

Loving Someone Enough To Stop And Help

Mark 10:46-52

Introduction: 1) Being caught on video, it shocked the moral sensibilities of the world and has shamed a nation. On Thursday, October 20, 2011 a little 2 year old girl named Yue Yue was struck by a van in a hit and run accident in China. She was then ignored by at least 18 people who passed by, some going out of their way to avoid her. She was then struck by a second van that also did not stop. She was finally helped by a 58 year old female trash collector. It was, tragically, too late. She was declared brain dead once she arrived at a local hospital, and declared dead early Friday, the next day.

2) Later in an interview, one of the passerby's, a middle-aged man said with an uncomfortable smile on his face: "This wasn't my child. Why should I bother?" Ligia Zhang in a news article would shout at her own people, "Shame on us Chinese!" (*The Guardian*, 10-22-11). Chai Ling, a leader of the Tiananmen Square student protest, author of *A Heart For Freedom*, and a Human Rights Activist, would dig even deeper while expressing a measured degree of hope, "Yue Yue's untimely and inhumane death has caused an ever greater stir in regards to the value of little girls in Chinese society and the responsibility of families and society to care for them than any video in all of history. And this has happened in a country that appears to care less about girls than boys – China has 37 million more men than women and is eliminating girls through prenatal sex-selection, infanticide and abandonment after birth. If one video of a small toddler on a side street in China can cause millions of people around the world to stop and rethink their own morals, and spur others to craft legislation that may save lives in the future, what sort of change is possible if we can capture the larger-scale, mass killing of girls on video? What if there were videos of women crying, being dragged into abortion centers while others look on? What if there were

videos of girls being born and immediately drowned or strangled because they're not boys, while others witnessed the crime? And what [if] (sic) there were videos of a family leaving its newborn daughter in a box outside the city because they can have only one child and they don't want a daughter? Would this cause a similar commotion and stir a comparable amount of action?" (*FoxNews.com*, 10.22.11).

3) All of this requires of each one of us that we ask the question, "Would I have stopped?" Would I have cared enough to take time and help helpless little Yue Yue? One thing I do know: Jesus would and Jesus did! How do I know? A poor blind beggar named Bartimaeus "says so!" And, in the process, he shows us what it means to "be a slave to all" (v. 44), "to serve" (v. 45), and to serve those who cannot do one thing in return for you loving them enough to stop and help.

I. People Are All Around Us Who Are Hurting And Need Our Love 10:46-48

- Jesus has arrived at Jericho, a town 18 miles N.E. of Jerusalem, 5 miles W. of the Jordan River and 740 feet below sea level. Archeologists say it may be the oldest continuously occupied city in the world. Refurbished by the Herodians, there was now 2 Jerichos in Jesus' day, the old ancient city and the new Herodian location. It was an oasis and known as "The City of Roses." It was the home of a wee little man named Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), and had been the home of a great, great grandmother of Jesus named Rahab (Matt. 1:5).
- Now, when one compares this story in Mark 10:46-52 with its parallel accounts in Matt. 20:29-34 and Luke 18:35-43 you will notice some differences in a few of details. Specifically, Matthew mentions 2 blind men whereas Mark and Luke mention one. Mark alone tells us that one of the men's name is Bartimaeus. Second,

Matthew and Mark say the miracle occurred as Jesus was leaving Jericho while Luke says it happened “as he drew near to Jericho” (Luke 18:35). The *ESV Study Bible* has 2 very helpful notes at this point in assisting us in putting all of this together:

20:29 Jericho. Not the ancient city of OT fame (e.g., Joshua 5-6), but the new Jericho nearby, about a mile (1.6 km) to the south. This new Jericho surrounded a huge palace complex first built by the Hasmoneans (2nd century B.C.), which Herod the Great expanded. Matthew says the healing of the blind men took place as they went out of Jericho (and Mark 10:46 agrees), but Luke 18:35 says it was “as he drew near to Jericho.” It is possible that Matthew and Mark refer to the new Jericho, and Luke to the old Jericho nearby, or vice versa. Another possibility is that the blind men cried out to Jesus first as he was entering the city (Luke 18:35), but he did not respond and heal them until he was leaving the city. Since none of the accounts tells everything about the event, this may simply reflect the selection of different details about the event by the different Gospel writers. None of the accounts tells everything about the event.

20:30-31 two blind men. Mark 10:46 and Luke 18:35 mention only one blind man, and Mark gives his name (“Bartimaeus”). This does not mean that Matthew’s report of two blind men is inaccurate, only that Mark and Luke focused on the one. (I would add probably the more vocal and active one).

- So Jesus makes a visit to Jericho, the last major city on the edge of the Judean wilderness on the way to Jerusalem. He will soon make the 3,500 foot climb from Jericho to Jerusalem where he will give his life as a ransom (10:45) for the sins of the

world. But first, He must stop and help someone who is hurting, someone needing a little, no, a lot of love.

1) There are crowds who are often insensitive 10:46, 48

- “Mob mentality” or “herd behavior” is called by some “crazy crowds”: the tendency of animals and even people to act together in unison, sometimes for people in morally reprehensible and unimaginable ways. Gang rape, gang beatings, even the extermination of an entire people group are tragic examples of a “mob mentality.”
- Though not this extreme, a poor blind beggar named Bartimaeus suffered from a “mob mentality” during the days of Jesus. Bartimaeus literally is “son of Timaeus” or “son of honor.” However, he was the recipient of anything but honor and respect by the crowd that was attracted to Jesus. He was marginalized and sidelined!
 - A blind beggar: ignored and no longer noticed by most. They do not see him or hear him.
 - Sits by the road day after day begging for just enough simply to survive another day. Some gave him a little but most gave him nothing.
 - Hearing that it is Jesus who is passing by he begins to shout loudly with Messianic respect, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” (vs. 47, 48).
 - The response of the mob: “many rebuked him, telling him to be silent” (v. 48). My paraphrase, “Shut up you fool! Stop being a nuisance. You are embarrassing us. Sit there and be quiet!”

- I cannot help but wonder if this was the first time in a long time that anyone even took notice of him. On this occasion they did, but not in love; only in scorn. They were insensitive to his situation. In their minds he did not matter. He was a taker not a contributor. They just did not care. No one cared but Jesus.

2) There is the one who needs our help

10:47-48

- Amidst the cacophony of the crowd one voice is isolated. No doubt the crowd noise was loud and boisterous and yet Mark tells us it is the voice of a single solitary person who gains the attention of the Savior.
- Twice he calls Jesus, “Son of David,” a messianic title that looks back to God’s promise to David in 2 Sam. 7:12-16 where we read, “When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.” Solomon was the immediate and partial fulfillment of this prophecy. Jesus would be the final and climatic fulfillment!
- Twice he pleads with Jesus, “Have mercy on me!” He acknowledges without apology his helpless and hopeless condition. He cannot give himself sight. He cannot make himself wealthy. He is all alone and completely dependent on

another, and he boldly and publicly declares he will stake his dependency on Christ and Christ alone, the Son of David.

- Application: Don't get so caught up with the masses that you miss the one. Don't get so paralyzed by the billions that you don't take the time just to help one.
 - Pray for one at a time.
 - Evangelize one at a time.
 - Feed one at a time.
 - Cloth one at a time.
 - Disciple one at a time.
 - Adopt one at a time.
 - Love one at a time.
- There is always one who needs our help. Do you see them? Do you hear them?

II. We Should Never Be So Busy We Cannot Stop and Help

10:49-51

Jesus is on the way to Jerusalem and He is on the way to die. Verse 32 tells us He was “walking ahead of them” and leading the way. He is determined to fulfill His destiny. His mind must have been racing, his heart filled to overflowing with sorrow for what awaits Him. We could certainly understand if He just moved on this one time without stopping to help a poor blind man. He had more important things on His mind. He had far more important things to do. He is about to give His life for the sins of the world! But, he “stopped” (v. 49). He brought this caravan of pilgrims headed up to Jerusalem to a screeching halt so that he might minister to and love on just one, just one. Jesus taught his disciples the “art of stopping.”

1) Hear the cries of the hurting

10:49

- Jesus stops, hearing with a sensitive ear the cries of a man who is hurting. The crowd wants to prevent this man from coming to Jesus, much like the disciples wanted to prevent children from coming to Jesus (10:13). As the 12 rebuked those bringing the little children the crowd rebuked Bartimaeus telling him to be silent (v. 48).
- Still, Jesus heard his cry of desperation, “stopped and said, call him.” The Son stood still and his voice sounded forth with a compassionate appeal, “call him.” (v. 49).
- The crowd responded in obedience to this greater Son of David. They 1) called the blind man, 2) told him to “take heart” (cheer up, be of good courage), 3) “get up”, 4) he is calling you.
- Jesus has heard his cry and he will not just walk on. Jesus has heard his cry and he will stop and meet this man at his point of need, his “greatest” need!

2) Listen to the cries of the hurting

10:50-51

- It is one thing to hear. It is another thing to listen. Some of us are good at neither! Some of us are good at hearing but not listening. Our Lord Jesus is great at both!!!
- Bartimaeus immediately did 2 things: 1) he threw off his cloak (a precious possession to be sure) and 2) he sprang up and came to Jesus (v. 50). He jumped to his feet and made his way to Jesus.
- Jesus (v. 51) then asked him a simple and straightforward question, “What do you want me to do for you?” Don’t miss this! This is the same exact question He has just asked James and John in v. 36. They asked for the best seats in the kingdom.

Bartimaeus, in radical and stark contrast, has a much more humble request, “Rabbi, I want to see” (*NIV*). James Edwards says it so well, “...the Sons of Thunder asked for extraordinary glory, Bartimaeus asked only for ordinary health” (330).

- Jesus heard his cry just like He hears ours. Jesus listened to his request just like He listens to ours. Several verses in the psalms immediately come to mind at this moment.
- Psalm 17:6 says, “I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your ear to me; hear my words.”
- Psalm 54:2 says, “O God, hear my prayer; give ear to the words of my mouth.”
- Psalm 71:2 says, “In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline your ear to me, and save me!”
- The Lord indeed heard his request, his prayer. After all, he is talking to God! And, our Lord will respond in glorious salvation. And, yes, I did say salvation. Watch and see what Mark tells us.

III. Never Be Surprised At How The Most Undesirable Respond to Grace 10:52

- Job 42:5 says, “I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you.” Job was addressing God as the awesome Creator. Bartimaeus could now voice those same words to God His Savior!
- Psalm 86:1 says, “Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.”
- And Psalm 86:6 adds, “Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace.”
- And I just had to add Psalm 143:1, “Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy! In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!”

- Here comes the answer, and oh what a wonderful answer it is!

1) There is healing grace that saves

- Jesus simply and quickly responds to the cry for grace and mercy from the blind beggar, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.”
 - Your faith → Grace is the divine hand that extends healing. Faith is the human hand that reaches out and receives it.
- Note: the object of our faith is crucial. “Keep the faith!” “Just have faith” are non-sensical statements that are vacuous. No, Bartimaeus directed his faith to the only one who could heal, the only one who could save!
 - “Made you well.” Interestingly the word for “well” (*NIV*, “healed”) is also the word for “saved.” It can have both a physical and spiritual dimension. Here it, no doubt, has both! Healed physically? Yes! Healed spiritually? An even better yes! How do we know?

2) There is following grace that sanctifies

- “Immediately he recovered his sight.” Instantaneous healing! No surgery! No medical treatment! Not when the Great Physician is at work.
- “And he followed him on the way.” Bartimaeus is now a disciple, a follower of King Jesus who is about to make his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (11:1-10).
- Where He goes Bartimaeus will go. What He asks Bartimaeus will do. Gospel gratitude will inspire us to follow, at any and all cost, the one who has so freely dispensed His grace. I see! I’ve been saved! I will joyfully follow King Jesus wherever He leads.

- John Grassmick says, “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 he began to follow Jesus” (*BKC*, 155).
- Some early church traditions say Bartimaeus would follow Jesus all the way to His passion and later become a major figure in the church at Jerusalem.

Personally, that is an easy thing for me to imagine!

Conclusion: 1) It is the last healing miracle in the gospel of Mark. It teaches us the “art of stopping.” It brings to a close our Lord’s great teachings on discipleship.

Interestingly, it began with his healing a blind man (8:22-26) and it closes with His healing a blind man (10:46-52). Interestingly, Bartimaeus is the only person Jesus healed whose name we actually know.

2) But then we could all bear his name couldn’t we? Like Bartimaeus we were blind until Jesus gave us sight. We were poor beggars until He saved us and brought us out of poverty as our ransom. We brought to Him nothing but our weakness and need and He graced us with His power and blessing.

3) Praise God Jesus stopped and had time for Bartimaeus. Praise God Jesus had time for you and me! Nothing has changed in 2000 years. Jesus stills stops for anyone who calls on His name. And like poor, blind Bartimaeus, they are not disappointed in what He does! Yes, there is hope for the blind when, in faith, we look to Jesus.