

THROUGH NIGHT TO MORNING

by

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SERMON SEVEN -

SAVING FAITH

"Thy faith hath saved thee" (Luke 18:42).

FAITH is the channel of blessing from GOD to man, just as faith is the channel of blessing from physician to patient, from government to subject, and from parent to child.

- If the patient has no faith in the physician, his remedies will do little good.
- If a citizen has no faith in the Government, he is apt to resist its authority, and cut himself off from its blessings.
- If the child has no faith in the parent, there is little chance of the parent's moulding the child's character for good.

Everything that is worth saving is saved by faith. Take away faith in the Government, in the family, in the bank, in the railroad corporation, in the Church, and these institutions will fall to pieces of their own weight. Faith is the cement that binds their parts together.

Now GOD applies this universal principle to the realm of salvation. We are saved by faith. Without our faith GOD can be neither Physician, Father nor King. Unbelief destroys the channel of blessing. Let us study the faith of Bartimeus and we shall see the kind of faith that saves.

I. It is a faith that realizes its true condition

Bartimeus was a beggar and blind. He had doubtless known better days. The fact that his father Timeus is mentioned suggests that his family may have been one of note. He might have come to CHRIST and commended himself on the ground of his former wealth and position in society.

He might have said, "It is true that I am a beggar, but I am not one of the common beggars; there is good blood in my veins. I am proud of my ancestors."

There was no masquerading in false finery. He came in the rags of a beggar; he made a beggar's plea. He was willing to confess what he was.

And until the sinner has that sort of faith in himself, he is not apt to have saving faith in CHRIST. While he comes excusing his sin, or apologizing for it, he need not expect salvation. When a real sinner meets the real Saviour the result is real salvation. There is no use in covering the rags with a sham cloak of hypocrisy. GOD can see through it.

"Just as I am without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of GOD, I come.

"Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need in Thee to find,
O Lamb of GOD, I come."

Matthew tells us there were two blind men. Bartimeus only is mentioned by Mark and Luke, because he was the one whom everybody knew. He had a fellowship of suffering with his more obscure brother. It is to his credit, however, that he did not organize a blind man's club for the preservation and propagation of blindness. Such things exist to-day. I heard not long ago of an infidel club. That means, of course, that some men who are blind to GOD and His truth have organized for the purpose of cultivating blindness and shutting out the light from themselves and others. They are poor blind beggars and proud of it. It is a pitiful sight. CHRIST can do nothing for them until they begin to desire a better condition and come to Him for healing.

II. It is a faith that inquires

Bartimeus heard the stir that CHRIST was making among the people. There was a crowd surging along the highway after Him. Hearing the multitudes pass by he asked what it meant.

The multitude then, as now, are interested in JESUS. "**The common people heard Him gladly.**" When the real CHRIST appears among the people, they are not indifferent to His claims. The real JESUS sympathizes with the weak and the oppressed. When such a Saviour is preached in the pulpit, the people come to hear Him.

He has made a stir in the world. If we will listen we can hear in history the tramp of the multitude that follow Him. In the literary world His name inspires the best poetry and prose. In the world of commerce He is felt. When Carey went to India, there was not a grammar of the language. When Morrison went to China, he found no helps for the study of their difficult tongue.

Missionaries of the cross were the only ones who would take the time, and give their strength to mastering difficult languages in order that they might convey to the people the message of salvation through CHRIST. As a result, the nations of the world are now joined in commercial relations as never before.

In the world of fine art the name of JESUS has inspired the finest paintings, the sweetest music, and the grandest architecture. When Haydn was old, he attended a concert at which his own masterpiece, "The Creation," was sung. It begins, you know, with a representation of chaos and darkness, by grating sounds and some discordant notes; then "**Let there be light**" bursts upon the audience in a very cyclone of melody.

When this point was reached, the old musician, unable to contain his feelings, arose and pointed upward, as if to say, "That came from GOD." So the masters of music, painting, and architecture may point to CHRIST as the Author of their highest inspirations.

Every battle for the liberation of the oppressed, every institution for the education of the orphan, every movement for the protection of the weak against the strong, means that JESUS is still in the world rousing the people to noble endeavour.

The state of mind which leads one to inquire the reason of this, and to investigate the claims of CHRIST, is a mark of strength. To sit by the highway of time with stolid indifference to such a world movement is not to one's credit. What CHRIST is doing in the world to-day should arouse a spirit of inquiry, and make all who are blind to His Deity ask questions, and seek to answer them by searching investigation. The result of such inquiry will be the confirmation of His claims.

III. It is a faith that prays

"**Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.**" He pleads no merit; he recognizes guilt somewhere. Whether his blindness was a result of sin we know not, but he knew that he was a sinner at heart.

- The spirit that makes light of sin fosters blindness of soul.
- The spirit that confesses sin shows true nobility.

To acknowledge a fault, and seek to correct it, is an honour; to hide it, that we may foster it, is a shame.

"**Jesus stood.**" The cry of the penitent soul stops Him.

I can imagine Him paying little attention to a triumphal procession entering the gates of the city with bands of music and rich trophies. He cares little for such gew-gaws of earth, but He is as sensitive to the cry of a penitent soul as a mother's heart is to the cry of her child. A broken heart always has the right of way to JESUS.

Everything else, however important, is laid aside while He attends to the cry for mercy. Let no penitent sinner feel that the GOD Who has the care of the universe is too busy to look after his case.

IV. It is a faith that fights its way to success

It was a sad fact that the disciples of JESUS sometimes failed to show His spirit of sympathy.

They told the blind man to hold his peace, but "**he cried so much the more. Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.**"

He would not be silenced; his need was too great. The followers of JESUS should be careful not to hinder rather than help seekers after sight.

But indifference may be a quiet rebuke which says, "**Hold [your] peace.**"

A thoughtless criticism of the sermon may have the same effect. These chilling words might have driven away a less courageous soul than Bartimeus, but his sense of deepest need made him stand his ground and fight his way. Those who would come to JESUS must sometimes press through no little opposition. Where the hand of encouragement should be given the word of rebuke is sometimes spoken.

Bartimeus had assurance that JESUS wanted him, and that was enough to make him brave against all opposers.

"I'll go to JESUS though my sins
Like a mountain rose,
I know His courts, I'll enter in,
Whatever may oppose."

V. It is a faith that expresses its great need

JESUS said, "**What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?**"

He might have replied, "Give me some money, Lord, that I may be relieved for several days, at least, from begging; give me a home and friends to take care of me." No, no, Bartimeus was wiser than that.

He knew that his deepest need was not money, or clothing, or shelter, but sight. His poverty was the result of his blindness, and if the blindness can be cured, everything else might be remedied.

Prayer is need packed till it takes fire.

Our deepest needs should be satisfied first.

- You need an education? Seek it, but not until your soul has been brought into right relations with GOD.

- You need money? Make it, but not until you have secured the riches of grace in CHRIST JESUS.

Let not the good hinder the best. "**Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness: and all these things shall be added.**" May GOD save us from the illusion that if we seek successfully these things, the kingdom of GOD shall be added. Let us put first what GOD has put first. Soul-sight is our deepest need. May we be satisfied with nothing less than the best that CHRIST can give us.

VI. It became a faith that followed JESUS

He may have had a wife and children in some humble home, and his heart yearned to look into their faces, but CHRIST Who had given him sight was so attractive that he could not leave Him;

he must gaze into His loving countenance and use the new eyes he had received in beholding His beauty.

I have heard of a man who had lost his sight, and it was restored by an eminent physician. After several days in a dark room, the man's wife and children were brought in, and he looked into their faces for the first time in years, and then he exclaimed, "Oh, where is the man who gave me my sight; his face should have been the first upon which I looked."

Thus felt Bartimeus.

CHRIST was to him all and in all. To be with Him was his delight, to hear His voice his joy, and now forever to do His will his highest ambition.

VII. Such a faith glorified JESUS

The word does not mean that he followed along the way shouting Hallelujah and singing. It has in it the idea of showing forth the excellence of another.

Bartimeus, when he met his old friends, told them of what JESUS had done for him and could not say enough in His praise. I can see him approaching a group on the street corner and pointing to the Master across the way as he says, "There is the Man who gave me my new eyes; let us go and worship Him together."

And he was such a man as CHRIST could afford to take with Him as a sample of His gracious work. The new eyes spoke for themselves. Does our following CHRIST really glorify Him? Are we such samples of grace that others looking upon us are reminded of our Lord?

~ end of chapter 7 ~
