Oh, To See!

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[0:00] So my family flew to Anaheim and we spent some time in Anaheim and then we drove to Phoenix across the desert to go to the Southern Baptist Convention. And in the midst of that desert there was a beautiful green oasis that I was determined to keep going so I didn't stop. I wish I had. And I found out later it was Palm Springs, California. I mean it sat over the side of the interstate and it was green as it could be. It was an oasis in the middle of the desert.

That remarkable scene in the midst of the desert is much like Jericho was in the first century. It's located in the Jordan Valley. It is surrounded by barren wilderness and Jericho was lush because it had natural springs. It sat at the bottom of a mountain range and it sat 850 feet below sea level in that Dead Sea Valley. Still does by the way. But water from those mountains to the west would travel underground and emerged into natural springs and it made it stand out in the desert as a beautiful fertile oasis. It is known and it is spoken of in the Old Testament as the city of palm trees. It's mentioned that way three times in the Old Testament. It was a winter retreat for the rich. Herod the great even built his winter palaces there. And it was through this city that Jesus passed on his final journey toward Jerusalem. When he left Jericho he would go on that road that we know as the road to Jericho. Of course if you're going the other way it's the road to Jerusalem. But that road to Jericho.

And if you ride the highway from Jericho to Jerusalem and you look over to your right I believe that path that goes along there's a hiking path of 19 miles in the desert. But I believe that very well could be what Jesus spoke of when he spoke of the road to Jericho. He was about to take that to Jerusalem.

Such a beautiful city was a natural spot for those who would head toward Jerusalem for Passover. And they would spend the night there and as they came out that gate it was a perfect place for a blind beggar to sit outside that gate. And that leads us to our passage in Mark chapter 10 beginning in verse 46.

[2:30] And it says this, And they came out all the more, And Jesus said to him, And Jesus said to him, And Jesus said to him, What do you want me to do for you?

And the blind man said to him, Rabbi, let me recover my sight. And Jesus said to him, Go your way. Your faith has made you well.

And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way. Bartimaeus was a blind beggar that was smart to do what he did the way he did it.

He had stationed himself outside of a nice town at a time when many would come through there on their way to Jerusalem for Passover. And people that travel normally have the means to do so. And when they are good religious people, sometimes they are more generous. And we can learn from Bartimaeus because what he did that day in his interaction with the Lord eternally changed his life.

[4:21] So I want to show you this morning not only what he did, but what we should do as well. First, we need to recognize the Lord.

Recognize the Lord. Verse 47 says that when he heard it was Jesus, he began to cry out. You see, he cried out because he had heard about Jesus. He had probably heard that demons were actively destroying lives and they had been cast out by the power of the mere voice of Jesus.

The word was out about stuff like that and he surely had heard about the storm and the sea that were calmed by that same voice.

He may have heard about the diseased woman who had been sick for 12 years who was instantly healed when she touched the hem of the garment of Christ. He could have heard about the girl that was raised from the dead or how 4,000 were fed or how 5,000 and their families were fed from just

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a boy's lunch.
I'm sure the word got out that Jesus welcomed children and yet took on the religious establishment and the whole time marveling everyone that saw him.
[5:49] He couldn't see him but he listened. He heard some people tear Jesus down while he heard others lift Jesus up but he wanted to see Jesus for himself.

He wanted to see Jesus for himself. Now it's one thing to want to witness something.
It's another thing to recognize Christ. And recognize him he did. He recognized him for who he is. He called him by name and he followed it with Son of David. He does it twice. No one else in the Gospel of Mark calls Jesus Son of David.
Now what does that mean that a blind beggar who very possibly could have been a Gentile knew that Jesus was the Messiah? That he knew he was the one that prophecy spoke of?
[7:00] That he knew he was the one that was the hope of Israel? Apparently Bartimaeus had apparently studied about Christ and prepared to meet Christ and he recognized the Lord for who he is.

Now many people miss that. The religious leaders rejected him and said he wasn't that Messiah. The disciples never really caught on to it either at this point.
They had a hard time figuring it out. But yet Bartimaeus figured it out. You know many people miss that today as well. The Jesus that I hear people talk about and I want to warn you about this.
The Jesus that I hear people talk about is not the Jesus of the Bible often. There's a flippancy today about who Jesus is. I remember hearing years ago Oprah Winfrey say whatever may be Jesus to you something else may be Jesus to somebody else.
I heard her say the other day on just a little reel that I accidentally listened to her said God are the life force.
[8:10] What a bunch of baloney. How foolish. How foolish. To have so much and have so little is so sad. Jesus is not what you make him up to be.

He's not a pile of Play-Doh for you to create. He's not some figment of your imagination. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and he is the way, the truth, and the life.
And by his testimony, he's the only access to the Father. Buddha will not get you there. Mohammed will not give you access to the Father.
Mormonism will not get you access to the Father. Knocking on doors for the Jehovah's Witnesses will not get you access to the Father. Let me tell you something. Church won't get you access to the Father.
Baptism, the first step of obedience after you get access to the Father. But baptism alone will not get you access to the Father.
[9:18] Our one and only hope is in Christ and that's the way he calls it. My friend, if he's not the way, there is no going. If he's not the truth, there is no telling.

If he's not the life, there is no living. He's not what we make him out to be. He is what he is. And he's the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
And when this man says, Jesus, Son of David, he's saying, you're the Lord. You're the Savior. You're the hope. He recognized Jesus for who he is.
We need to respond like Bartimaeus did. Not only do you recognize him, but we also need to call upon the Lord. I want you to understand that it's one thing to know that you need Jesus.
Sometimes I ask people about their relationship with the Lord, I've heard people say, well, me and the man upstairs, we all right. That sounds like something out of a Hitchcock Psycho.
[10:27] That's right. If you refer to a holy God as the man upstairs, I would declare you never knew him.

You don't have a relationship with him. He's not some drunk uncle that you'd bump into every now and then. At all. No. No, not at all, my friend.
He instead is one that we need to know. I want you to understand it's one thing to know that you need Jesus.
It's a whole other matter to call upon him. And he called upon the Lord. People tried to hush him when he did. They didn't want him to bother Jesus.
And I'll tell you, when you call upon the Lord today, people try to hush you too. And it's usually not about bothering Jesus. That's not what their concern is. It's about your reputation. It's about you keeping your pride.

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[11:32] And I'll tell you, the devil will not, he don't want you to call on Jesus. He'll try his best not to get you to do that. In your heart, in your mind, he'll give you every reason in the world not to call upon the Lord.

What are people going to think? I mean, if you obey God and do what he's leading you to do, what are people going to think? I mean, do you really think you can live for God?
Do you really think you got that in you? Is it really that necessary for you to step out and call on God? Satan will use anything he can.
He'll use other people to try to talk you out of coming to the Lord. I want you to understand, Ephesians is clear to tell us, there's a whole cosmic battle going on that we can't see that is attempting us to keep us from coming to Christ.
Christ, somebody gets moved by the Holy Spirit of God in an act of obedience and all of hell comes upon it to try to stop them. It happens in a Baptist church. They'll see a crowd, God will be moving and there'll be a crowd trying to snuff them out.
[12:43] It's called the Cold Water Committee. It's not on the nominating report. It's not voted on. It's self-appointed. They want to kill any movement of the Holy Spirit of God in people's lives.

You know why? Because it's unpredictable. When God gets to move, you don't know what he's going to do. People don't like that. They don't know what's happening. Beware of them. Don't be a part of them.
Let nothing stop you from calling upon the Lord. Notice what he says. He says, Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me.
He didn't ask for healing. He didn't give them ultimatums. He asked for mercy. The mercy and the grace of God is the only hope we have.
1 Peter 1, verse 3 says, according to his great mercy, he's called us to be born again. He called on the mercy of God. People tried to hush him and he didn't let them.
[13:47] Scripture says he called out again. I believe he's showing us how to respond to Christ because not only did he recognize the Lord for who he is, he called on him, but he also came to him and that's exactly what we ought to do is come to him.

Come to him. Jesus heard his cry, called for him to come and those that told him to come, I want you to listen to what they said.
First they said, take heart. That's sometimes translated, be of good cheer. It's a phrase that's only used in one other time in Mark. And the one other time it's used in Mark is when Jesus is walking on the water and the disciples are terrified and he told them, take heart.
It is I. Don't be afraid. The people looked at him and said, take heart. Get up. Let me tell you something, friend. You cannot stay where you are and go where you need to go with Christ.
You got to get up. You got to get up. You got to come to Christ. Then they said he's calling you. And I want to be clear this morning. If you have any unction to get right with God, to come to him for salvation, to repent of sin in your life and to get your life right today, this goes for any of us and all of us.
[15:17] We don't come up with that on our own. God's calling you to get your life right. And when he calls you, you need to get up and come to Christ.

It is your responsibility to respond to the grace and the mercy of God. No one can do that for you and it's no one else's fault if you refuse to.
Notice what this man did. It says in verse 50, and throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.
How valuable is a cloak of a blind beggar? Have you ever lost your phone? Where's my phone? Everybody frees. I can't find my phone. All of life stops when somebody can't find their phone. Phone's nothing compared to a cloak to a blind beggar.
[16:25] Not only is it his coat, not only is it his umbrella, but it may, and I don't want to infer this because I don't know his circumstances, it may have been his home.

When the man threw his cloak, all his inhibitions were tossed to the side in the hopes of seeing Jesus.
Throw it off. Spring up. And come to Jesus. That's what he did. One day a little boy got his hand stuck in a vase.
Man, they tried to get that hand out and they couldn't do it for anything. They put soap on it and tried to wiggle it out. They couldn't do anything. Finally, they had to break the vase to get the boy's hand

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out. And when they broke the vase, they looked at his hand and he had his hand clenched.
He had a quarter in it. He wasn't letting go of that quarter. And he broke that vase. It's the only way he's going to get his hand out if he could get a hold of that quarter, friend. Some folks never come to Christ because they have a pet sin in their life.
[17:41] They have a lifestyle. They have a way about them that's displeasing to God. They don't want to let go of it.

Drop your quarter today. Throw your cloak today. Leave your distraction behind and spring to your feet.
Come as you are to Christ because he'll open your eyes to see what you never could otherwise have seen. The blind man is showing us how to respond to Jesus.
Not only that, I want you to see this. You also believe in the Lord. Verse 51 says, And Jesus said to him, What do you want me to do for you?
And the blind man said to him, Rabbi, let me recover my sight. Now the question that Jesus asked him may sound like a silly question, but it's really not.
[18:47] There are a lot of things that people want God to do for them. Some people want to bargain with God. God, if I do this, will you do this?

As somehow if we can pay for his mercy, and we can't. Some want God to solve their problems. They want relief, but they don't want a relationship.
Some want God's blessings. I mean, they know what they want. They know what they're going to do, but surely God will approve what I have already lined up for me to do.
Some want deliverance from difficulty, but they don't want to repent from the sin that put them in that difficulty. Some want God to change other people.
And every time, in 33 years of passion, I've ran across a rock and a shoe and said, Lord, do something in them. Fix them, Lord. He started fixing me.
[19:58] Every time. Every time. He helped me see that person in a different way than I'd ever seen them before because I prayed for them.

You got a problem with somebody? Pray for them. God will do a work in them. Yeah, he will, but he'll also do a work in you. I'll just warn you. Bartimaeus was up front.
He was open. He knew exactly what he wanted, and he had exactly what he needed. He had the faith that God would do it.
And Jesus said to him in verse 52, Go your way. Your faith has made you well. Now, Bartimaeus' life was changed because he believed.
Life-changing, pleading through the noise, throwing your cloak, responding instantly. He had that kind of faith to follow Christ.
[21:06] Christ changed his life. He'll change yours too. Lastly, he teaches us how to respond by showing us that you follow the Lord. This is my favorite part of this amazing count.

I want you to see this. Verse 52 says, And Jesus said to him, Go your way. Your faith has made you well. And immediately he recovered his sight and followed Christ on the way.
Jesus told him to go his way. And he instantly recovered his sight, and his way of going was to follow the Lord in his way. My friend, that is a physical example for us of what must happen to us when Christ opens our eyes.
We follow him. There's a point in John chapter 6 where some of the followers of Jesus turned away. And when they see the people leaving, Jesus looks at his disciples and he says, Do you want to go away as well?
[22:19] And Simon Peter, who got a lot wrong before the ascension of Christ, he gets it right here. He said, Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. Amen. Peter got it right. He got a lot of things wrong, but he got that right.
And that's good because that's what you have to get right, friend. It's amazing to me that a blind man could show us more clearly than even those with sight that walked with Christ daily.
He showed us more than they could. It means that you can be so close. Listen to me, church member. It means you can be so close.
Listen to me, church attender. It means you can be so close, but miss so much.
[23:23] and I don't want you to miss it. I want you to see what you can have when you have Jesus.

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But you got to recognize him for who he is. You got to call on him. There will be naysayers in your life that will discourage that.
Jesus said, unless you hate your father and your mother and your brother and your sister, and his point was, don't let anybody come in the way of you being obedient to follow God. Let nobody stand in your way.
They'll always be naysayers. There's naysayers in your own mind. There'll always be naysayers. Let me remind you, there's a spiritual battle going on that you can't see that's more real than anything in Iran to keep you away from being everything that God would have you to be.
Call him out. Come to him. He's calling for you. Got any unction within you at all, he's calling you. He's the one that developed that. Believe in him because your faith will allow you to see and then spend the rest of your days following him.
[24:52] My friend, that's where it's at. Oh, that we can see what we have when we have the Lord Jesus.

With every head bowed and every eye closed, I have a tremendous burden for those who may attend church a lot who never have given their heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ.
Sometimes it's men that's just so hardened and so proud, they don't want to surrender to anybody, let alone the Lord. They're afraid they'll look weak in front of somebody else.
and the reality is one day there'll come a day when all that pride will be acknowledged and it'll be forever too late.
Don't let anything come in the way of you coming to the Lord. It may be women, boys and girls who are concerned about what somebody else in their household will be concerned about.
[26:00] Don't let anything come in the way of you coming to Christ. You've never given your life to Christ.

Surrender your life to Him today. He's calling you. Maybe you're here and you have done that but you've never publicly acknowledged Him.
Jesus shows us that, commands us that, tells us to do that by baptism. So I encourage you today to follow the Lord.
If you've never been baptized as a believer, it's a step of obedience that can be a hindrance in your walk with God when you hold that back. Satan will hold that over you. Maybe you're here and God's drawing you to Pickens First Baptist Church.
This is the place that you know God would have you to serve. Don't let anything hold you back from being obedient to God. I'm not a salesman. I just want to encourage you to do everything God tells you to do.
[27:06] You just follow the Lord. Maybe you're here this morning as many of us are. We need to release the grip that's in our hand.

we need to we need to throw our cloak of security aside and follow the Lord today. I encourage you to do that.
However God tells you to do it, just trust Him. Trust Him. We're going to stand and we're going to sing in just a moment and when we do, I encourage you that as God leads you, you come.
Say, Pastor, I need you to pray for me. Pastor, I need the Lord Jesus. Pastor, I need to be baptized. Pastor, God's leading me to this church. Pastor, I just need you to pray through this matter with me. Whatever it is that God would have you do, you can do it in the pew where you are, you can do it with me, you can do it at this altar, you can do whatever God tells you to do, but don't do anything less.
[28:14] Jesus has come by this morning. Call on Him. Come to Him. Believe Him.

Follow Him. Lord Jesus, lead us to just simply do what you tell us to do, to trust you with it all, Father, I pray. In Jesus' name, amen.
Amen.

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