

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Mark 10: 46-52

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. We'll continue to read Mark chapter 10, verses 46 to 52.

Earlier we mentioned that Jesus left Capernaum in Galilee and went to Bethany beyond the Jordan; where He stayed for nearly six months. The account in the Gospel of Mark is concise, compressing these six months into one chapter, Chapter 10. We know that during His time in Capernaum in Galilee, Jesus primarily focused on training the disciples of the twelve; and now, in Bethany beyond the Jordan, He fulfills His ministry on earth during the last six months. These six months are when He leads the disciples on the path to the cross.

Although Bethany beyond the Jordan serves as the center during these six months, He takes the disciples on several trips to Jerusalem. If we truly want to understand how Jesus trained the disciples to walk the path of the cross, we need to read the Gospel of Luke, because Luke uses ten chapters of the Bible, from Chapter 9 to Chapter 19, to record Jesus' journey during these six months. Please allow me to briefly digress and look at the division of the Gospel of Luke, as well as what is recorded in Mark, and more importantly, mention some things that Mark did not record; please follow me as we quickly give an overview of the divisions of the Gospel of Luke.

Basically, based on the segmentation by Brother Christian Chen: In this Chapter 10 of the Bible, Luke mentions 5 times of going to Jerusalem, these 5 mentions serve as 5 markers, neatly dividing this passage into 4 stages. The first mention is in Luke 9:51, where it says, Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem; the second is in Luke 13:22, Jesus journeyed toward Jerusalem, teaching in various cities along the way; the third is in Luke 17:11, Jesus went toward Jerusalem, passing through Samaria and Galilee; the fourth is in Luke 18:31, Jesus took the twelve disciples aside and said to

them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem;" and the last is in Luke 19:28, Jesus said this and went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. And this time, Jesus indeed entered the city of Jerusalem, beginning His final week of earthly ministry. According to the segmentation in the Gospel of Luke, these 5 markers divide the entire passage of Jesus' journey to the cross into 4 stages. During this period, Jesus centered around Bethany beyond the Jordan, until the last time when He finally led the disciples into Jerusalem.

We've mentioned before that Bethany beyond the Jordan is not southeast of the Sea of Galilee, but rather east of the Jordan River; there's another Bethany in the Bible, the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, located near Jerusalem. To avoid confusion, I'll refer to Bethany beyond the Jordan as "beyond the Jordan." Jesus left Galilee and went beyond the Jordan, where He debated with the Pharisees about divorce. The first stage is also recorded in the Gospel of Mark. Then Jesus sent out seventy others, and they returned to report to Him. Jesus also went with the disciples to Bethany near Jerusalem, where He encouraged Martha not to be troubled by many things and encouraged her to choose the better portion like Mary did. During this time, He also went to Jerusalem: during the Feast of Dedication, where He healed a man born blind, and later revealed to His disciples that He is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep.

Moving on to the second stage: during this period, Mark didn't record anything, but Luke devotes a significant portion. Jesus told parables about the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son; He also spoke about the parable of the unjust steward. There's also the story of the rich man and Lazarus: in this event, both the rich man and Lazarus died, with the rich man suffering torment in Hades while Lazarus rested in Abraham's bosom. The rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus back to warn his five brothers to repent, so they wouldn't suffer as he did. Abraham refused. But what's remarkable is that during this time, Jesus took the disciples to Bethany near Jerusalem, where there was another man named Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, whom Jesus raised from the dead.

In the third stage, Jesus went to Jerusalem, Samaria, and Galilee, and then returned to beyond the Jordan. During this time, Mark records two events: the welcoming of

children and the encounter with the rich young ruler seeking eternal life. In the fourth stage, Jesus left Bethany beyond the Jordan to go to Jerusalem once again, and He reiterated to the disciples that He would suffer, be killed, and rise again on the third day.

Mark's Gospel records James and John asking Jesus to grant them seats at His left and right in His glory, as well as the healing of a blind man in Jericho, which we'll read about today. What Mark doesn't record is what happened after this event: Jesus entered Jericho and saved the tax collector Zacchaeus, then told the parable of the ten minas. I've provided a general overview of Jesus' journey and activities during these six months in Bethany beyond the Jordan. For a detailed understanding, it's essential to carefully study the accounts in Luke's Gospel spanning these four chapters. Now, let's return to Mark 10 and read verse 46.

Verse 46: "Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging."

At that time, Jesus had already left Bethany beyond the Jordan and, with His disciples, traveled south until they reached the vicinity of the Dead Sea. They then headed west to Jericho, where they encountered a blind beggar. According to Mark's account, it was as Jesus was leaving Jericho with His disciples. Interestingly, if you read Luke's account in chapter 18 verse 35, it mentions that as Jesus was approaching Jericho, there was a blind man sitting by the road begging. After this event, Luke 19:1 begins by stating that Jesus entered Jericho and saved the chief tax collector, Zacchaeus. So why does Mark say Jesus was leaving Jericho while Luke says Jesus was about to enter Jericho? Although seemingly a minor detail, it's an important one.

Understanding the difference between these two accounts requires a look into the historical background of Jericho: In the time of Joshua, after crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land, the first city they attacked was Jericho. With God's help, they miraculously conquered the city by circling it, blowing trumpets, and

shouting, causing the walls of Jericho to collapse. After the conquest, Joshua 6:26 states, "Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, 'Cursed be the man before the Lord who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates.'" Consequently, Jericho became a cursed city. Over 1,000 years later, it became a ruin, known as Old Jericho.

During the time of King Herod the Great, a new city called Jericho was built about two and a half kilometers south of Old Jericho. This new city was thriving, with Herod constructing a grand palace there. Zacchaeus served as the chief tax collector of this new Jericho. Between the old and new Jericho, there was a road, and it was on this road that the blind beggar sat. Jesus and His disciples traveled from Bethany beyond the Jordan, passed near the Dead Sea, and on their way to the new Jericho, they passed through the ruins of the old Jericho, then continued south to the new city. Many people traveled along this road during the Passover season, heading towards Jerusalem. It was a time when many people were on the move, making it easier for beggars like the blind man to seek alms by the roadside.

Matthew and Luke both mention this event but do not provide us with the name of the blind man. However, Mark tells us his name, which was Bartimaeus. "Bar" means son in Aramaic, so he was the son of Timaeus. The name Timaeus means "highly valued" or "honored," indicating that Bartimaeus was of noble lineage. Mark's inclusion of his name carries a subtle message: despite his noble heritage, this Jewish man had fallen into beggary due to his blindness.

The Jewish people were God's chosen people under the Old Covenant, yet they had all gone astray. God sent His only begotten Son to save them, but sadly, they were blind and did not recognize the Son of God or see God's salvation. Some Jews even sought to kill Jesus, leading them to fall under a curse. This curse mirrors the fate of Old Jericho, representing their cursed state. They would all become beggars spiritually.

When Jesus met Bartimaeus as He was leaving Old Jericho, it symbolized His departure from the cursed city. Bartimaeus, the blind man, represents those who, through faith, can escape the curse.

Verse 47: "And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'"

When Bartimaeus heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, it's worth noting that this was the common designation people used for Jesus at that time, particularly to emphasize His origin from Nazareth. Nazareth was a despised small town, and Jews used this term to scorn Jesus. However, on the other hand, Jesus' preaching, exorcisms, and healings had actually helped many people, thus spreading His fame.

Now, when Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was passing by, he cried out loudly. Although blind, Bartimaeus could still hear and speak. Upon hearing that Jesus, known as the Nazarene, was approaching, he cried out, calling Him "Son of David," asking for mercy. It's important not to overlook Bartimaeus' use of this title. Referring to Jesus as the Son of David was significant to the Jewish people, as it was a grand title. The prophet Jeremiah, in Jeremiah 23:5-6, spoke of the promise from the Lord: "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." This was the long-awaited Messiah that the Israelites had been hoping for.

Indeed, the prophet Isaiah also speaks of the same individual in Isaiah 9:6-7: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

From the prophecies of both Isaiah and Jeremiah, it's clear that the Messiah, also referred to as the Son of David, was anticipated as the one who would bring deliverance and restoration to Israel. When the blind man cried out, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" he recognized Jesus as the Messiah, the one whom the Jewish

people had eagerly awaited, even though his physical eyes were blind, his spiritual insight was keen, knowing that only the Messiah could perform the miracles Jesus did. Thus, it can be translated that he cried out loudly, saying, "Messiah Jesus, have mercy on me!"

Verse 48: "Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'"

When the blind beggar heard that another blind man, also a beggar, was loudly shouting for the Messiah, many people came and rebuked him, telling him to be quiet. The title "Messiah" offended them, especially when used in reference to Jesus. They saw Jesus as just a man from Nazareth in Galilee, a simple countryside person. How could He possibly bear such a lofty title? But Bartimaeus paid no attention to them; instead, he cried out even louder: "Son of David, Messiah, have mercy on me!" His physical eyes may have been blind, but thankfully, his spiritual insight was clear. He did not bury the name of Jesus, for it was valuable and noble. He recognized Jesus as the Messiah.

Verse 49: "So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.'"

Jesus stopped in His tracks. He Himself was walking the road to the cross, soon to reach Jerusalem where many hardships awaited Him. Yet, even in this moment, when He encountered someone in need, He halted His steps. He instructed His disciples, "Call him." They then called the blind man, reassuring him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you." First and foremost, Jesus wanted to reassure the blind man, indicating the urgency and fervency of his cry.

Verse 50: "And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus."

When the blind man heard Jesus calling him, he was overjoyed. He immediately threw aside his garment, symbolizing his abandonment of his old, corrupt ways and leaving behind any burdens that weighed him down. With excitement and hope, he leaped up and eagerly approached Jesus.

Verse 51: "So Jesus answered and said to him, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' The blind man said to Him, 'Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.'"

Jesus simply asked one question, "What do you want Me to do for you?" Dear brothers and sisters, many times when we come before Jesus, this is the first question He asks us: "What do you want Me to do for you?" To answer this question, we need to have a certain understanding of ourselves. We need to recognize our spiritual condition. When we pray to the Lord, He asks, "What do you want?" Therefore, you need to know what you are asking for. Our prayers should have a definite purpose; of course, this purpose should not be frivolous. Therefore, we need to regularly examine our spiritual condition, know what we need, and come to God in grace and mercy.

In response, the blind man said, "Rabboni," which means teacher, "that I may receive my sight." He could hear Jesus' question, so he asked Jesus to grant him sight. This is often the order in which we gain understanding: we must first be able to hear before we can see. Especially when we read the Bible, we must try to listen to the small voice from the Holy Spirit within us. If you can frequently hear the voice of the Holy Spirit and let the Spirit guide you, you will be able to see new light in the Bible, and this new light will bring new revelations.

Verse 52: "Then Jesus said to him, 'Go your way; your faith has made you well.' And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road."

Upon hearing the blind man's request, Jesus responded with a simple sentence: "Your faith has saved you." This blind man believed in Jesus's ability to heal and

trusted that Jesus was willing to do so. With such faith, Jesus fulfilled his request: "Your faith has saved you." This salvation refers to his spiritual salvation, as he saw Jesus within himself, and Jesus saved him. This inner salvation resulted in external healing, and the blind man immediately regained his sight.

Jesus instructed him, "Go your way," as Jesus himself was on the path to the cross, destined to suffer and be killed upon reaching Jerusalem. Therefore, at this moment, Jesus did not encourage others to follow Him, as it was a difficult road. However, despite this, the recently healed blind man chose to follow Jesus on the journey.

In the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 18: 43, "Immediately he received his sight and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God." This blind man's salvation and restoration of sight led to a significant transformation in his life. He immediately followed Jesus and glorified God along the way. As a result, others joined him in praising God, bringing immense joy.

Mark's Gospel ends here in chapter 10, and chapter 11 begins with Jesus heading towards Jerusalem, starting His final week of ministry on earth. We need to review Jesus' disciple training in Galilee and His journey with the disciples outside the Jordan River. Mark's account is concise, selecting only a few events to record, but there are hidden insights behind each one. It takes spiritual insight to unearth these treasures.

Mark spends several chapters (from chapter 3 to chapter 9) recording Jesus' disciple training in Galilee. The pinnacle of this training is when Jesus takes the disciples to the foot of Mount Hermon, where He reveals Himself as the Christ and shows the divine glory to three disciples. That was a significant moment.

Before that pinnacle, in Mark 8:22-26, Jesus heals a blind man in Bethsaida in a unique way, first applying spit to his eyes, then touching him again to fully restore his sight. Why does Mark choose to record this event? We need to look back a bit further, to Mark 8:14-21, where the disciples fail to understand the meaning of the feeding of the 4,000 and the 5,000. Jesus emphasizes the two feedings, indicating the provision for both the Jews (symbolized by the 12 baskets) and the Gentiles

(symbolized by the 7 baskets). Because the disciples fail to grasp this, Mark records Jesus healing the blind man, symbolizing the disciples' lack of spiritual sight. After the two stages of healing by Jesus, their eyes are opened, and they can see Jesus as the Christ.

Mark's account serves as a summary of Jesus' disciple training in Galilee. The bread, specifically the fragments, can be seen as central to Jesus' disciple training. Jesus is likened to a grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies, producing many seeds. These seeds are harvested, crushed, ground into flour, and made into bread. This bread is then distributed to meet the needs of both the Gentiles and the children of God. This represents the culmination of Jesus' ministry in Galilee.

In parallel, Mark chapter 10 discusses Jesus' time in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where He spent six months leading His disciples on the road to the cross. The culmination of this journey to the cross lies in the future chapters, particularly on the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem, where Jesus will be crucified.

Prior to this climax, Mark records an incident in Jericho, a cursed city, where Jesus healed a blind beggar as He left the city. This blind man glorified God upon receiving healing. Preceding this event, in Mark 10:35-45, James and John requested to sit at Jesus' left and right hand in His glory. Jesus emphasized whether they could drink from the cup He would drink, referring to the culmination of His work on earth in the last six months: the cup the Father had prepared for Him. However, they did not fully understand; they thought they could drink from that cup. Jesus repeatedly tried to explain, but they still didn't comprehend. So, Mark cleverly juxtaposes this incident with the blind man in Jericho. Jesus healed his eyes, enabling him to see. This blind man symbolizes the disciples, who couldn't see the significance of the cup. Through Jesus' healing, they could see the cup and were willing to glorify God.

Certainly, as they were about to enter Jerusalem, they were all going to experience the reality of that cup. So here we see a very clever contrast by Mark: in the time in Galilee, the central revelation was that Jesus is the bread. And in the six months outside the Jordan in Bethany, the central revelation was that Jesus is the cup. Jesus' bread and cup are the revelations the disciples most needed to understand! It is

also what every saved saint today needs to come before the Lord Jesus Christ's bread and cup every week, knowing the cup of suffering He endured for us so we can drink the cup of salvation; knowing that He is the grain of wheat now made into bread, broken for us to meet our daily needs. May we all see the message Mark wants us to see.

Let us pray: Lord, thank You for this bread and this cup, not only the fact of what You accomplished 2000 years ago but also the provision You give Your children today. Just as You healed the blind man in Bethsaida and the blind man in Jericho back then, today You also come to heal our spiritual blindness, so that we can truly see the reality of the bread and cup. This cup is Your covenant blood shed for us; this bread is Your body broken to meet our needs. Help us not only to understand but also to experience Your great salvation. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!