"WHAT DO YOU WANT?"

Mark 10:46-52
Key Verse: 10:51

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.
The blind man said, 'Rabbi, I want to see.'"

When we read Mark’s Gospel one thing is conspicuous. Mark’s Gospel is called the standard gospel because this gospel includes the most events, even though it is the shortest gospel. The other thing is that half of the Mark’s Gospel accounts are focused on Jesus’ way to Jerusalem and his crucifixion, while other gospels proportion one-third to this. Mark 10:45 is the key verse of Mark’s Gospel. It says, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Before the coming of Jesus, those who were served by others were known as masters and they were regarded as great. On the other hand, those who served others were known as servants or slaves, and they were unhappy all the time. They were unhappy in the morning. They were unhappy in the evening. When Jesus said that he did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many, it sounds contradictory. But it is the truth of God. Good examples are Moses, David and Paul, who served their people. The best example is Jesus, who served God’s will for world salvation unto death, death on the cross. In Mark 10:45, Jesus teaches us that when we serve others in the name of Jesus we are truly happy. Today’s passage is a story about Jesus who healed a blind beggar. In this passage we learn from the beggar how to overcome our fatalistic elements of life. We also learn that we can please God when we come to him, overcoming our fatalism.

I. "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (46-48)

First, the blind man was pathetic because he was blind. Jesus and his disciples and the crowd of people following him came to Jericho,
which was 15 miles from Jerusalem, where a rugged cross awaited Jesus. This scene seems to be the prelude of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Jesus' heart must have been heavy as he approached Jerusalem. Jesus and his disciples, along with a large crowd, were again on the way to Jerusalem. This parade was delayed by a blind man, Bartimaeus, who was sitting by the roadside begging. This blind man must have been a most pitiful person among all unhappy people. Why was he so? It is because a blind man cannot see anything, but lives in the darkness. How beautiful it is to see budding and sprouting leaves in the spring! How beautiful it is to see the standing fields of grain on a summer's evening! How beautiful it is to see colorful leaves of autumn trees in the river valley! How beautiful it is to see white snow everywhere on the ground in the winter! How beautiful it is to look at our lovely mother's face every day! It is a great privilege for mankind to see man and nature and everything in it. Through the beauty of nature, God convinces us of his promises of life and peace. The beautiful rainbow in the sky is the sign of God's promise of peace to all mankind. When we look at the rainbow, all of our fear and anxiety can be washed away when we remember God's promise. But this blind man could not see the rainbow. He must have felt cut off from God's blessings, and excluded from God's promises of love and life. It is easy for a blind man to live in a world of misunderstanding and prejudice. Misunderstanding often causes one to be hurt deeply. There was a young man who misunderstood his father, thinking that his father loved his younger brother more than him. His misunderstanding grew bigger and bigger until he became a high school dropout. "Prejudice" is also not a good word. One woman began working in the Physics department of a mid-size university. But several of her colleagues were disturbed by her ambition and accomplishments, thinking that she was out of line. They eventually drove her out of the department. This blind man lived in misunderstanding and prejudice. He must have felt imprisoned by the labyrinth of all the evilness of the dark world. He cried, sorrowing over himself because of his eyes, which seemed to have been made only to shed many tears.
Second, the blind man was pathetic because he did not have his own name. Everyone has his or her name. Someone's name is Weaver. Perhaps his ancestor was one who made clothing and fine cloth. Someone's name is Jennifer. Jennifer comes from Guinevere, which means "bright and fair spirit." Even insects have their own names, such as "maggot," "leech," "cockroach" and so on. A person's name signifies his place in life and his worth as an individual. But this blind man had no name of his own. People called him Bartimaeus, which meant a son of Timaeus. He was a man with no name. He was always there. But people ignored him as if he were not there.

Third, the blind man was pathetic because he was a fatalistic beggar. He could not see. He had no name. Still, he was a human being. He felt hungry exactly three times a day. So he begged from passers-by, saying, "Alms for the blind! Alms for the blind!" But he could hardly get enough money to satisfy his stomach. He cried and cried until he was exhausted and fell asleep. Hebrew people thought that the blind were cursed by God because of their sins. He had all the fatalistic elements of life in himself. For to him, to live was unbearable suffering, yet he was too young to die. One blind man occupied a seat on a night train. A scoundrel pushed him aside and took his seat. The blind man began to cry so sorrowfully that people who heard him felt very sorry for him. One person wanted to give him his seat out of his compassion. But the blind man said, sobbing, "I have no right to sit on a seat because I am a blind man." He was very fatalistic about his blindness and didn't know how to get out of his fatalism.

Fourth, the blind man Bartimaeus was a man of faith. The blind man's human condition had all the elements of fatalism. No one heard of anyone opening the eyes of the blind. It was impossible for anyone to help him. So this blind man could have many good excuses not to go to Jesus. He should have been too fatalistic to go to Jesus. As a blind man, to get to Jesus was almost impossible, for there were many people who wanted to get to Jesus. It was easier for him to be resigned to his fate. He looked doomed to sit there forever, on the
road leading from Jericho. But he did not give in to his situation. He cried out to Jesus by faith. Look at verse 47. "When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'" At that time, the Son of David was known as the One who was promised to come and save his people. The Son of David, the promised Messiah, was known even to this blind beggar. The blind man asked the Messiah's mercy. The blind man believed in Jesus' mercy and power to heal him. Here we learn that we should not be victims of our human condition or fatalism. We must come to Jesus to overcome our fatalistic human condition.

Fifth, the blind man had faith to overcome people's hindrance. At the moment, the blind man wanted to go to Jesus. Many rebuked him, saying, "You blind beggar. Shut your mouth!" when the blind man began to cry out, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" People also hindered his going to Jesus, thinking that he was too presumptuous. People pressed him hard not to go to Jesus. But the blind man began to shout all the more. His cry was a cry to God for help to overcome his inborn fatalism. His cry was the expression of his faith. This fragile blind man did not succumb to their hindrance. Then God gave him burning fire in his heart to overcome people's hindrance. In this way, he overcame people's hindrance and came to Jesus. The blind man was indeed a man of great faith. By faith he overcame his fatalistic human condition and came to Jesus.

II. "What do you want me to do for you?" (49-52)

First, Jesus stopped on the way (49-50). There is a saying, "God helps those who help themselves." Jesus heard this blind man's crying and helped him. Look at verse 49. "Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.' So they called to the blind man, 'Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you!''" Now Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem to die on the cross for the sin of the world. Jesus must have been burdened by the crowd of people following him with false hopes. At that moment, if Jesus were an ordinary man, he would have been indifferent to the blind beggar's crying. But Jesus was not indifferent. He stopped at
the crying voice of one blind man. Even though this blind man was completely ignored and despised by others, Jesus honored and respected him as a child of God whose soul was twinkling like a myriad of stars in the sky. His misery was the object of people's entertainment. But Jesus was gracious and compassionate toward him. Jesus said, "Call him." When Jesus said, "Call him," it meant, "Bring my child to me." So they called to the blind man. When he heard that Jesus was calling for him, he threw his cloak of fate aside, jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. Outwardly, he was a fatalistic blind man, but inwardly he was a man of great faith. He looked pitiful, but he had a bold and courageous faith to come to Jesus by any means. In this way, the Son of God stopped to help the blind man. Here we learn that Jesus wants us to overcome our fatalism like the blind man did.

Second, Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus wanted to help him. So he asked in verse 51, "What do you want me to do for you?" This was the question Jesus asked when James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask." (10:35) "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus answered. They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory." In reality, James and John did not know what they really wanted.

"What do you want me to do for you?" It does not seem that to answer this question requires faith. But to answer this question well before God requires absolute faith in God's authority as the Creator God. The word "want" literally has the meaning of "lack". "What do you want" means, "What do you lack which God can provide?" But by nature, fallen men are apt to follow their fallen desires instead of wanting what they really lack. They have no faith that God can heal them or change their wicked character. Instead, they think that they want petty things that cannot satisfy them, like James and John, who wanted a life of ease and glory.
In brief, to be able to answer Jesus' question, "What do you want?", we must have a clear prayer topic before God. American young people look handsome. But they are very nervous for themselves, because they don't have a foundation in the truth. It seems that American young people need too many things, like my son Joey, who never has enough toys. African people are very inventive and joyful. But African young people are full of fatalism because of the devastation of AIDS. It seems that the problem of AIDS in Africa is too big. Russian young people are so artistic. But they are crushed by the heritage of communism and the hopelessness of their future. America tried to help Russia become like us, but instead Russia only became more corrupt and hopeless. It seems that Russian people are doomed. In this situation, we don't know what to pray to God about for the future generation. But God is asking us, "What do you want me to do for you?" When we pray about this nation, our prayer topic is very clear. We must pray, "Lord, may God raise 10,000 Bible teachers so that Bible-believing people prevail over ungodly people." God asks us, "What do you want me to do for your people and the people of all nations?" We must come to God in prayer and find the prayer topic for ourselves, for our nations and for the world. We must overcome our fatalism, and believe that God is the Almighty God who can heal the blind, and who can restore their identity as children of God. In God, America's anxiety, Africa's tears of suffering, Russia's hopelessness can all be solved, when we pray according to God's prayer topic for each nation.

Jesus asked the same question to the blind man because Jesus wanted to know if this man knew what he really wanted. If he did not know what he really wanted, Jesus could not help him. Let's see what the blind man said to Jesus. Look at verse 51b. "The blind man said, 'Rabbi, I want to see.'" He knew exactly what he wanted. He knew exactly what Jesus wanted him to ask. He knew the key point of Jesus' question. The blind man was a man of wisdom who knew exactly the one thing to ask God. The blind man knew what he really wanted from God. When he knew exactly what he really wanted God to do for him, God answered his prayer.
We have many things that we want God to do for us. But before asking God for something to do for us we must know what God wants us to do. Many people, even the disciples of Jesus, do not know what they really want. But we can learn from Paul. Paul did not know what he really wanted God to do for him. So he wanted honor and wealth. But later, Paul came to know what he should ask God to do for him, for the sake of God's glory as well as for his own success. Paul was on the way to Damascus to persecute the early Christians. The Risen Christ met him on the road and said, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" After hearing the voice of the Risen Christ, Paul fell down on the ground. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." (Acts 9:4-6) God told him what to do in Acts 9:15,16. It says, "But the Lord said to Ananias, 'Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.'" Paul was able to ask God what God wanted him to do after he was told what to do for God.

Third, Jesus blessed the blind man's faith. Look at verse 52a. "'Go,' said Jesus, 'your faith has healed you.'" This blind man was miserable and he had all the fatalistic elements of life. He was too sick to come to Jesus. But he came to Jesus by faith. When he came to Jesus, Jesus wiped the tears from his eyes and gave him 20/20 vision. Now he could see all the beautiful things of the world, which God had created for his own glory and for the happiness of mankind. Now, he did not have to cry because of his blindness. He could see the beautiful rainbow, and know that God's promise of peace and life was for him, too. God also opened his spiritual eyes to see the spiritual realities. When he came to Jesus God gave him eyes to see the kingdom of God.

May God give us faith and wisdom to answer when Jesus asks, "What do you want me to do for you?"