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“Jesus Stood Still.”

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My text is taken from that very interesting and wonderful account of the healing of the blind man who sat by the wayside begging. Crowds of people had come out of Jericho to follow the Man who was performing such wonderful miracles, to listen to the One who spake as never man had spoken, to see Him who had become so famous in Jerusalem and all the country round. This blind man of whom we are to talk a little to-day sat by the wayside begging, while the crowd pressed upon him. He had doubtless heard of this famous and wonderful

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Personage. He could not see, but he had a brain, a heart, and he had ears. He used what faculties he had. He could think, and he knew the promises—all the promises of a coming Messiah; of a Saviour that was to visit the earth. Doubtless he had heard of the dead being raised, and of other wonderful manifestations of power. Doubtless, he reasoned, He must be the promised king of the Jews; He must be the man who was to set his people free—the Deliverer! the Messiah!

We can imagine there was no one to be interested in this poor man's case. It was an accustomed sight, as he sat day after day and perhaps year after year, begging, his ragged cloak about him—a beggar in the very direst sense of the term, depending entirely on what was put into his hand. And yet, as we go on to know his history, he seems to have retained something of character and independ-

ence, for as soon as he heard the Lord Jesus was coming that way, he cried out boldly with strong conviction, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Ah, we know hundreds of people, and you may have met scores of such, who were almost afraid to recognize the Lord Jesus Christ, or who put it upon the ground of humility because they said so little about Him; they would devote six days of the week to business, and encroach very closely upon the seventh, open their mails on Sunday morning, planning business for the coming week. This is a reality of daily life. As when Christ walked the earth, so are men to-day—Pharisees then, Pharisees now.

This blind man was not afraid or ashamed to cry out and to believe that this personage of whom he had heard, and who had such wondrous power, must be the Messiah. Shall we not be bold as Christians, and take

our position before the world as believers in the promised Saviour? Shall we not say, He has come to my heart and I love Him better than all else in the world? This is the great reality! We read of no one befriending the man, offering to lead him to Christ, encouraging him to hope for help. But rather, as soon as he uttered the cry, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me," there were those who rebuked him and commanded him to "keep still." Is it not so today? Do we stand boldly for God and say, "I have consecrated myself and my life and property and everything to Him?" that moment the world and half-hearted Christians cry out, "O, it won't last!" "*You can't hold out!*" This is the devil's plea. It is the devil's business to destroy souls. He does not care how he does it. Whether he makes us sick, or whether he makes us weaklings, or whether he keeps us from doing

God's service or committing grosser sins,—he sits in his majesty and laughs over his victims. O, to be men and women of God! so true to Him that we care not who may attack us! Who can rob us of the grace wherein we stand! "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

With the blind man it was a personal matter. "Thou Son of David have mercy on ME." He knew he was blind; he had no need to be told the fact. His eyes looked out upon darkness; he had not seen the form of man for years. He looked into vacancy. The blueness of the sky had no charm for him; he could not see the arched vault. The flowers had their perfume, but he could not see them; he was blind, just as hundreds and thousands of people are blind to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. They do not understand the Word and care nothing about it; it

has no fragrance for them. Blind, blind! It is a thousand times worse to be blind spiritually than to be blind physically. Blessed is the man that can see God and that walks with God and God walks with him! As the crowd jostled the blind man and warned him to be quiet, he would not be silenced, but cried out the more, his one reiterated plea, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" It means something to be in dead earnest. It means something to be so given to an object or principle or truth that nothing can turn us aside; when counting not our lives dear, all cowardice removed, we fear not what man can do unto us.

The world says, "Don't make such a fuss about this matter! You are overdoing the thing! You are talking too much about this blessed life that the Lord has given! You will get along for a little while, perhaps, but be quiet and see how you come out.

You may go to church once in a while, and you may go to prayer-meeting if you will keep still, but I beg of you talk less about this religion of the Lord Jesus Christ." If we listen to the world in this matter, we shall soon fall out by the way, and have for the result a barren and fruitless life. O, for a life that is hid with Christ in God! That says to every living soul, *The time is short, I know not how soon He may call me to my reward; but while I live I will hold up the banner of the cross and cry,* "God be merciful to me a sinner! He did save me, and the world shall never hear the last of it." Just as determined as was this man about receiving his eyesight, so do I want you to be determined about serving God. Rarely one makes the mistake of doing too much for the Master, of praying too much, of looking too much unto Him. The mistake comes when we spend so little time for Him and with Him. This

man cried much more," "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." My heart rejoices in this. — Bartimeus made it a personal matter. It is right to seek for ourselves, when we know our need and Jesus is near to supply. There is a time of emergency for each one of us, when we must receive of God, or live a beggar; helpless ourselves, and helpless towards those about us; so to remain, until our absorbing cry shall be, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on ME!"

We must be definite in asking if we would have definite blessing. I remember when the first noon prayer-meeting was established in London, Mr. Moody was there. A great many people came and they began to pray. It was a noon day prayer-meeting. They prayed for the nation, for the Jews, and for everything under the heavens. The next day Mr. Moody said, "Now, brethren, I think we had better stop right here. We have es-

tablished this meeting as a noon-day prayer-meeting. I think we ought to pray for something definite. Yesterday I noticed that everybody prayed for the Jews and Gentiles, the nation, for this, that and the other thing, but nobody prayed for me and nobody prayed for himself personally. We must begin at the bottom of things. '*What do I want and what can God do for me?*'" The meeting went on as a success from that day.

So it will be and ought to be to every one of us; not simply to talk and pray about all these things that go to make up the aggregate of life, but, What am I getting out of it? What does God do for *my* soul? How much can He do for *me*? The answer will ring through Heaven, "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe ye receive them and ye shall have them!" I would to God His children here and everywhere might to-day make a personal application for the

needs of their own soul, and then reach out for everybody under heaven; then we can pray and we can accomplish something in grand and glorious service for the Master.

Do you remember in this account it says that, as Jesus was passing by, the blind man cried unto Him? He had detected, as none but a blind man can, where the sound came from. *More than once*, in the face of opposition, he cried, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"

You say, perhaps, the Lord never hears me when I pray! How many times I have prayed and never had the answer. Look at this instance. Jesus was passing by, seemingly going away from the blind man. "But he cried the more a great deal."

Beloved, never stop crying unto God until you get your answer. Don't say, the Lord has forgotten me, the Lord does not hear my prayer. Pray till the very heavens break, and they

will break if need be, to bring you the answer. People are in such a hurry; what they want they must have on the moment. The Lord said, "Blessed is he that waiteth." I don't know why He made as if He would pass by this man, but for your instruction and mine. I claim it for myself. It is for you, too, my friend—that we may learn the lesson to patiently wait. You look at the loved one at home for whom you have prayed and prayed, and have wept because he came not. You have longed perhaps for some soul out of Christ and prayed and prayed, and the answer seemingly came not. *It must come, beloved.* Nowhere in this precious book has He taken back his promise never to forsake you. Does he say, "Lo, I am with you always," to mock and reject you? No, the flowers lift up their heads and give their perfume; they blossom because God waters them and gives them sunlight, and *the*

grace of God never ceases. We have only to wait, as we wait for the bud to blossom and give forth its perfume. *It will come.*

This man waited and cried the more, as if to say, "Lord, I must have my answer; I must be heard." By and by, the Word says, "*Jesus stood still.*"

O, I am so glad that in this case Jesus did not stretch forth His hand to touch the man and heal him, but that "He stood still!" There comes a time in the history of every man, of every child of God, when, amid perplexing care, trial and difficulty, he must stand still and wait. There are such epochs in the history of nations. The children of Israel had to "stand still and see the salvation of God." There was no light. They stood still and deliverance came. Blessed is the man that stands still and looks up, who sees God in the firmament, who remembers, "Of old hast Thou laid

the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands." The same who declares, "I am the Lord, for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me." Blessed is he that waiteth: There is deliverance with Him! Jesus stood still before the poor ragged, wretched blind man. It was not before a king; it was not before an angel that He deigned to stop, but before a *poor, wretched blind man.*

What did He do then? "He commanded him to be called." That earnest, persistent cry reached His heart. At once He opened His mouth and called him unto Him. Again and again has He called us by His Spirit. You can never mistake the voice of the living Christ. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

What did the poor man do? He sprang to his feet; he was in earnest; it mattered not to him how many

people crowded around him; he heard their voices, for they had commanded him to keep still, when he cried the more. What did he care for the people? He was in the presence of the King of Kings, who had power to do for him what no other king on earth could do. He cast aside his garment, sprang to his feet, and "came to Jesus."

So may *we* "lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us." So may we walk with God! The Master answered the cry of faith and the blind man immediately received his sight. He left all that pertained to his former life; even his rags might cause him to stumble on the way. Nothing should hinder, for did not the Master utter His command? Shall we not learn the lesson and question no more the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to heal?

I have *seen* something of the joy of a blind man who was restored to sight.

I remember in this room a man who had been totally blind for seven years, who came to be prayed with that his sight might be restored—he was not even a Christian. He did not know anything about this wonderful Saviour who had the power to save a man's soul. He had heard, as this blind Bartimeus had heard, that the Lord Jesus Christ was doing wonderful things in healing the sick. So this poor man came, and in the quietness of the hour he gave himself to the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved. Then, according to the promise in James, the "prayer of faith" was offered for the healing of his blindness. Two weeks after he returned to us, and taking a Bible of the smallest print he stood and read a portion, without difficulty. Once blind, he could now see.

If the Lord Jesus Christ can do that for a poor blind man, what will he not do for a man whose soul is at

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rest in Him! Beloved, let us trust Him! Let us receive every incident, every promise, every blessing, between the covers of God's Word, as given for us by the Giver of every good and perfect gift!

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