

Mark 10

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 24 August 2010 10:03

Jesus is the One and Only Saviour. If you are saved, it is through and by Him. The same Saviour is also our Lord, and this does not only mean He rules us; it also means He gives us what we need in life, including, at times, healing and material things. Do not fool yourselves by claiming to be saved and pretending God gives you what you need, if you really do not have faith! But, you CAN experience it, if only you believe... truly and genuinely, without doubting. This is the Jesus we read of here. Will you walk with Him in the Way?

Verses 1-9

1.

And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judaea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

2.

And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.

3.

And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

4.

And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.

5.

And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

6.

But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.

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For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;

8.

And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

9.

What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Jesus left Capernaum and travelled on to the seaside areas of Judaea on the “farthest side of Jordan”. That is, on the other side of the River Jordan. Once again, the people massed around Him in vast crowds, so Jesus taught them.

The Pharisees, ever present so as to catch Jesus out, also attended these extempore outdoor meetings. Once more they asked a question, not interested in the answer but in the hope that He would contradict Moses, which would be sufficient for them to accuse Him of heresy. Which is why we are told that they were “tempting him”. They asked ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?’

The law they referred to was the law of Moses, which was the law accepted and used by the Jews. If something was lawful, then it was also permitted. Instead of using the term ‘divorce’ they used “put away”, *apolyō*. It was more than splitting up; it was a man sending a wife immediately out of his house because he wished her to go; to repudiate her. He could do this without opposition and the woman could say nothing. However, if the woman was a Greek or Roman, she could herself divorce the man. Jewish women did not have that luxury. This ‘putting away’ was an act of destruction of a relationship; once broken it was broken for good, as the primary article, *apo*, infers. Just as the marriage was binding (on the woman) so was the divorce.

Today, divorce is undertaken for unbiblical reasons at an increasing rate, even amongst Christians. Only two reasons are given for divorce in the New Testament, and these are given grudgingly: for adultery by the other spouse, or if he or she is unsaved and does not wish to remain married to a Christian. In essence there should be no divorce amongst two Christians,

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just as no Christian should ever commit adultery, for any reason. But, sadly, both happen.

Jesus, supreme thinker and speaker, turned the question around and asked them to tell Him what Moses commanded them to do. They quickly replied: 'Moses commanded to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.' The 'bill' was a scroll on which was written the divorce statement by the husband; the repudiation of the woman as his wife. He handed the declaration to the wife and that was the end of her marriage. On many occasions, the husband did not even bother with the document, and simply repeated "I divorce thee" three times.

On hearing this, Jesus denounced the beliefs of the Pharisees, who were good at using Mosaic laws for their own ends. He told them that the law on divorce was given by Moses not as a good thing, but in recognition of their hard hearts. It was a compromise used to save the woman from complete abuse, and the nation from doing whatever it liked. He told them the 'precept' or teaching about this law was not given as a just settlement, but as a reflection of their hard hearts. The people were sinning and this damaged not just families and marriages but also the whole Jewish nation, who so easily destroyed the marriage bond, which was reflective of their attitude towards their relationship with God Himself.

Jesus then reminded them of the truth: At the first God created both man and woman. The woman came out of the man's body. So, when a man and a woman join together in marriage (this is another way of talking about sexual union), it is as if the woman rejoins the man's body, and both become 'one'. The two leave their parents and join each other as one body; the two "shall be one flesh" so that they are no longer 'twain', or two people, "but one flesh".

Thus, when a man and woman marry, they are joined before the face of God. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Their joining is an act of God. No man, whether by divorce or by adultery, may separate the husband and wife, for by doing so they contradict God's plan and command. In other words, anything other than lifelong marriage is sin, and the provision of two reasons for divorce is NOT a command but a reluctant acknowledgement of the sinfulness of couples or a sinning spouse, by God.

Christians today do not understand this provision and so easily allow divorce to enter into it, with little or no thought. It shows how most enter just as thoughtlessly into marriage in the first place. How many ignored the 'bad points' in their partners before marriage, only to regret it later? Or how many based their marriage only on a sexual attraction? Or for all manner of reasons not linked to a genuine preference? And how many understand that love is not necessarily a central

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theme in marriage, therefore lack of it is not a true reason for divorce. The 'theme' is obedience to God's laws, not to our own emotions.

Verses 10-12

1.

And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.

2.

And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

3.

And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Once they entered the house they were staying in, the disciples asked Jesus about His statements. Jesus bluntly said that if a man divorces his wife and marries someone else, then he commits adultery. The same happened to a woman who divorced. So, when we divorce we commit adultery by remarrying. (This does not take into account the two permitted reasons for divorce). It has been my misfortune to watch several divorces at close quarters, and in each case the spouses never once attempted to look for Christian answers to supposed 'problems', or, they blatantly sinned. This suggested clearly that they did not want answers or help, because they had already decided to get rid of each other, for their own selfish ends. Indeed, the sheer viciousness of their responses was enough to prove this to be true.

Verses 13-16

1.

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

2.

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But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

3.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

4.

And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

We now come to a totally misused and misinterpreted section of scripture. As we have already seen, people, including Christians today, have continually misrepresented the texts, because they do not like the real interpretation! The text does NOT refer to young children and does NOT imply that children are saved because of their age.

Parents were bringing small children to Jesus so that He could apply a blessing by touching their heads. The disciples, trying to protect Jesus from so many demands, told the parents not to do so. But, Jesus was “much displeased” or indignant by this. Jesus appeared to have a love for children. Though children are born in sin, they nevertheless display a genuine trust in their parents, and it is this aspect of young life that Jesus is talking about.

Jesus told the disciples that “of such is the kingdom of God”. This does NOT say the kingdom is composed of children. The term ‘of such’ is the adjective, *toioutos*, and it means ‘such as this’ or ‘of this kind or sort’. That is, the kingdom is filled with people who are like children in their trust. It is true that some are saved at an unusually young age, but this is rare, because to be saved we must acknowledge our sin and the part played by Jesus in our salvation; we must repent and turn to God. Young children are generally unable to do this because they do not understand the reasoning or the implications. But, they do trust explicitly. It is this to which Jesus alludes.

The proof of this interpretation is found in verse 15, where Jesus adds “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” The ‘kingdom of God’ is a reference to salvation – the person who does not show utter trust (“as a little child”) cannot be

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saved. The adverb, hōs, used for 'as', means 'like' or 'even as', which are forms of comparison. Thus, Jesus did not say they must literally be children, but that they must accept the terms of salvation given by God, with genuine trust, just as children trust their parents.

Therefore, the incomprehensible idea amongst so many Christians, that their children are saved, or will be, just because they think so, is unfounded. In my experience, too many parents ascribe salvation to their children at a young age, and so are devastated when they later discover they are not. Youngsters tend to follow their parents out of habit; they copy. They can use the same words, and can openly and genuinely say they love Jesus or God. But, as they grow older, especially in their teens, they stop copying parents and start to copy their peers, because salvation is not truly theirs, but has been assumed by the parents.

On one occasion, on behalf of the church I then attended, I was teaching in a summer school for children. It was the one and only time that a young child kept asking me about salvation! Sadly, I was unable to answer that child – after the lesson I was deluged by pressures from the other children demanding my time. I do know that that person will have been saved, whether or not I answered him. The point, though, is this – as adults we should never push children to 'accept' Jesus.

I used to do it with adults when I preached in an Arminian fashion, and it is something I will always regret. But, I would never push children, because it would be an abuse of their trust. If they are to be saved, then they will not leave this earth until God has given them eternal life, whether someone like me is unable to answer their questions or not. Do not assume young children can understand what you are saying – because most of them cannot. They do not accept your words, only your status as trusted adults.

Jesus then picked up the little children and blessed them. Do not read between the lines here. Jesus 'blessed' them by putting His hands on their heads, but it does NOT mean He gave them salvation! The blessing (from which we get our word 'eulogy') in this text is simply one of future happiness and favour. The unsaved are thus blessed by God in general things, but not in salvation. The word also means that Jesus spoke well of the children. How? By identifying their natural trust.

Verses 17-22

1.

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and

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asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

2.

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

3.

Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

4.

And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

5.

Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

6.

And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

After that, Jesus walked on. As He walked, a man came running after Him. He caught up with Him and kneeled before Him, before asking a question. "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

You might think it odd that Jesus first replied "Why callest thou me good? (There is) none good but one, (that is), God." Can you see why He said it? Jesus was not denying the attribute of goodness, but claiming it for Himself. He was pointing out that by calling Him 'good' the man was accepting Him as God... or should do. Once again, then, Jesus was claiming He was God. Those who say He never said He was God are deluded, and do not read scripture properly! The man also called Jesus 'Master', didaskalos, meaning teacher or, similarly, rabbi.

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Then, Jesus gave the man a blunt instruction after listing the beliefs held by the man (which Jesus knew about because he is God): do not commit adultery; do not steal, or tell lies about others in a court of law, or defraud people, and honour your mother and father. The man replied that he had observed these laws from childhood.

Jesus looked at the man and “loved him”. You know how we, as mere human beings, can be endeared to a man or woman who displays an open nature? Jesus was no different. The man was honest and wanting to please God, and Jesus recognised it. He felt compassion for such a one seeking to do what was right. Probably with a warm tone in His voice, Jesus told the man that he lacked only one thing – he had to sell everything he had and give the proceeds to the poor. If he did that he would know salvation. He also had to stop making money and follow Him, whatever it cost.

Does this mean the man could be saved simply by giving his money away? No. It means that his preference for money was a barrier. When we are regenerated by the Holy Spirit our mind and heart starts to change, to be in-line with God’s ways and mind. We will not show interest until this occurs. The man in the account evidently had more interest in his money than in his salvation, and this is why Jesus quickly and accurately identified his stumblingblock. The man did not have to literally walk with Jesus everywhere – he just had to walk in His way as a believer, in whatever capacity God wanted him to be. Part of that, for this particular man, was to give away the thing he loved the most, his money. Note that helping the poor is a prime requirement of us all... those in our family first, then those who are brethren, and only after that, others.

The man went away much grieved, for he “had great possessions”. Few rich people are saved for this very reason: their love of money is greater than concern for their souls and though earthly life is so very short, many covet their possessions.

Verses 23-27

1.

And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

2.

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And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

3.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

4.

And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

5.

And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

When the man left Him, Jesus looked around at the crowd and told them that very few rich people enter heaven/are saved, which supports the interpretation I have given. I have known many rich men and most of them believe their money can buy anything. They can buy the best healthcare, the best goods, the best houses, and can live very comfortably. In human terms they have no problems and care nothing for the thing called 'sin'. If anything goes wrong they pay their way out of it. If they want anything they just give out money. But, how many of them would alleviate the dire straits of the poor? It is fact that most folks give charitably out of what they have spare, not from their substance. This is why Jesus told the man to give away ALL of his money, as a test of his real desire to be saved.

No doubt the crowd were just as amazed at Jesus' words as modern men are. They asked "Who then can be saved?" Like so many people they held rich men in awe and respect. The rich were the pinnacle of society, or so they thought. Note how it is rich men who are asked to join committees, boards of directors, government, and so forth. Jesus put all their views on their heads!

He then pointed out a truth few understand, even today: that whatever men think is impossible is not impossible with God, Who says "all things are possible". Jesus was referring to salvation

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here, not to everything else in life. This is evident because *absolutely* everything is NOT possible with God. For example, it is not possible for God to sin, or to change His stance. But, in matters of salvation the most unlikely persons can be saved, and that was the meaning of Jesus' words in the text.

Verses 28-31

1.

Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

2.

And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

3.

But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

4.

But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

There are times when reading scripture that texts seem disjointed or not connected. The answer is really simple – it would take a library to contain every word spoken in every day of the three short years Jesus preached! Even so, we find that Peter's question is loosely connected to a previous one about who should be first, and a later one about who should sit at His right hand.

Peter appears to be a very frank and open man, and he asked a blunt question: "Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee." You might think this is not a question, but it is, for Peter was really asking Jesus what the point of following Him was... what did they get out of it? Before you shake your head and say "How awful", I would suggest that you and I would have thought along the same lines!

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Look at the facts: when Jesus came along the lives of the apostles were no longer their own; they left their trades and professions to follow Him, with no clear idea of what was to happen. Yes, for three years their lives were exciting and full; they saw Jesus perform countless miracles and heard Him speak as no man had ever done. They heard Him easily counter the Pharisees and scribes, and knew Jesus was opposed by the establishment.

Even so, they must have asked themselves where this was all going. There had to be a purpose and, if we are honest, there had to be some aim or objective for the ones who followed so closely – the apostles. If I was asked to follow a man no matter what happened, I would also wish to know what the point was, and whether or not I had any kind of objective of my own. Peter, then, was only being upfront with Jesus.

Jesus was not angry. Instead, He gave him a similarly-upfront statement: He told Peter that if anyone left everything behind in the pursuit of Himself and the Gospel, he would be given a hundred times more than what he lost. He would also know persecution but would have eternal life.

How many modern Christians know this, accept it, and understand it? When a man gives his whole life to God and performs whatever ministry he is given, in all circumstances, God will reward him hugely. Jesus says, a hundred times more. Do you believe that? Would you give up all to follow and minister? If you do not, you will not know the reward!

Everyone has a ministry, but very few know it because they concentrate only on the human idea of existence – work, status and ambition. Remove these and work for God and He will make sure you receive far more than anything you lose. But, you have to do it to know it! That is the catch! Hold back and resist, or keep looking for a way out, or an human answer, and you will never know the reward in your own life.

Jesus then said something that again seems unconnected: that many who are first shall be last, and the last shall be first. This is mainly explained a little later, but generally it means that anyone who wishes to be first with God must become last, with no personal ambition to lord it over others. Maybe someone ought to tell the majority of pastors this truth! Only when we become lower than others will God raise us to be higher!

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Verses 32-34

1.

And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him,

2.

Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles:

3.

And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.

Jesus and the apostles then began to make their way towards Jerusalem. At some point Jesus was ahead of them and said and did many amazing things. The apostles watched and listened and yet were afraid. Jesus had already told them what would happen to Him, and they must have been cogitating on it, wondering what was to happen, not just to Jesus but to themselves.

Knowing their hearts and fears, Jesus again took the twelve aside, to teach them. He told them that the chief priests would capture Him and condemn Him to death. They would then deliver Him to the Gentiles – that is, Pontius Pilate. The Gentiles (the Roman soldiers) would scoff at Him and then torture Him, before killing Him. But, on the third day He would rise again to life. He had told them before, but this time gave more detail. Suddenly, the excitement of being with Jesus must have been overshadowed by doubt and great fear.

Those who stubbornly speak the truth of God will always be persecuted and attacked, even in centuries and places not known for these things. It can occur in many ways – loss of job, income, home, status, legal hatred and even violence... Satan will bring many pressures to bear on them. One secret pressure is the way so many pastors play the 'church game', by not saying things to upset the congregation, and preaching in a way that pleases. Think not? Then I

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suggest you listen very carefully, for this is what they do. They do it because they fear losing their income! Simple as that. And so their witness is marred before God.

Verses 35-40

1.

And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

2.

And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

3.

They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

4.

But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

5.

And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

6.

But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.

James and John asked a favour of Jesus – could they sit on His right and left side in Heaven? Jesus told them they did not realise what they were asking. Did they know what it would mean? Could they suffer as He would? They definitely replied “We can”. Jesus then gave them a

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chilling prophecy... that they would indeed suffer and be killed for His sake. But, He said, He could not promise them a place at either side in Heaven, because the Father reserved such a place for “whom it is prepared”... that is, Himself.

Many today (again, mostly charismatic) think they can suffer and die like Jesus and so ‘share’ His suffering. This is not so. Whilst some will die as martyrs, they cannot share His actual plan, for only Christ could suffer and die for our sakes.

Verses 41-45

1.

And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

2.

But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

3.

But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

4.

And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

5.

For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

The question of who would be Jesus’ closest associate has come up before, so it is little wonder that the other disciples were angry. Knowing this, Jesus called them together for a talk. He said that the Gentiles had people who ruled over them (‘lordship’, ‘great ones’), but they should look

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for something far better! The one who wished to rule must become “your minister”; that is, a servant... as verse 44 further states. How many pastors or preachers understand that statement? More pertinently, how many observe it in practice? I know of very few. Yet, even Jesus did not come to rule others; He came to be a servant and to pay the price of death as a ransom for many. (Note: Not for ‘all’ but for ‘many’).

Verses 46-52

1.

And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.

2.

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

3.

And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

4.

And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.

5.

And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

6.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

7.

And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he

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received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

Jesus and the apostles came to Jericho ('place of fragrance': called so because of its abundance of roses, honey, balsam, etc). It is between Jerusalem and the Jordan River, seven miles north of the Dead Sea. (The Hebrew root name for Jericho means 'its moon', with a possible root of yareach, meaning 'moon', or 'before the moon', or 'as long as the moon shall shine', with another possible connection to yerach – moon, lunar cycle, calendar month; it seems to refer to Jericho's longevity).

Intending to walk through, Jesus started to walk out of the city. At the side of the road outside the gates, were a large number of people, begging. One of them was a blind man: "Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus". The name literally means 'son of Timaeus'. Some think his name implies he was the blind son of a blind father.

Bartimaeus learned that Jesus was walking by and called out to Him: "Jesus, (thou) Son of David, have mercy on me." The crowd told him to shut up, but he cried out all the more! Such beggars were tolerated in those days, because, unlike the fake beggars of today, they were disabled and had no other way to survive. Note that the blind man did not call Jesus 'a son of David', but '*The* Son of David'. The wording suggests the man knew Jesus was divine. (Typically in the Greek, the word 'The' is implied by the capital 'S' in 'Son').

When Jesus heard the man cry out He stopped, and asked someone to bring Bartimaeus to Him. A bystander spoke to the blind man, telling him to be joyful, for Jesus had called for him. Immediately, Bartimaeus stood up, threw off his coat, and was led to Jesus.

Jesus asked him what he wanted. Bartimaeus simply said, "Lord, that I might receive my sight." A simple request, but not made half-heartedly, which is how most people would put it today, because of low expectations. Ask – and it will be given! That is Jesus' promise!! Do you believe it? If you do, then why are you so depressed and unsure? Why don't you receive what you ask for? The answer is within... seek it!

This time, Jesus did not even touch the man, yet the man was healed! Jesus just said "Go thy

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way; thy faith hath made thee whole.” The man’s sight was given immediately – remember, it is a truth that if Jesus heals it will be immediate and total. Bartimaeus was overjoyed, and began to follow Jesus.

We have salvation given to us, freely, yet do we live in joy? Do we expect God to answer our prayers? Do we truly follow Jesus in every way? These are vital questions in an era of joylessness and faithlessness.

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