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BIBLE LESSONS.

STUDIES IN MARK.

First Quarter.

Lesson XII. March 24. Mark 10: 46-52.

BLIND BARTIMEUS.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.—Mark 10: 48.

EXPLANATORY.

I. THE BLIND BEGGAR.—Ver. 46. *And they:* Jesus and his disciples. *Came to Jericho:* on their way to Jerusalem. *And as he went out of Jericho:* after having spent the night with Zaccheus (Luke 19: 5). *And a great number of people.* This crowd was probably composed of people going up to keep the Passover. *Blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus.* Bartimeus means son of Timeus, but was used as a proper name, like our Johnson or Thomson.

HE WAS BLIND. Blindness is especially frequent in the East. While in northern Europe there is only one blind in a thousand, in Egypt there is one in every hundred; indeed, very few persons there have their eyes quite healthy.

HENCE HE WAS HELPLESS. There was almost nothing which a blind person could do in that country. He seemed to have had no friends on whom he could depend, and he could neither remove his blindnes nor support himself.

HE WAS POOR; A BEGGAR. He *sat by the highway side begging.* All the roads leading to Jerusalem, like the temple itself, were much frequented, at the times of the feasts, by beggars, who reaped a special harvest from the charity of the pilgrims.

A TYPE OF THE SINNER. (1) *The sinner is blind.* What was true of the eyes of his body is true of the eyes of the sinner's soul. The former could not see the natural world, and the latter cannot see the spiritual world. Physical blindness is a great evil, but spiritual blindness is a far greater. The sinner is blind to his own best good, to the great spiritual realities of heaven and hell, to true holiness, to the possibilities in his soul, to the joys and glories of a religious life, to the highest motives, to eternal life. (2) *He is poor.* "That man only is poor in this world who lives without Jesus; and that man only is rich with whom Jesus delights to dwell." (3) *He is helpless.* He cannot save himself; he cannot supply his own wants. But, (4) he can go to Jesus. He cannot cure himself, but he has power to go where he can be cured.

II. SEEKING FOR HELP. 47. *And when he heard.* (See Luke 19: 37.) Suddenly and unexpectedly sometimes our greatest opportunities come to us. *That it was Jesus of Nazareth.* He had heard of him before,—heard of healings wrought by him, of blind eyes opened, of dead men raised. It had never crossed his thoughts that he and this Jesus should meet, when now they tell him that he is near at hand. He can do that for him which none but he can do. It is his one and only chance.

HIS PRAYER FOR WHAT HE WANTED. He availed himself of his opportunities; he prayed a short, direct, earnest prayer from his heart. *He began.* Immediately, as soon as he heard this; and continued so to do until he gained his end. *To cry out.* For God loves to be entreated; he loves to be compelled; he loves to be even vanquished by our perseverving importunity. *Jesus, thou Son of David.* The cry of these blind men was a recognition of Christ's dignity as the Messiah.

AS AN ACT OF MERCY, NOT OF RIGHT. *Have mercy on me.* The emphasis naturally falls on the word *me;* for Bartimeus, hearing "that it was Jesus," and knowing his own disadvantage from his blindness in the crowd, fears *he* may be overlooked.

HE PERSISTED IN SPITE OF GREAT OBSTACLES. His blindness was a great hindrance; he could not see where Jesus was. Another obstacle was his poverty and beggar's rags, which made him despised and neglected and easily thrust aside by the well-dressed multitude going up to a festival.

48. *And many charged* (rebuked) *him that he should hold his peace.* Why? (1) From a contempt of a blind beggar who "presumed to intrude a private grief upon the King of Israel, when, as they supposed, he was going in triumph to Jerusalem to assume his throne and deliver the nation." (2) Perhaps from selfishness, not wishing to have the Lord's attention called away from their instruction. (3) From indifference to others' needs. (4) They thought they were pleasing the Master in defending him from a beggar. *But he cried the more a great deal.* It was the one opportunity of his life; it was now or never with him.

HE ASKED IN FAITH. His persistency showed his faith; his calling Jesus the Son of David showed his faith. He believed that Christ was both able and willing to help him.

THE SINNER SEEKING SALVATION. Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. It is but a single day we have for meeting with him,—that short day of life, the twelve hours of which are so swiftly running out. Let us be as earnest to see him as Bartimeus, as careless of what others say or do, as resolute to overcome all difficulties; and we shall find he will be as ready to hear, to heal, to come to us. (1) The sinner must seek salvation from Jesus, the Son of God. No man, no human skill, no mere works, no religious forms, but Jesus only, can save him from his sin. (2) He must go to Jesus for it. (3) He must seek salvation as a free gift. He cannot purchase it; he cannot earn it. (4) He must expect opposition.

III. SAVED BY FAITH. 49. *Jesus stood still.* He who moves the universe is held by the prayer of this man. *And commanded him to be called.* He sets those calling the man who had just been hindering him. He wishes men to be helpers of each other's joy. *They call the blind man.* No doubt cheerfully and gladly, now that they know it is the will of the Master. Their heads were more astray than their hearts. *Be of good comfort* (or cheer), *rise, He calleth thee.* They knew now that the blind man would see, and would cheer him as if his sight were certain. It is a blessed thing to be the bearer of good news, and to give cheer and comfort to others.

50. *And he, casting away his garment.* This was his cloak, or mantle; which is often used by the poor at night for a covering, and which the law of Moses gave them a special claim to, that it should not be kept from them over night when it was given as a pledge. The outside garment hindered his speed, could be spared, and is therefore thrown aside. In dead earnest is he, and can brook no delay.

51. *And Jesus . . . said unto him, What will thou that I should do unto thee?* He as well as the rest knew exactly what he sought, but, for the sake of others in need, and for the sake of the man himself, Christ will elicit a still clearer prayer, and make the noble faith of the man shine forth. *The blind man said unto him, Lord:* Better, *Rabboni,* "My Master," as in the Rev. Ver., the word being the same as in John 20: 16, and occurring in these two passages only. The word was an augmentative form of Rabbi, and as such expressed greater reverence. *That I might receive my sight.* This was the one great thing that he desired, for enfolded within it lay rich and countless blessings. No earthly gift was of value beside this.

52. *And Jesus said unto him:* at the same time touching their eyes (Matt. 20: 34). *Go thy way.* Not necessarily a command to depart, but a token that his prayer was granted. *Thy faith hath made thee whole.* Complete, sound, nothing wanting. A sinner is never *whole;* never a complete, perfect man. Christ makes us *whole,* completes the man, develops and balances every part. *And followed Jesus in the way.* He did not say to the blind man, Follow Me; yet he did it; love compelled him; he did not need a command. Unbidden, the healed one follows. *Glorifying God,* as Luke adds (18: 43), and joining the festal company of his Healer, who all likewise gave praise unto God for the miracle which they had witnessed (compare Acts 3: 8–10).

THE SINNER SAVED. (1) How sweet the tidings to a poor blind sinner, that Jesus is now calling him; in His Word, His ordinances, His providences! "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (2) We are to carry the message of Jesus to those who do not know Him. There ought not to be a single person within reach of the church, to whom the invitation should not be given by God's people. (3) The sinner who hears Christ's invitation has great reason to be of good cheer. (4) How eagerly will one cast away his cloak of pride and self-righteousness when he hears Jesus call him to be saved! (5) The sinner must rise up and go to Jesus. No one will be saved sitting still and neglecting to do what lies in his own power. (6) He must believe Jesus' Word. Faith is like opening the blinds of the house to let in the sunshine that is waiting to enter. (7) Jesus makes him whole, restores that which has been ruined by sin, completes and perfects his nature, his character, and his life. (8) Then he should follow Jesus, praising and glorifying God. Henceforth Jesus is his Leader and Teacher, his King, as well as his Saviour and Friend. (9) His experience of salvation is now the argument by which he can persuade others to come to Jesus, and thus help to save the world from spiritual darkness.

She Liked Him.

People who have formed the habit of finding fault with everything and on all occasions, not only render themselves disagreeable to those with whom they come in contact, but frequently place themselves in very awkward positions. This was the experience of a lady who, while attending service in a church in Providence, R. I., not long since, forgot that it is better to worship God than to spend the time in criticizing the preacher.

The minister in question was a young man, scarcely twenty-one years of age, and was widely known as the boy-preacher. On this particular Sabbath he had exchanged with one of the city clergymen and his wife, who looked older than her husband, accompanied him. She was ushered into the pastor's pew, while the minister passed through the vestry and thence into the pulpit by a private staircase.

There were many persons in the congregation who had never seen the young minister, and there was a noticeable buzz of surprise when the boyish figure mounted the pulpit steps. By chance, a strange lady was seated by the side of the preacher's wife, and she began the following dialogue:

"Is that young thing pastor of this church?"

"No, that is the Rev. Mr. D—"

"Goodness me! I don't want to hear him preach. Why, he's nothing but a *boy!*"

After a really elegant sermon, which, if it had no other effect, changed the opinion of the strange lady, she turned to her neighbor and said:

"Pretty good sermon wasn't it? I like him, don't you?"

As the "boy" descended from the pulpit and came to where his wife was standing, she quietly took his arm, and turning to the astonished stranger, replied, with a smile, "Of course! I ought to, for he is my husband!"—*Young People's Weekly.*

Why Minnie could not Sleep.

Up rose the little girl suddenly, giving her pillow an impatient shake. The curtain was drawn up, and she saw the moon, and it looked as if it were laughing at her.

"You need not look at me, Moon," she said. "You don't know about it; you can't see in the day-time. Besides, I am going to sleep."

She lay down and tried to go to sleep. The clock on the mantle went "tick-tock, tick-tock." She generally liked to hear it, but to-night it sounded just as if it said, "I know, I know, I know."

"You don't know, either," said Minnie, opening her eyes wide. "You weren't there, you old thing, you were up stairs."

Her loud noise awoke the parrot. He took his head out from under his wing, and cried out "Polly did!"

"That's a wicked story, you naughty bird!" said Minnie. "You were in grandma's room. So now!"

Then Minnie tried to go to sleep again. She lay down and counted white sheep; she counted white sheep just as grandma said she did when she couldn't sleep. But there was a big lump in her throat. "Oh, I wish I hadn't!"

Pretty soon there came a very soft patter of four little feet, and her pussy jumped up on the bed, kissed Minnie's cheek, and than began to "purr-r-r, purr-r-r." It was very queer, but that, too, sounded as if pussy said, "I know, I know."

"Yes, you do know, Kitty," said Minnie; and then she threw her arms around Kitty's neck and cried bitterly.

"And—I guess—I want—to see my—mamma!"

Mamma opened her arms when she saw the little weeping girl coming, and then Minnie told her miserable story.

"I was awful naughty, mamma; but I did want the custard pie so bad, and so I ate it up, 'most a whole pie; and then—I—I—oh, I don't want to tell, but I 'spect I must! I shut Kitty in the pantry to make you think she did it. But I'm truly sorry, mamma."

Then mamma told Minnie that she had known all about it. But she had hoped that her little daughter would be brave enough to tell her all about it herself.

"But, mamma, she asked, "how did you know it wasn't Kitty?"

"Because Kitty would never have left a spoon in the pie," replied mamma smiling.—*Sel.*

A Diphtheria Scare.

There is no doubt but that diphtheria in its worst form is very prevalent in many cities and small towns. At the same time, that fact is no reason for frightening people out of their wits, with every new case of sore throat. Even ulcerated sore throat is bad enough, and no person would have that for fun. Yet hundreds of persons are said to have had diphtheria who only had a severe sore throat. The form of sore throat which often passes for diphtheretic is what old people call quinsy. "Putrid sore throat," known long before diphtheria, was probably a form of diphtheria, and very dangerous. An old hospital nurse in Boston, says: "It ain't the clear cold of winter that lays people up with colds, catarrh, and sore throats, and lays the children low with diphtheria; it's the soft, pleasant, alternating with the wet, slushy days." This is very true, and explains why those troubles are so prevalent this unusually soft rainy winter; the air, in fact, is laden with poisonous vapors. The first symptoms of true diphtheria are much like those of a heavy cold on the lungs. There is fever, some stupor, and difficulty in breathing. Very sharp pains are often felt in the neck glands, just below the ear. The tongue is coated, the throat and tonsils inflamed, little white spots, which increase and turn to a dirty yellow or brown color next appear, and a peculiar odor totally unlike ulcerated sore throat is noticeable. If the disease is of the black and malignant type, nothing but a miracle can restore the patients to their former good health. Very many reliable people claim to have cured severe cases of diphtheria with Johnson's Anodyne Liniment. Be that as it may, it is worth trying, because so easily used internally, dropped on sugar, or as a gargle, and bathing for external use. We know from experience that it will cure a common sore throat in one night, and thousands of people claim that no remedy known will relieve colds, catarrh, bronchitis, croup, etc., as promptly as the good old Johnson's Liniment. If it cures them, why not diphtheria? It was an old family physician's prescription. I. S. Johnson & Co., Boston, will send free to any person an illustrated pamphlet about its use. Send them your name.

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