

Opportunities to encounter Jesus

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[0 : 0 0] if you could turn now please in your Bibles to Mark chapter 10 into Mark chapter 11 just as we go there let's again pray Heavenly Father we are conscious because you remind us constantly in scripture that without your help we can do nothing apart from Jesus we can do nothing we cannot speak, we cannot listen we cannot respond in a way that will bring salvation to us and bring glory to your name so we need the help of the Holy Spirit and we pray that we would know his help in this time now as we open your word and think through it we ask Lord that he would be moving around in this room and that the Holy Spirit would be moving in us to help us Lord we pray fill this place with your presence and be at work for your glory we pray this in Jesus name

Amen last night later on in the evening my routine is probably similar to the routine of quite a number of people in the room here to Sniper I would like to put on match of the day for a while and you know the format of match of the day most of you will I guess anyway the games of football come on we watch the games we pick and choose the games that we want to go through and then after the games have been shown there's the analysis so you get the ex football players and the football managers and their smart casual clothes and they do the analysis of the game that's just been shown and they may pick on individual players within the actual game so if one team has lost for example they'll start to look for a fault in the team and they might identify one or two players whose work rate just doesn't seem to be up to it and there's all the red dots all over the pitch to show where they've covered and where they've not covered and you see in that kind of analysis that there are some players in a game that work very hard they cover huge areas of the pitch and there's other players who are almost inactive and the first point I want to look at today as we think about this section from Mark 10 into Mark 11 is the activity of Jesus we talked about the activity of players in a pitch how it's tracked with Mark 10 and Mark's gospel open as we look back and as we look forward let's give a thought just now just to the activity of Jesus it seems to be that for us one of our aims in life is to settle down we think about activity and movement as something for the young and for the restless the expectation is that as we grow up as we mature we'll slow down and we'll settle down that's the general expectation we'll see of guys in their early twenties not if they're still charging around but they'll soon settle down they'll soon kind of settle down in one place and yet with Jesus he's always on the move he's the maker of heaven and earth as we sang at the beginning and yet when he came to this earth that he made he had no place to call home at 33 years old he has no home in this world he says in Luke chapter 9 and verse 58 foxes have dens and birds have nests but the son of man has no place to lay his head it wasn't Jesus' priority to have a comfy place to lay his head he didn't go to great lengths and great expense to make sure he had feathered down pillows and the perfect mattress for the undisturbed night's sleep he's on the move constantly he's active you can glance back

we're not going to do it this morning but you can glance back in your own time and look at previous chapters even in Mark's gospel and Jesus is moving from place to place to place he's healing he's casting out demons he's performing miracles he's teaching here he's teaching there he's teaching everywhere he's intercepting Pharisees and Sadducees and scribes and teachers of the law as they go at him he deals with them he's acting he's up and doing the activity of Jesus and here at this point in Mark's gospel he's on the way to Jerusalem steadfastly he set his face as he went towards Jerusalem he went there with great purpose he was going to Jerusalem to go to a cross where he would die to do the work of salvation for us the work that we couldn't do that was the reason he left glory to come to this world to go to that cross in Jerusalem to die and yet en route to the cross where Jesus in his humanity must have been in torment psychologically at the prospect of all the suffering that he would go through for our sin even on the way to the most horrific cross

Jesus goes he goes into Jericho he goes into Bethphage he goes into Bethany he doesn't take the bypass he doesn't pass through them he occupied with his head down he goes to them into them his people to see his souls to save his blind eyes to open his lessons to teach the intimacy of Jesus it's an example that we shouldn't overlook if Jesus was active as he was if he was hard working if he was committed in gospel work so should we be the day that I was preparing this it was on Thursday in the evening

Spurgeon in his morning and evening notes said this through sin that dwelleth in us we may become lax in holy duties slothful in religious exercises dull in spiritual joys and altogether supine and careless this is a shameful state for one in whom the quickening spirit dwells it is high time for all to shake off the bands of sloth with a perishing world around us to sleep as cruel with eternity so near at hand to sleep as madness and we have been made so powerfully aware of the nearness of eternity in these past few days we should be encouraged to be up and doing for God's people to be going out with the gospel message to see the activity of Jesus if your life or my life was was charted if our activity levels were put under analysis much of the day how would we look energy how much energy are we expendable to make

[10:01] Jesus known to the people who are around us we're putting a whole lot of energy into a whole lot of things we're flat out busy with a million different tasks how much energy are we expending in making Jesus known in extending gospel hope in a world that is perishing the activity of Jesus second point here we see the opportunities to encounter Jesus because of the activity of Jesus because of the way he was he was always on the move there was opportunity for many people to be able to meet with Jesus to encounter Jesus to take hold of the salvation that he was offering that could be received by faith and on this day in this section that we've focused on this morning we read in verse 46 of chapter 10 there was a large crowd of people in Jericho and we flick over to chapter 11 and verse 8 we read that there were many people in Bethphage and Bethany many people large crowds in these places and they saw

Jesus and they heard Jesus speak they had opportunity to draw near to Jesus as he was passing through in the direction of Jerusalem but it seems like only one person truly took hold of the opportunity to seek Jesus that was Bartimaeus we only actually read about one meaningful encounter large crowds many people and yet only one person seems to cry out with that soul thirst with that heart desire to want to meet with and encounter Christ we should learn from him we had a reasonable crowd of people here this morning that we don't get saved by being part of a large crowd or even a medium sized crowd we don't get saved by being in a church building and sitting in church chairs we get saved by crying out to Jesus as

Bartimaeus said Jesus saviour son of David have mercy upon me that's how we're saved and in a sense Jesus comes to us through the word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit if we're still alert if we're alert it's because God is reaching us he's speaking to us and in a sense Jesus comes to us and he says to us as he said to Bartimaeus in verse 51 of chapter 10 what do you want me to do for you what do you want me says Jesus to do for me and the person who's still lost who's sitting here this morning you can cry out to Jesus you can say to Jesus what

Bartimaeus said son of David saviour have mercy upon me you could have walked down the door of this church this morning still lost with no hope for eternity and yet through one encounter with Christ in this place this morning if you bow your head you can walk back out the door knowing that you are saved eternally and the way you do that is by crying out to Jesus as Bartimaeus said son of David have mercy on me the promise of Joel in chapter 2 verse 32 as he looked forward to Jesus coming was that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved and we see that promise fulfilled as

Bartimaeus encounters Christ as he calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ he had an opportunity to encounter Jesus in a saving way and today you and I have an opportunity to encounter Jesus as the word is read as God the Holy Spirit moves Jesus is passing through don't be like the crowd and let him pass you by call out to Bartimaeus did maybe someone here this morning saying well I'm not sure why really I'd want to try out to Jesus it's okay for Bartimaeus you know that day but

[16:02] I don't really see why I need to encounter with Christ and if that's the way of thinking of some people here or elsewhere we perhaps need to focus again on the identity of Christ the third point the identity of Jesus sometimes we can be mid conversation sometimes we can phone somebody up for example and we dial the numbers on the phone and as we put the numbers in and as we think about the reason that we're punching the numbers in we have a particular purpose in making the call please speak to the person they answer the phone hi how are you doing have you heard about this and the conversation goes that way and it goes this way and you're five minutes in and you're suddenly thinking why did I phone again need the reminder actually what was the purpose for this conversation in the first place and maybe we need just a reminder at chapter 11 of

Mark's gospel why Mark is speaking to us why is it that Mark wrote this letter why is it that we have this gospel because we might be at chapter 11 and actually quite engaged and quite interested by all that we're reading because it's a great read it's fast moving it's action packed there's no dilly dallying in Mark's gospel he's just charging on ahead this is not simply for our entertainment Mark didn't write this book just to give us something to read before we went to our beds he wants us to see something through this book Mark states the purpose for which he wrote in the very first verse of the book he says the beginning the beginning of the gospel the good news about

Jesus Christ the son of God the identity of Jesus Mark wants us to be clear on that he is the son of God of God you can be sitting alongside somebody in this room just now and think I have no particular desire to want to have a deep encounter with him this morning but God the son Jesus you and I have need desperate need to encounter him in time before we go to eternity and Mark wants us to see the identity of Christ and for those who knew the

Old Testament scriptures they should increasingly have been seeing the identity of Jesus as the son of God the Bible in some ways is like a giant jigsaw many pieces there's many books there's many authors all inspired by the one Holy Spirit and they're all pointing us to the Messiah they're all pointing us to the Savior to the Christ to the son of God so there's a whole Old Testament that's full of clues that are pointing the people of God to see and to recognize the identity of Jesus when he came Isaiah in chapter 35 verses 4 to 6 says be strong do not fear your God will come he will come with vengeance with divine retribution he will come to save you then will the eyes of the blind be open and the ears of the deaf unstopped then will the lame leap like a deer and the mute tongue shout for joy

Isaiah is saying as the Holy Spirit moves them this is what the Messiah will do this is what the Son of God will do when he comes to this world this is how you'll know him and all this was happening we could flick back through the last few chapters and see everything of that promise that Isaiah made actually happening in real time the ears of the deaf were being opened the lame were walking the mute were speaking and the eyes of the blind people like Bartimaeus were being given sight and Mark is saying pay attention your God has come and Bartimaeus understood that and that's why he called out to Jesus he perceives he recognizes this is no this is no man simply a man this is the

[21 : 33] God man this is the saviour this is the one who can help me that's why he cried out to Jesus J.C.

Ryle says Bartimaeus was blind in body but not in soul the eyes of his understanding were open he saw that Jesus of Nazareth as our Lord was contemptuously called Jesus who had lived for 30 years in an obscure Galilean village this very Jesus was the son of David the Messiah of whom prophets had prophesied long ago that's why Bartimaeus cried out he didn't cry out to anyone else who was passing by because they couldn't help him they couldn't save him but when Jesus passed by he recognized the identity of Christ as God the son the saviour and he cries out son of David have mercy upon me and then as we move from chapter 10 into chapter 11 we're given another piece of the jigsaw that shows us the identity of Christ in Zechariah in chapter 9 in verse 9 we're given another picture another piece of the jigsaw that points us to the identity of Christ rejoice greatly daughter of

Zion it says shout daughter Jerusalem see your king comes to you righteous and victorious lowly and riding on a donkey on a colt the colt of a donkey this was a prophecy for what would be happening when God the son came he would come riding on a donkey and as Jesus rode into Jerusalem we see this prophecy being played out in real time Jesus as he headed in the direction of the cross his approach was not that of a mighty warrior and a stallion as we might expect rather he came as the humble servant king yes he was the only righteous one he was the only one who could win the victory over sin and death and

Satan and hell for us but his approach to Jerusalem was a lowly one he came riding on a donkey and it was a sign that was to fulfill scripture it was to help the people to see and recognize where God has come and all these pieces came together Jesus could be seen for who he was and is as Christ the saviour son of God see when we don't see Jesus clearly when we don't understand the identity of

Christ we will sit on occasions like this and we'll let him pass by and our minds will be on dinner our minds will be on meetings our minds will be in sport our minds will be in the relationships we have or the relationships we want our minds will be in the office desk and Jesus will pass by most of the Christ on these days let him pass by they didn't see who he was but when we see that Jesus is the saviour who can save us from our sin when we see that

[26 : 29] Jesus is the Christ who alone can bring peace to our restless souls when we see that he is the Lord who can help us to break the chains of sin but strangle us when we see that Jesus is the son of God the righteous judge for whom we will one day give an account of how we lived our lives and surely we will cry out of mark in it Jesus saviour son of David Christ have mercy upon me

I think I'll stop there Lord God we thank you for your word and we thank you for the promise of scripture where even two or three of us meet together in the name of Jesus he is here with us and we thank you for how readily we can connect the picture back then with the picture of today right here and now we are we are a group of people and we are people who are aware that Jesus is passing by just now as the scripture is read we hear the voice of

Jesus and we know that the Holy Spirit is active in this place bringing to us our attention to our hearts the piercing words of Jesus we ask Lord that we would not be like the many to let Jesus pass by and we very quickly went from showing their approval of Christ as they shouted his hand to showing their hatred for him as they shouted crucify the same people Lord enable us not to stay within the Christ and to let Jesus pass by today but hear us and move in our hearts in order that we will say from our hearts Jesus son of David have mercy upon me we know that that is a prayer that

God will hear we know that that is a prayer that will bring salvation into the hearts of sinners who truly mean it we know it's a prayer that changes life for us in this world and changes eternal destiny for us as we are redirected from the road to hell to the road to heaven enable us we pray today not to miss this opportunity that you give to us but to close in by faith in Christ and to receive the salvation that is offered so freely to us in him we pray all these things in the name of Jesus Amen we're singing to conclude Psalm 72 and the last three verses of the psalm his name forever shall endure last like the sun it shall men shall be blessed in him and blessed all nations shall him call now blessed be the

Lord our God the God of Israel for he alone with wondrous works and glory that excel and blessed be his holy glorious name to all eternity the whole earth let this glory fill Amen so let it be we stand to sing to God's praise