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Exegetical Paper on the Gospel of Mark 10:46-52

46 And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. 47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 48 And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 49 And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart. Get up; he is calling you." 50 And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 51 And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight."52 And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way. (Mark 10:46-52 ESV)

Introduction

This paper is an exegetical analysis of the Gospel of Mark 10:46-52. This paper is an attempt to exegete Mark's narration on Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus by analyzing the structure of the passage and understanding the purpose of Mark's writing the passage and the core of the logic and flow recorded in 10:46-52. It also aims to find out the meaning of true "discipleship" presented in the passage and the whole of the Gospel of Mark. Theological implications and reflections are also deduced from this study.

This passage belongs to the last part of the true "discipleship," which is delivered to Jesus' disciples in the course of three predictions of Jesus' suffering, which run to Mark 8:27-10:52 and finally to Jerusalem through Jericho. This passage concerning the "discipleship," which occupies a key theme in the Gospel of Mark, centers around the three predictions of Jesus' suffering on his

journey from Galilee to Jerusalem: Caesarea Philippi (8:27); the First prediction of suffering (8:31): Misunderstanding of disciples I, the discipleship I; Passing through the middle of Galilee (9:30); the Second prediction of suffering (93:21): Misunderstanding of disciples II, the discipleship II; Going up to Jerusalem (10:32); the third prediction of suffering (10:32-34): the discipleship III. Mark 10:46-52 belongs to the discipleship III. Through a narrative of a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, Mark colorfully paints the meaning of true discipleship.

Structural analysis and semantic understanding of the text

A. Structural Analysis

The narrative in the Gospel of Mark 10:46-52 is about the healing of the blind beggar, Bartimaeus. The narrative of this healing event is contained in other Synoptical Gospels; Matthew 20:29-34; and Luke 18:35-43. However, this event, recorded in the Gospel of Mark, shows differences from the ones recorded in other Gospel.[1] Mark follows the order of the event of Matthew's record, but in the process of recording this event, the passage testifies differently to the unique points Mark has as a witness to the incident.[2] The passage of the blind man, Bartimaeus, written in the Gospel of Mark, is the last healing miracle recorded in the Gospel of Mark and is set in the framework of Jesus' last journey to Jerusalem, as the fourth major part of the Gospel of Mark.[3] Jesus explains his Messianic mission and its meaning to those who want to follow him.

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[1] In Matthew 20:30, there are two blind men appear in the narrative; in Luke 18:35, the healing takes place when Jesus approaches Jericho whereas, in Mark, Jesus was leaving the city.

[2] C.S. Mann, *The Anchor Bible : Mark a new translation with introduction and commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1986), pp. 421

[3] John Grammix divides the entire structure of the Gospel of Mark into: I. The Preparation for Jesus' Public Ministry (1:1–13), II. Jesus' early and later Galilean Ministry (1:14–6:6), III. Jesus' Ministry in and around Jerusalem (6:7-8:30), IV. Jesus' Journey to Jerusalem (8:31–10:52), V. Jesus' Ministry in and around Jerusalem (11:1–13:37), VI. Jesus' Suffering and Death in Jerusalem (chaps. 14–15), VII. Jesus' Resurrection from the Dead near Jerusalem (16:1–8), VIII. Disputed Epilogue (16:9–20). John D.Grassmick. *The Knowledge Commentary* (Illinois: Victor Books, 1988)

There is a balanced tension between Jesus' suffering and his future revelation in the glory. The structure of Mark 8:32-10:52 consists of three signs of suffering; the first prediction of suffering 8:31-9:29; the second prediction of suffering 9:30-10:31; the third prediction of suffering in 10:32-10:52, and for each of these prediction contains one prophecy (8:31, 9:30-31, 10:32-34). Also, the disciples' responses to these predictions are recorded in 8:32-33, 9:32, 10:35-41, and each part contains some lessons about discipleship (8:34-9:29, 9:33-10:31, 10:42-52).[4]

As mentioned above, this narrative is the last healing miracle recorded in Mark and is also the conclusion of Mark's particular reference to discipleship (Mark 8:31-10:52). The meaning of this narrative is well explained in 10:52, despite the misunderstandings of the disciples, Jesus opens their eyes and reveals the full meaning of his Messiahship so that the disciples will have a clear understanding.

A linguistic analysis of the healing account of Bartimaeus focuses specifically on the story's structure flow about who Jesus is. Mark describes the exact identity of Jesus on the last path of Jesus, who finishes all his ministry and goes up to Jerusalem through the story of healing Bartimaeus that appears here. From this perspective, Mark 10:46-52 can be divided into plots as follows:

Introduction 10:46a

Miracle worker comes 10:46a

Body 10:46b-52a

Need presented 10:46b-47

Crowd responds 10:48a

Victim responds 10:48b

[4] Ibid. p.133

Miracle worker commands 10:49a

Need presented 10:49b-50

Miracle worker questions 10:51a

Victim responds 10:51b

Miracle worker heals 10:52a, b

Conclusion 10:52c

Miracle worker departs 10:52c[5]

Among the above structures, the narrative structure is as follows. 46a has a clear and single theme of 'Miracle Worker Comes' as the introduction part. In addition, this section clarifies where the geopolitics in which this event takes place. The body part of the story, the 10:46-52b part, contains complex interchanges between Jesus, the crowd, and the Bartimaeus. In verse 47 that followed, Bartimaeus cries out, "Jesus, Son of David," and through this, the incident begins. In 48a, the crowds' rebuke to Bartimaeus's behavior appears, and in 48b, the Bartimaeus's second crying out to Jesus appears. Jesus' response and crowd's reactions to this second crying out of Bartimaeus follow in 49a, in turn, Bartimaeus's reaction to Jesus' call in 50, followed by Jesus's question to Bartimaeus in 51a, Bartimaeus's response to Jesus in 51b, Jesus' response to Bartimaeus's request in 52a, b, and 52c's Bartimaeus's reaction in 52c.

This structure focuses on the conversation between Jesus and Bartimaeus and between his disciples and Bartimaeus.[6]

"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

"Be silent."

"Son of David, have mercy on me!"

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[5] Edwin K. Broadhead. *Teaching with Authority : Miracles and Christology in the Gospel of Mark* (Sheffield, England ;Sheffield Academic Press,1992) pp, 157-158

[6] Jerry Camery-Hoggat. *Irony in Mark's Gospel* (England : Cambridge University Press, 1992) p.164

"Call him."

"Take heart. Get up; he is calling you."

"What do you want me to do for you?"

"Rabbi, let me recover my sight."

"Go your way; your faith has made you well."

The structure is as if it were antiphonal chant, and it has a structure of demands, objections, repeated demands, pauses, questions, and repeated demands. All these exert rhetorical power that makes something feel urgent and necessary.

B. Semantic Understanding

Bartimaeus' narrative begins with the word Kai; e[rontai eij" Bhqsai>davn (And He came to Bethsaida) in the first half of the Gospel of Mark, and Bartimaeus' narrative begin within similar manner Kai; e[rcontai eij" JIericw (And they came to Jericho).[7]

In both passages, the crowds come to see the miracle of Jesus. The similarity of these words naturally connects Bartimaeus' account to the Bethsaida account. The healing of Bartimaeus takes place at the end of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, and it is the last miracle Jesus performs before entering Jerusalem. Moreover, this passage has special meaning as the discipleship is recorded at the end of the discourse. As the blind beggar Bartimaeus come to Jesus with confidence in healing, his action is presented as an example for readers to follow.

Mark's positive portrayal of Bartimaeus further supports this. In verses 46 and 49, Mark describes the behavior of the blind man trying to move on to Jesus, whose cries are desperate. First of all, the description of Bartimaeus indicates the crowds who are with Jesus. Jesus was

[7] Joel F. Williams. *Other Followers of Jesus: Minor Characters as Major Figures in Mark's Gospel* (JSOT Press, 1994) p.152

known as "the Nazareth" to the crowd who had been with him. However, when Bartimaeus hears that Jesus is passing by, he cries out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

He calls Jesus "Son of David," which shows that his faith is different from others. In the Old Testament, the word "Son of David" refers to Messiah, who will appear in the future (Matt. 1:1, 9:27, 2 Sam. 7:12-16, Ps. 89:4). Furthermore, Bartimaeus' cry reflects the praise of the crowd as they entered Jerusalem, "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father, David! Hosanna in the highest!" (Mark 11:10).[8] Also, Bartimaeus' cry is an expression of his faith. One important thing that should be noted about Bartimaeus' confession is that no one but Peter knew Jesus as Messiah until this point. Only Peter once referred to Jesus as the Messiah (Mark 8:27-30).

In Mark 10:51, Jesus asks Bartimaeus, "What do you want me to do?" (Tiv soi qevlei" poihvsw). In 10:36, Jesus asks the same question to James and John, the sons of Zebedee (tiv qevlete me poihvsw uJmi'n). James and John's response to the question directly contrasts with the Bartimaeus response. The request of James and John show their blindness. James and John do not know what they are asking (Mark 10:38). Unlike them, Bartimaeus seek to gain his sight. He firmly believes that Jesus has the ability to heal him. In the Gospel of Mark, people's requests for God are answered when they are in line with God's will. This principle is evident in Jesus' teachings in Mark 8:34; 9:35; 10:43-44. Bartimaeus, therefore, is allowed to recover his sight to follow Jesus.

Jesus' response to Bartimaeus' request is, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." Jesus tells Bartimaeus that his faith has saved him. Jesus' words not only mean that he has restored his sight but also proclaims that he will gain spiritual salvation beyond physical

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[8] Lane, William L., *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Mark*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974) p.300

recovery. Unlike disciples and religious leaders who see but cannot see, Bartimaeus shows that he is a person who knows how to see Jesus' teaching correctly.

Linguistic Interpretation: Word Study

When Jesus hears the cry of the Bartimaeus, he called the Bartimaeus through the crowd. Here, Jesus' "call" is really important because the verb fwnevw is repeated three times in verse 49 by Jesus, by the narrator, and by crowds.[9] Jesus had called his disciples before in Mark 1:17, 20; 2:14; 3:13-19. Jesus calls to give Bartimaeus a chance to heal. Jesus also calls Bartimaeus to follow him. Bartimaeus' response to Jesus' call is to throw off his cloak and spring up and come to Jesus.

Jesus says, "Go your way; your faith has made you well.," in response to Bartimaeus' request. The command' uJpavgw' is typical of the healing narrative of the Gospel of Mark (1:44, 2:11, 5:19,34, 7:29, and 10:52). In the New Testament, "uJpavgw" is used in three ways: "gone away" and "go for a purpose" and "Christ goes to Father." In the text, it is used as a second-person singular imperative as {Upage. Therefore "go" to Bartimaeus means that he is given the opportunity to follow Jesus.

Bartimaeus appears to follow Jesus on the way (oJdov") after his sight has been altered. It is a meaningful decision to say that he follows Jesus after Bartimaeus gains his sight. oJdov" is a word meaning "way, path, the road" and "lifestyle," and the image of "the way" links to the whole Gospel of Mark. The way given in the Gospel of Mark is the way given in the journey of Jesus, which begins again in Caesarea Philippi and go up to Jerusalem in 10:32. Bartimaeus is glad to follow Jesus on his last journey to Jerusalem, and Mark presents his meaningful action as a true disciple in his discipleship. After Bartimaeus opens his eyes, the way he follows Jesus is

[9] GNT, UBS4-NA27 *NOVUM TESTAMENTUM GRAECE* (Greek New Testament) p.125

the very way that his disciples have hesitated to follow. He wants to live life as a disciple by choosing to follow Jesus on "the way" to Jerusalem to carry the cross, even at Jesus' command, "Go your way; your faith has made you well."

Understanding the background and socio-cultural understanding

In the first part of this article, 46a, the location of the event is revealed to be Jericho. Jericho is a city about 27 kilometers from Jerusalem, which was called the "place of fragrance." In the Old Testament, Jericho is recorded as a "city of palm trees." Jericho, the city, conquered by the people of Israel in Joshua 6, was declared through Joshua that, "Cursed before the Lord be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho. "At the cost of his firstborn shall he lay its foundation, and at the cost of his youngest son, shall he set up its gates" (Joshua 6:26) after the conquest. In fact, when Hiel of Bethel built Jericho in 1 King 16:34, the firstborn of Abiram died on the site, and when he set up its gate, the words proclaimed through Joshua came true through the death of his youngest son Segub. Also, in Jericho, many priests and Levites, who were in charge of God's work, stayed waiting for their half-day.[10] Even though the priests and Levites were distinguished before God, their faith was like a ruined Jericho. Therefore, the fact that Mark indicates that the healing event will take place here in Jericho in verse 46, and Bartimaeus' confession of "Jesus, the Son of David," shows what an amazing confession of faith he made.

Literary interpretation

In relation to the background in literary works, this passage corresponds to the middle part between the section on discipleship in Chapters 8-10 and the section where Jesus confronts Jerusalem's religious leaders in Chapters 11-13. The last word of the passage, in verse 52, "On the way," forms the proper conclusion of the whole passage, in which teachings about the twelve

[10] William Barclay. *The Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia : The Saint Andrew Press, 1975) p.260

disciples are given to the path of Jesus, which is part of the discipleship. The story of healing the blind appears twice, in 1:46-52 and 8:22-26 in the Gospel of Mark. They are each transitional passages in the main parts of the Gospel of Mark. In 10:46-52, as in other passages on healing the blind, "To see" has a literal and symbolic meaning. It should not be argued that Bartimaeus has a spiritual eye by recognizing Jesus as a teacher, and became an ideal disciple. When Jesus is crucified, Bartimaeus will run away with all the other disciples. But now in this story, the insight of Bartimaeus as a foreigner contrasts sharply with the blindness of his disciples, who belong to the inner circle. Moreover, "immediately he recovered his sight" forms a close parallel to "followed him on the way." This text invites readers to come and see Jesus, to see him, to follow him.[11]

With regard to the literary manner of 10:46-52, one can see that this passage is a miraculous event of remarkable healing. It contains evidence of problems, solutions, and healing. By emphasizing the relationship between faith and healing, this passage directly echoes Jesus' words of "your faith has made you well," in Mark 5:34, to a woman who has hemophilia. It reemphasizes the reference to faith in Mark 2:5, 9:23-24, 6:5-6. Bartimaeus clearly shows an example of faith. Bartimaeus shouts to Jesus, even though he does not fully know who Jesus was; he passionately responses to Jesus' call; he fully focuses on what he wants and has a clear conviction that Jesus would heal him. Jesus calls all of his attitudes and actions, "faith." The purity of Bartimaeus' faith can be proven from the fact that he soon follows Jesus on the road when he sees him.

Although this passage can be interpreted as a miracle story, the form of the miracle story is already completely changing within the passage itself. The account of the problem dominates the scene, and the account of the actual healing and its consequences is reduced to only verse 52.

[11] Miller, Susan., “Mark 10:46-52 Expository Times” 117/12(2006) p.508

Moreover, the healing is being done without any word or action from Jesus. Jesus's words are presented only as words to send the blind. Given the above, along with the fact that "call" is repeated three times in verse 49, which also features in common with the calling account of apostle Paul, which is perhaps also fundamentally in the "calling account" in the book of Acts. Therefore, this passage is closer to the "calling account" at the beginning of the Gospel of Mark 1:16-20, 2:13-14, which shows how a particular individual whose name is revealed becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ.[12]

Meaning of the text related to the subject matter of discipleship

Mark 10:46-52, including The Rich Young Man in 10:17-22, the reward for his followers in 10:23-31, The Request of James and John in 10:35-45, and Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus in 10:46-52 are records that are related discipleship. Mark inserts Jesus' third foretelling of his suffering at the center of these events, ultimately revealing that these narratives are about the discipleship that follows Jesus.

The narrative of this Bartimaeus contrasts structurally with The Rich Young Man in 10:17-22. In other words, while the rich young man disobeyed Jesus' commandment, Bartimaeus concludes, "followed him on the way," despite Jesus' commandment to "Go your way." Bartimaeus' following shows "the following of joy" with faith, especially the Christian discipleship required for the third prediction of Jesus' suffering.

Also, Mark represents his theological intentions with the motif of Jesus' "way," which is dramatically choreographed about Jesus' life and death in the process of showing discipleship. The theme of the "way" is a lesson about the discipleship of Jesus in "The Way to Jerusalem." Mark's "way" theology is rooted in Jesus Christ or Christianism. The discipleship begins with

[12] Lamar Williamson, Jr. *A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: Mark* (John Knox Press, 2001) p.260

Jesus. Through the "way" theme, readers face tension and fear and alternative deaths.[13] Thus, true discipleship means the "way of the cross," which follows service and sacrifice that includes suffering and death.

Finally, a crucial metaphorical expression that represents discipleship in the Gospel of Mark is "follow," which is closely related to the "the way" as mentioned above. The object of the following is Jesus, and the goal is the cross. In other words, true discipleship means the way of "life following" the "the way of the cross" that Jesus walked in obedience to his task.
In the narrative on the healing of Bartimaeus, Mark delivers a message of true disciples' path along the way of the cross that Jesus Christ walked on.

Conclusion

Through 8:27-10:52, Mark records the "discipleship" that entails the transformation of life into that of Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of Mark, "discipleship" is an important theme, and the meaning of it is evident in the predictions of Jesus' suffering, and the story of the discipleship. Mark paints what the true discipleship of Jesus Christ is through Bartimaeus, the last miraculous healing narrative recorded in the Gospel of Mark, contrasting sharply with the misunderstanding of the disciples recorded in the preceding passages. Although Bartimaeus was a blind beggar, he cries out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me," as Jesus passes by. In the Old Testament, "the descendants of David" refers to Messiah, who will appear in the future (Matt. 1:1, 9:27, 2 Sam. 7:12-16, Ps. 89:4), indicating that unlike the crowds around Jesus or his disciples who followed him, Bartimaeus has a good understanding of who Jesus is. Also, it is important to say that Bartimaeus follows Jesus' way after his sight has been corrected in verse 52. The "way" pursued by Bartimaeus was the way given out of the journey of Jesus throughout the Gospel of

[13] Rhoads D. and Michie D, *Mark as Story* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982) p.140

Mark (10:32). He is glad to follow Jesus in Jerusalem on his last journey to Jerusalem, on his journey of suffering and death. This passage shows that the faith of a Christian should not be a static disposition of the mind, but a concrete action that follows Jesus in "the way." The path of the suffering of Jesus is the "the way" that all the disciples who follow him must go.
The Gospel of Mark instructs readers to follow the way of Jesus, the afflicted Son of God, walked the way of the cross denying himself, and sacrificed himself to give up his body as an atonement.

Analyzing the Gospel of Mark 10:46-52, I was able to deeply study and ponder what the Doctrine of the discipleship and how to follow Jesus as a Christian. The way of a disciple who truly follows Jesus reminds me of the fact that walking sincerely through the service, sacrifice, and hard work, denying myself is the way of a true disciple. I will keep that in mind always and will go on the way of a cross with joy as Bartimaeus does.

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