

38. Jesus Gave Sight to Bartimaeus

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to become servant leaders. That can happen as we show them, by example, what it means to be a servant leader. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus healed a blind man, by the name of Bartimaeus, on His way to Jerusalem.

Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem, because the time of His death for our sins was now only a few days away. In spite of what was ahead for Him, in His own life, Jesus still had time to show mercy to all those who asked for mercy. Mark 10:46-48 says, “Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. 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!’ Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’” In these verses, we see that Bartimaeus had a great need, because of the fact that he was blind.

We see that Jesus met Bartimaeus near the city of Jericho, which was about fifteen miles from the city of Jerusalem. Jesus and His disciples were leaving the city of Jericho. The old walled city of Jericho was a short distance north of the New Testament city of Jericho. Jesus was probably between the old walled city and the newer city, because Luke 18:35 says, “Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging.” Here, we see that they were coming near the city of Jericho. Jesus and the disciples were on their way to the city of Jerusalem. There was a large crowd traveling with Jesus and the disciples, because they were all on their way to Jerusalem as it was almost time for the Passover.

We read that Bartimaeus was blind, which was why he was lying along the side of the road begging. In that time, the only way for the blind to survive was by begging. This was a good place to beg, because it was on the main road from Perea to Jerusalem. Near the times of the various feasts in Jerusalem, there were large numbers of people traveling along this road, because they were on their way to Jerusalem for the feast.

Bartimaeus was told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by the place where he was lying. Bartimaeus had heard many things about Jesus. He had certainly heard how Jesus had healed others of various diseases and physical problems. As a result, he began to cry out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” This was a statement that showed that Bartimaeus believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Isaiah 11:1 says, “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.” Then, Jeremiah 23:5 says, “...That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.” Here, we see that even though Bartimaeus was blind, he was familiar with the Old Testament promises about the coming of the Messiah.

However, we see that there was a total lack of compassion by many of the people that were in the multitude following Jesus. We see that many in the crowd sharply warned Bartimaeus to keep quiet. The word translated “warned” means *to charge sharply or to rebuke*. Mark 10:13 says,

“Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought *them*.” In this verse, the word is translated “rebuked”. In this case, it showed a lack of compassion by the disciples. That is the same attitude many in the crowd had as they told Bartimaeus to keep quiet. However, that did not quiet Bartimaeus. Instead, he kept calling to Jesus.

In contrast, we see that Jesus responded to Bartimaeus with love and compassion. Mark 10:49-50 says, “So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.’ And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.” Jesus stopped and stood still. Then, He commanded that Bartimaeus should be called to Him. We do not read that Jesus ever rejected even one person who called to Him for help. Instead, Jesus was quick to respond to requests with compassion and love.

We see that Bartimaeus asked Jesus to show mercy to him. The word translated “mercy” means *to have mercy or to show mercy* and speaks of helping those who are afflicted. Mercy is not something that is deserved. Instead, mercy is freely given. 2 Corinthians 4:1 says, “Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.” In this verse, we see that it is because of the fact that the Lord has shown us His mercy that we even have the opportunity to serve Him.

The people who spoke to Bartimaeus told him, “Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.” The word translated “be of good cheer” means *to have courage or to be filled with cheer*. Jesus used this word several times when He rewarded those who had shown faith in Him by seeking to be healed by Him. Jesus also used this same word to encourage both the disciples, and later, to encourage Paul. John 16:33 says: “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” Then, Acts 23:11 adds: “But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, ‘Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.’” Jesus wants all those who follow Him to be filled with courage.

Suddenly, Bartimaeus was greatly encouraged. He quickly threw aside his garment, got up and came to Jesus. The word translated “to throw aside” means *to throw off or to throw away*. This same word is used in Hebrews 10:35, where we read: “Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.” The writer of Hebrews told those who had suffered for Jesus not to throw away the confidence they had in the Lord during their time of suffering. In this verse, we see that Bartimaeus had great confidence that the Lord was going to give him eyesight, so he quickly threw his garment aside.

Then, Bartimaeus rose and came to Jesus. The faith of Bartimaeus in Jesus was revealed by everything he said and did. He continued to keep calling out to Jesus, even when others tried to silence him. He quickly threw aside his garment and came to Jesus when Jesus told him to come. Now, we are going to see how Jesus rewarded this faith. Mark 10:51-52 says, “So Jesus answered and said to him, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ The blind man said to Him, ‘Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your faith has made you well.’”

And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.” Jesus changed the life of Bartimaeus that day.

The first thing Jesus did was ask Bartimaeus a question. Jesus asked “What do you want Me to do for you?” Here, we see that Jesus gave Bartimaeus an opportunity to publicly declare his faith to the multitude that was following Jesus. Jesus wants all true believers to publicly declare their faith to others. He told the disciples, in Luke 24:46-48, ““Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.” We are all called to be witnesses of what Jesus has done in our lives through His death and resurrection.

He immediately answered, “Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.” The word translated “Rabboni” means *master, chief or prince*. The only other time the New Testament uses this word is in John 20:16, where we read: “Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to Him, ‘Rabboni!’ (which is to say, Teacher).” Both Mary and Bartimaeus recognized that Jesus is the Christ by their use of this word. This was a bold statement on the part of Bartimaeus, because he made this statement in front of a large crowd of people. As we yield our lives to the Lord, He will also give us the strength to witness boldly about Jesus.

Jesus also recognized and honored the faith of Bartimaeus. Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” Here, we see that Jesus focused on the faith that Bartimaeus had shown by his request. The word translated “well” in this verse is used a hundred and ten times in the New Testament and is translated as “save” ninety-three of those times. Romans 10:13 says, “For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’” As a result, we see that Bartimaeus received both physical sight and spiritual sight that day. This is the word that is used in many other passages to describe salvation, such as Acts 2:47, where we read: “Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

We also see the response of Bartimaeus when he received his sight. We see that he immediately followed Jesus. When individuals repent of their sin of unbelief and place their faith in Jesus, we see that there is also a change in their actions. Their desire is to follow Jesus and learn more about Him, so they can grow in the understanding of His love. We want to show our physical and spiritual children how to help those, who come to Jesus in repentance and faith, begin learning to take root in Christ and His love. Colossians 2:6-7 says, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.” As the love of Jesus takes root in their hearts, new Christians will begin to grow spiritually. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to help others come to Jesus and grow in Him.