

## Believing Is Seeing

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Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43; Mt. 20:29-34

Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem. As He passes through the city of Jericho He encounters a blind man named Bartimaeus (Mk. 10:46).

Supposed contradiction: Luke 18:35 says, “...as he was come NIGH unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging.” Mark 10:46 says, “...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.” Matthew 20:29 says, “And as they DEPARTED FROM Jericho, a great multitude followed him...” Was Jesus leaving Jericho or entering Jericho when He met Bartimaeus??? The answer is there were THREE Jerichos—(1) The ancient city God destroyed in Joshua. (2) A Jericho built during the reign of Ahab (1 Kings 16:34). (3) About a mile away there was another Jericho built by Herod. Between these two Jerichos there was a highway where Bartimaeus was begging. Jesus was passing out of one Jericho and entering into the other. NO CONTRADICTION.

The secular world says, “seeing is believing.” Here is a case where “believing is seeing.” Jesus healing blind Bartimaeus is a picture of salvation.

### I. His bleak **CONDITION** (vs. 35).

A. He was **BLIND**—An unsaved man is spiritually blind (2 Cor. 4:4). When a person is saved they go from spiritual darkness into light. As we sing in *Amazing Grace*—“I once was lost, but now I’m found; was *blind*, but now I see.”

- ***Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord:*** (Eph. 5:8 cf. Acts 26:18; 1 Pet. 2:9).

B. He was a **BEGGAR**. He had nothing to offer. His focus was only on *getting*. He had a GIVE ME attitude...

- Ahab said to Naboth, “*GIVE ME thy vineyard, that I may have it...*”
- The prodigal—“*GIVE ME the portion of goods that falleth to me.*”
- Herodias’ daughter—“*GIVE ME... the head of John the Baptist*”

- Judas Iscariot told the priests, “*What will ye GIVE ME, and I will deliver him unto you?*”
- Simon the Sorcerer asked Philip, “*GIVE ME also this power...*”

➡ The focus of the unsaved is “Give me...”

C. He was **BROUGHT** (Luke 18:40). He needed someone to BRING HIM TO JESUS. As Christians, we are commanded to bring people to Jesus.

## II. His believing **CRY** (vs. 36-39).

➡ Bartimaeus had faith (v. 42)! **8 things about his faith.**

A. Faith that **CRIES OUT** (vs. 38-39). Faith is vocal—Unbelief is silent.

1. The word “*cried*” in Greek literally means scream (Strong’s). It was earnest and loud.
2. A cry for mercy. It was a cry Jesus could not ignore! His ears are always open to a fervent, effectual prayer!

B. Faith that **DISCERNED WHO CHRIST IS**—“*Jesus, thou son of David...*”— Faith recognizes the true identity of Christ. The crowd said it was “*Jesus of Nazareth*”—His earthly/human name. But Bartimaeus used Christ’s kingly title—“*son of David*”—Heir to the throne of David, Israel’s future King. By using this title, Bartimaeus recognized Jesus as Israel’s Messiah!

C. Faith that was **OPPOSED** (v. 39). Genuine faith is **disturbing** to the world. The world tries to keep Christians quiet about Jesus.

1. Attempt to SILENCE. Satan seeks to keep people away from coming to Christ.

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When I preached my farewell sermon at Galilean Baptist Church in Michigan before leaving for Washington, my wife’s Catholic family came to the service. I preached the Gospel and gave the invitation. My mother-in-law was ready to come forward for salvation. She turned to Barb’s sister Vicki and said, “Come with me to get saved.” Vicki refused and talked Barb’s mother out of coming forward to get saved. Sad.

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2. Attempt to SCOLD. They rebuked him.

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When I pastored in Vermont, one of our church members (Bernard Reindeau) got a burden for a neighbor lady who was dying of cancer. He took me with him to try to win her to Christ. All her sons were there in the living room. She was in the bedroom in bed. While Bernard talked with her sons in the living room, I went in the bedroom to speak to this dying mother. I was about to pray with her to receive Christ when Bernard came in and said, "Pastor, We need to leave." I was puzzled, but he was very insistent. So we left. When we got in the car I asked Bernard why he stopped me before I could actually win her to the Lord. Bernard told me, "Her sons were very angry and they said, 'Our mother was born a Catholic, raised a Catholic, and she is going to die a Catholic. Now get your Pastor and get out of here!'"

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- The devil doesn't want anyone to come to Christ. He will do everything he can to stop people from getting saved.

D. Faith that was **DETERMINED** (v. 39).

1. The opposition only caused Bartimaeus to cry louder! Bartimaeus is desperate. He refused to be intimidated. He knew this was probably his only chance. Jesus would not pass by his way again. He would not be denied, like that Syrophenician woman of Matthew 15:21-28.
  - Mark 10:49—"And Jesus **stood still**..." Joshua cried, "*Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon*" (Josh. 10:12), and the sun stood still. The cry of Bartimaeus was just as powerful—It caused the Son of righteousness to stop and stand still.
2. Mark 10:50—"And **he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.**" This was a large outer garment like a heavy trench coat. It would protect Bartimaeus from the weather and he would wrap himself in it to sleep. But in this case, it would only encumber his haste to get to Jesus (Heb. 12:1).

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Garments in the Bible often picture a person's righteousness (Ps. 132:9; Job 29:14). Our own righteousness is described as "*filthy rags*" (Isa. 64:6). The garment of Bartimaeus represented his own self-righteousness. It needed to be cast away. When you come to Christ, you cast off the filthy rags of your own self-righteousness and receive the robe of Christ's righteousness. To have the righteousness of Christ, you must cast away your own.

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E. Faith that was **DEFINITE** (v. 41). This is one of the most amazing questions Jesus ever asked. Jesus basically gave him a "blank check." It is similar to the offer God gave to Solomon (1 Kings 3:5).

➡ Bartimaeus was specific in his request. To get specific answers to prayer, you must be specific in what you ask.

F. Faith that **RECEIVED AN ANSWER** (v. 42).

1. He confessed his need. No one ever gets saved until they confess they are a sinner in need of forgiveness.
2. He was healed by Jesus speaking the word to him. Jesus healed one blind man by touching his eyes. Another blind man was healed when Jesus put spit in his eyes. Another blind man was healed when Jesus put clay in his eyes and told him go wash. The Lord is not bound to do it the same way every time.

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Imagine if all these men got together to discuss how they were healed. One guy would testify, "Jesus spit in my eyes and I was healed." The other would say, "No, that's not how it is to be done. You need to have clay in your eyes then go wash." Bartimaeus would argue, "You all wrong. All you need is for Jesus to speak to you." Before it would be over you'd have several denominations starting: The Spittites... the Clayites... the Washites... the Touchites... and the Speakites.

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➤ The truth is, while God remains the same, He may choose to do His work by different methods. There are changes in dispensations.

G. Faith that was **DISCERNED BY OTHERS** (Luke 18:43). Faith that is observed. Can people see your faith by your actions?

➤ ILLUS: Cutting hair after salvation in answer to Gordie's prayer

H. Faith that **SAVES** (Luke 18:42—*"Thy faith hath saved thee."*) That is how anyone is saved today (Eph. 2:8-9).

➤ He was healed immediately—We are saved immediately upon trusting Christ.

### III. His blessed **CHANGE**. His four-fold change.

A. A change of **CONDITION** from darkness to light—that's **conversion**.

B. A change of **COURSE** from sitting to following—that's **discipleship**. A new believer should follow his Savior as his Lord. There should be a public witness to what the Lord has done in his life.

C. A change of **CONDUCT** from begging to praising (Luke 18:43)—that's **worship**.

D. A change of **CAUSE** from being blessed in order to bless others—that's **evangelism**.

**SUMMATION:** The devil doesn't want anyone to come to Christ. He will use the pleasures of sin... pride... fear... false philosophies... religion... and even other people (peer pressure) to keep you getting saved.

Before I got saved, the unsaved guys in the tool shop I worked at warned me about Gordie Raatz—"Watch out for that guy Gordie. He's a religious fanatic. He try to convert you!" One time when Gordie was working the same shift as I was, he zeroed-in on me. The guys would holler, "Hey Al. Look out! Gordie's comin' to git ya." I would duck into the bathroom, until the coast was clear to come out.

But Gordie was determined and eventually he cornered me. He got right in my face and asked, "Al, are you a Christian?" I answered, "Sure.

I'm American!" In my thinking, America was supposed to be a Christian nation, therefore since I was an American, I must be a Christian.

Gordie proceeded to show me what the Bible said a Christian was. He quoted John 1:12 and explained if I had not received Christ, I was not a Christian. Eventually, because of Gordie lead me to Christ using a Gospel tract. The devil lost that battle!

But, if the devil can't stop you for getting saved, he do all he can to keep you from living for the Lord and getting other people saved.

- If you're not saved, come to Christ and he will open your eyes to the truth. Don't let anything stand in your way!
- If you are saved, what are you doing to bring others to Christ so they can see.