

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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Sermon title: I Once Was Blind, But Now I See, Mark 10:46-52

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INTRODUCTION: Being blind can mean more than a lack of sight. Today, we are going to look at four points regarding blindness:

1. Bartimaeus's Condition
2. Bartimaeus's Cry
3. Jesus' Response
4. Bartimaeus's Cost

SCRIPTURE: Mark 10:46-52 ⁴⁶ *Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means "son of Timaeus"), was sitting by the roadside begging. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

⁴⁸ *Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

⁴⁹ *Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."*

So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you."

⁵⁰ *Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.*

⁵¹ *"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.*

The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."

⁵² *"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.*

INTRODUCTION: Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem—to his death. His “dull Bible class” follows along, blind to what his mission really is, blind to who he really is, although they have seen him demonstrate his identity time after time. His followers would not recognize who Jesus really was until after he was crucified, dead and buried, and then resurrected. They simply didn’t get it. They were spiritually blind.

As they made their way to Jerusalem, they passed through the city of Jericho. The roads of the city were jammed with pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover. Crowds of people gathered around Jesus to catch a glimpse of him as he passed through. They may not have understood exactly who he was, but word had gotten around he was somebody important. And, they were interested in seeing what the buzz was all about.

Jesus had encountered Zacchaeus, one of the richest men in town earlier. Talk of this man had preceded him even though most people in the throng were blind as to who he really was. However, there was one man who, although physically blind, had 20/20 spiritual vision concerning who Jesus was.

I want us to look in our own hearts today as we observe this encounter. What Jesus did for this blind man, he can do for anyone who will call upon his name by faith—give him sight.

First, we have BARTIMAEUS’S CONDITION (Verse 46).

He was blind. Due to disease and unsanitary conditions in Israel at this time, blindness was very common. He lived in a world of darkness. He couldn’t see his children’s smiles or his wife’s face. He couldn’t enjoy a sunrise or a sunset. He had to be led everywhere he went. Try as hard as he may, he just couldn’t see. He was blind. There were no humanitarian laws such as the American Disabilities Act. There was no particular sensitivity to this man with special needs.

Bartimaeus is a symbol of the person who is blind, living in the darkness of the world of sin and not in a relationship with Jesus. Lost sinners are spiritually blind.

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 4:4 *⁴Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the*

Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God (NLT).

EXPLANATION: Those who don't believe are blinded.

- They cannot see the horrors of sin.
- They cannot see what sin has done/is doing to them.
- They cannot see the lost years, the wasted days, the ruined lives, the pain, the sorrow and the sadness.
- They cannot see they are headed for a place called Hell.
- They cannot see they are headed for death, destruction and damnation. The Bible tells us the gate is narrow (Matthew 7:13-14).

SCRIPTURE: II Thessalonians 1:8-9 ⁸ *He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.* ⁹ *They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.*

- They cannot see how wonderful Jesus is.

ILLUSTRATION: A woman in jail had this to say after an encounter with Jesus: "I feel better, more patient, stronger, and wiser every day. Every day it's like a light bulb goes off above my head as I'm doing my studies in the Word."

Not only was his condition blind, he was also beggar. Bartimaeus couldn't hold down a job. There were no welfare programs or social services to support him. All he could do was beg and throw himself on the mercy of other people. He was a man to be pitied, with an incurable condition, living in a cruel world.

APPLICATION: Those without Christ are spiritually bankrupt. They may have accumulated wealth in this world, but they are poverty stricken spiritually. They are spiritual paupers. They are headed for death and destruction.

Second, I told you about Bartimaeus' condition. Now I'll tell you about—

BARTIMAEUS'S CRY (Verse 47-50).

Even though blind, he saw who Jesus was. There's an old saying: None are so blind as those who will not see. Although physically blind, Bartimaeus somehow knew Jesus held the key and the power to heal him.

- Perhaps he'd heard the stories circulating of the many healings Jesus had performed throughout the region.
- Perhaps he'd prayed Jesus would come his way one day. Maybe a friend had told him if Jesus ever came to Jericho, to grab the chance to ask him to heal him. We don't know, but we do know he recognized who Jesus was. The fact he called Jesus, "Son of David," tells us he knew who Jesus was, for that was the name the Messiah was to be given.

Even though blind, he saw what Jesus could do. Bartimaeus had faith Jesus could heal him. We don't know how he knew this, but for some reason, he saw something others in the crowd around him couldn't see, or didn't believe.

Even though blind, he saw he had to grab his opportunity. Bartimaeus was not about to let this opportunity pass him by. The beggar jumps to his feet and begins to scream and holler for Jesus. The crowd around Bartimaeus becomes uncomfortable with the beggar's all-out enthusiasm for Jesus. They try to make him be quiet. But, the man was desperate, and he didn't care who he offended. He was determined to get to the one who could heal him.

Bartimaeus got carried away when he saw Jesus, even though he was blind.

APPLICATION: We get uncomfortable if people get too exuberant in their expressions of worship, don't we?

But, Bartimaeus grabbed his opportunity. It is a sobering thought how many opportunities we've had in our lives to follow Jesus and might have missed it.

APPLICATION: We must grab the chance when it comes. The scripture tells us God will not always strive with man. When the Spirit moves upon us, we must respond. And, I think we can apply this to opportunities other than salvation.

- How many times have we passed someone who needed help? How many times have we not spoken a good word when the Holy Spirit nudged us to do so? How many times have we been selfish with our time or our resources?

Third, So we have—

- Bartimaeus condition,
- His cry, and—

Now, JESUS' RESPONSE (Verses 51-52).

When Jesus heard the cry of the beggar, he stopped in his tracks and turned his attention to him. Jesus is never too busy to hear our cry. Jesus is never too busy to respond to genuine faith.

I think it's interesting Jesus asked the beggar what he wanted him to do for him. Wasn't it obvious he was blind? Of course, but Bartimaeus had to let go of any pride he might have had. He had to confess what his need was, just like we have to confess our need for Jesus when we come to him. There was nothing Bartimaeus could do to help himself. He needed Jesus.

APPLICATION: There is nothing we can do to help ourselves. We need Jesus, and we have to confess that. We need Jesus to make us whole.

Fourth, BARTIMAEUS'S COST (Verse 50).

When Bartimaeus got up to go to Jesus, he flung his cloak aside. This may not seem like much to us today, but in this day, a man's cloak was very valuable to him. Somebody could have picked it up and taken it. He would have had no means to replace it. But, Bartimaeus was willing to throw aside anything which would hinder him getting to Jesus, even if it meant giving up something of great value.

APPLICATION: We have to be willing to let go of anything which might hinder us from coming to Jesus, whether it's possessions, a person, or a lifestyle. We must be willing to surrender all. We sing "I Surrender All" many times for an invitation hymn. Are we willing to really surrender everything?

Bartimaeus threw it all aside and followed Jesus. And, that's what we must do.

CONCLUSION: If we truly want to follow Jesus, we don't need to try to do better, turn over a new leaf, or get "religion." What we need is Jesus. If you have never been born again, you need Jesus. If you need healing, you need Jesus. If you have a besetting sin, something you just cannot shake, you need Jesus. If you have a family issue, you need Jesus. The altar is open. Throw everything aside and come to Jesus.

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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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