

The Miracles of Jesus
Miracle # 29

"Blind Bartimaeus"
(**Matt 20:29-34, Mk 10:46-52, Lk 18: 35-43**)

This last of Jesus' healing miracles took place at Jericho on his way to Jerusalem, where He knew He was to die. It is the last stage of the journey for Jesus but it was the first stage of a new journey of another man. As Jesus travels near Jericho, a blind man is begging by the side of the road and hears a commotion. He asks what is going on. They tell him that **"Jesus of Nazareth is passing by."** Luke's record of the healing of a blind man which we will use as our primary text is supported by accounts in Mark (10:46-52) where we are told that the blind man's name was Bartimaeus and in Matthew (20:29-34) where we are told that there two blind men who were healed on this occasion.

Some see differences in the details of three accounts as discrepancies. Mark indicates that the miracle took place on the way **out** of Jericho and Luke says that it occurred on the way **into** Jericho. But as Larry Richards points out in his book "Every Miracle of the Bible" this can easily be explained by the fact **"in the first century there were two Jericho's: old Jericho, which was largely a ruin and a new Jericho, an attractive city built by Herod just to the south of the old town. Apparently the miracle took place on the border of between the old and new cities, as Jesus was leaving one and entering the other."** [Larry Richards. Every Miracle of the Bible. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998) p. 233]

Matt 20:29-34

"Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. (30) And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!" (31) Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!" (32) So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" (33) They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." (34) So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him."

Mark 10:46-52

"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. (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) Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" (49) 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." (50) And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. (51) 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." (52) 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."

The Background of the Miracle

(Luke 18:35-39)

"Then it happened, that as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. (36) And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. (37) So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by."

Jesus would soon pass him by. This man at least knew he was blind, in perpetual darkness. He knew what his condition was. He not only knew his condition but he believed Jesus was the Messiah and he knew that he must do something. One man broke the rules of polite society and created a scene.

Our Lord was going up to Jerusalem to die and he had weighty matters on his mind, but he found the time to be concerned over one poor suffering soul. For verse thirty-eight reveals that the blind man, *"...cried out, saying, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'"*

Sometimes those who see the most clearly are not those who stand out in our society, the rich, the famous or the powerful. In fact this blind man stands in stark contrast to the rich young ruler found in Luke 18:18-24.

In his choice of word, *"Jesus, Son of David"* the blind man is recognizing who Jesus was, he is the **Messiah**, the promised seed of the line of David. The recognition of who Jesus was is the basis of everything else that happens. Luke never stops making the person of Jesus the issue of the Gospel. Even today, what you believe about the person of Jesus is the single most important thing in your life. It is on that question alone that all of eternity rests. ***"Who is this man they call Jesus?"***

That day when Jesus passed by, Bartimaeus was suddenly faced with the biggest **decision** of his life. Would he continue to be dependent upon others where he felt safe, or would he assume responsibility for himself. He chose to cry out.

Herbert Lockyer in his book "All the Miracles of the Bible" points out that, "ordinarily, as a beggar, Bartimaeus would have sought to make capital out of the crowd. More passersby meant more money in his box. But as sight was more important to him than money, he deliberately sacrificed financial advantage for eyesight. He would have been a fool had he acted otherwise. Would that many today who are too busy making money to think about their soul's salvation would realize what a treasure they are sacrificing." [Herbert Lockyer. All the Miracles of the Bible. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961) p. 233]

Think for a moment about your own condition. What is keeping you from being all that God wants you to be? Are you blaming your parents or society or your nationality or your rotten luck in life or your lack of self discipline or the bad genes you inherited from your parents or the weather or whatever? You're certainly free to do so. But there is a price for that dubious "freedom."

But I don't want you to miss the truth that *we don't know that Jesus ever passed through Jericho again!!!* Don't miss this! Do you know that the average person does not have all that many good chances to be saved? It could be that you had some narrow escapes in your life, times when you have said to yourself, "***I could have died.***" Maybe you have experienced a illness or had some other brush with death, that really got your attention. It may be that at that time you thought, "***I don't know that I am really ready to meet my maker.***" Perhaps you even intended to do something about it, but once the pressure was gone, you didn't do anything about it. It may be that you have sat in the church in service after service when you have felt the tug of the Holy Spirit at your heart but you didn't do anything about it. Consider with me, Jesus never passed that way again.

You need to understand that if you allow salvation to pass you, you may never have the opportunity to be saved again. When you know you are lost and you know that you have no claim on heaven and you want to change the direction of your life, then it is time to come to the Lord. The prophet Isaiah's (55:6) warning is still relevant today, "***Seek the Lord while he may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.***"

In fact statistically the longer you wait the less likely that you will make a salvation decision. Thom S. Rainer in his book "The Bridger Generation" notes the "***81% of those surveyed became Christians before the age of nineteen.***"

Before the age of 6 6%

Ages 6-9	<u>24%</u>
Ages 10-12	<u>26%</u>
Ages 13-15	<u>15%</u>
Ages 16-19	<u>10%</u>
Over the age of 20	<u>19%</u>

[Thom S. Rainer. The Bridger Generation. (Nashville: Broadman, 1997) p. 166]

George Barna's research also concurs he says, *"three quarter's of all people who have consciously, intentionally, and personally chosen to embrace Jesus Christ as their Savior did so before their **eighteenth** birthday."* [George Barna. Generation Next. (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 1995) p. 77]

"A woman came to Dr. Chalmers one day and said: Dr. Chalmers, I cannot get my child to come to the Savior. I've talked and talked to her, but it's no use.' The doctor thought to himself ... and said, 'Let me talk with your daughter by myself, and we will see what may be done.'

One day he met with the daughter and engaged her in conversation. 'You have been bothered a good deal about the matter of your soul... haven't you? Suppose I say to your mother that you don't want to be talked about the matter for a whole year, how will that do?'

The Scottish young lady hesitated a little then replied: 'Well, I don't think it would be safe to put the matter off for a whole year. Something might happen! I might die before then.' 'Yes, that's so," replied the doctor. 'Suppose we say six months.' The daughter didn't think that even that would be safe.' 'Well, then, how about three months?' After a brief hesitation the daughter replied, 'I don't think it is safe to put it off at all.' They knelt together and in a few moments the daughter was radiantly saved." [Paul Lee Tan. Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations. "# 5383 -Suppose One Year to Wait" (Rockville, Maryland: Assurance Publishers, 1979). p. 1222]

Human reasoning may tell one that they have plenty of time to be saved. But that may not be true.

The Men were warned to be quiet (v. 39)

"Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'" Those leading the way into town – some of whom were probably the elders of Jericho – were irritated by the interruption and unseemly disturbance caused by the blind man.

At first the blind man **"called out"** (**eboesen**) (v. 38), but when they tried to make him be quiet he **"cried out"** (**ekazen**) (v. 39) which is an entirely different Greek word. In reality he had to yell louder because he had to raise his voice above the people telling him to shut up. But he refused to be silenced by people trying to rebuke him who had no

knowledge of the misery of his situation. What or who are you allowing to silence your request to be saved?

Mike Yaconelli writes, *"Threaten others with a loud and boisterous faith, and you will be politely (at first) asked to quiet down; dance your faith instead of sitting in your pew, and you will be asked to leave; talk about your faith with passion and you will get expressions of concern about the inappropriateness of your emotions. Allow others to see your brokenness and you will be reprimanded for being too open; hear the music of faith and you will be warned of the danger of emotional instability."* [Mike Yaconelli. "Messy Spirituality: God's Annoying Love for Imperfect People." (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001).]

If you cry or pray at the altar, sing too loudly or if you actually were to raise your hands in the air, what will people think? Anyone that does not look like me, dress like me, act like me, believe exactly like me, is threatening to me. ***The sad truth is that many people want a church that comforts their challenges instead of challenging their comforts.***

Beware of accepting religion in the place of a **relationship** with Christ.

The Elements of the Miracle

(Luke 18:40-41)

Jesus not only heard the cry but he more importantly; He hears the pain of this man. So in verse forty it says, *"So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him."* Mark's (10:49-50) Gospel adds, *"Jesus stopped and said, Tell him to come here. (50) Bartimaeus threw aside his coat, jumped up, and came to Jesus"* (NLT).

What Do You Want Me To Do For You? (v. 41)

In verse forty-one Jesus asked the man, *"And when he had come near, He asked him, What do you want Me to do for you?"* That seems like a silly question, doesn't it? What blind person doesn't want to see? It is not that Jesus does not know what this man wants, it is that Jesus wants him to admit his **need**. In contrast with the rich young ruler of the previous section (18:17-27), the blind man did, he admitted his need and pleaded for mercy.

Bartimaeus knew exactly what he wanted and he replied in second half of verse forty-one, *"... Lord, that I may receive my sight."*

Let's consider again a comparison of the blind beggar and the rich young ruler.

Blind Man

Poor became rich

Rich Ruler

rich became poor

Claimed no <u>merit</u>	<u>bragged</u> about himself
Admitted <u>need</u>	admitted <u>no</u> need
<u>Believed</u>	<u>refused</u> to believe
went away <u>joyful</u>	went away <u>sad</u>

The blind man was poor but he became rich, the young ruler was rich but he became eternally poor. The blind man claimed no special merit and openly admitted his need, the rich young ruler lied to himself and others as he bragged about his character. The rich young ruler refused to believe, and so went away from Jesus sad; the blind man believed Jesus and decided not to go away at all.

The Effect of the Miracle (Luke 18:42-23)

Your Faith Has Made You Well (v. 42-43)

"Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." (43) And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God...."

Just how this miracle of healing occurred we are do not know. Matthew tells us, He "touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight..." (20:34). Mark says, he told the men "go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight..." (10:52). Luke tells us that Jesus said, "Receive your sight" (18:42). No matter how the restoration was effected whether it was by **touch**, or by a **spoken word**, or both the healing was instant and complete.

I believe that the reality of this man faith is seen not so much in his healing as in his willingness to follow Jesus and glorify God. We need to reach out in trust as this man did, praise God after receiving blessings from God's hand and follow Jesus.

If you want to know if you really a Christian then consider this; take a look at your life. Whom do you follow? What are the great ambitions that drive your life? The one who has really come to Jesus for salvation will always be known by the general direction of their lives.

God has no policemen to who will grab us by the neck and say you must read your Bible, you must go to church, or you must give to missions. When God created man, he created man superior to all other creatures. He gave you the power and privilege of CHOICE. He will not force us. With the privilege of Choice, goes the terrible responsibility of living with the results or consequences of our choices.

All the people gave praise to God (v. 43)

"And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God."

The blind man's transformed life led the people to praise God also.