



JESUS GIVES SIGHT TO THE BLIND

Part 77 of Luke's Gospel: Investigating the Man Who Is God

Pastor Mark Driscoll | Luke 18:35-43 | June 12, 2011

LUKE 18:35–43

³⁵ As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. ³⁶ And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. ³⁷ They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." ³⁸ And he cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ³⁹ And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁰ And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, ⁴¹ "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me recover my sight." ⁴² And Jesus said to him, "Recover your sight; your faith has made you well." ⁴³ And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

INTRODUCTION

The music is very big. I feel like I should be taller when I walk out to that music. I feel like a very large man should come out. We are in Luke's Gospel. We've been in it for awhile. This is, I think, the 77th week. And we find ourselves in Luke 18:35–43 where Jesus gives sight to the blind. So I promise you, nothing too bizarre is going to happen. Trust me on this, just go with it.

Okay, for a minute, just close your eyes. And I'm gonna close my eyes so I don't know if you're obeying. But in faith, I believe you all. So close your eyes. Now imagine this, imagine, let's say tomorrow morning, you wake up, you open your eyes, you're blind. You can't see anything. It's utter, total darkness. You think maybe you're still dreaming. You realize you're awake. The first inclination is, "Obviously this is temporary, something's going on, but I'll be fine. I'll just lay here a minute." You wait, you don't know how long. It feels forever, but it's a short while. You're blind. You can't see anything. It's complete darkness. Eventually you start to get a bit panicked. You make your way out of bed, you're stumbling around, you're trying to figure out where things are and you're completely disoriented. "What do I do?" That's what you're thinking.

This goes on for days, weeks, months, years. Your whole life changes. You lose all your money. You can't go to work. You're absolutely broke. You lose the place of residence that you were enjoying. And your whole life is forever changed, for the worse. You can open your eyes now.

Imagine that. See, it's amazing how there are so many evidences of God's grace in our life that we just take for granted. Like tomorrow we're going to wake up, open our eyes, and see. Imagine that goes away and how absolutely everything in your whole life is forever changed.

JESUS AND THE BLIND BEGGAR

I want you to be in that place emotionally because as we look today at Luke 18, we're going to see an interaction between Jesus and a man who is blind. As a result of his blindness, he's unemployed, he's homeless, he's destitute poor, he is a beggar. He is begging for his own survival. And so if you could see this man, he's not well-groomed because he's poor and blind. He has long, scraggly hair, an unkempt beard. His scent is off-putting. He has a threadbare cloak. He's dirty. There's nothing attractive or impressive about this man.

And he has something to say about Jesus. In fact, he says that Jesus is the Son of David. So let's jump right into this story, Luke 18:35–39. Speaking of Jesus, it says, "As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, 'Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.' And he cried out, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'" There's a lot here. Let me unpack the story.

Jesus has been ministering in a rural area called Galilee. It's predominately small towns, fishing, farming, and rural people. He is here making his journey to the great city of Jerusalem. And this would be his final journey to Jerusalem. And it is during the season of Passover, and I'll explain that in a moment, but it was a very celebratory time, it was an annual feast where God's people would travel, usually by foot, to the great city of Jerusalem: the city on a hill, the city built out of rock, where the temple was and the Holy of holies was, and the presence of God was and where the priests were and sacrifices for sin were offered and people came to worship God.

So this is a momentous holiday. The roads are filled with people and along the way there would have been small towns that would swell, as those who were on pilgrimage to Jerusalem passed through and they would stop in these small towns to get supplies, to get food and water, and perhaps some lodging and other necessities. You can think of it this way. Think of a big holiday weekend or a busy time of year where people are out traveling. Maybe it's summer break or Memorial Day weekend or Fourth of July or Christmas or Thanksgiving. What happens then is people end up in small

towns. And those small towns swell. That's Jericho. People are stopping there on their way to Jerusalem.

Jesus is traveling through this town and there is a large crowd following him because he's quite popular. And they're going to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. And let me explain the significance of this. If you are not familiar with the Bible, or perhaps you know a lot of Bible stories but you've not had a lot of good Bible teaching, you don't know the Bible story. And this may surprise you—the sixty-six books, which comprise the Bible, have a lot of stories, but those are all subplots to one story. Everything in this book is really about one story. So all the characters and all the events and all the activities are all stories that are underlying plots that contribute to one story: the story of God becoming a man, Jesus, living without sin, dying for sin, rising for sinners as their Savior. That's the story.

THE EXODUS

And so this is the season of Passover and Passover's one of the stories that supports the big story of the Bible. The Passover is all the way back in the second book of the Bible, the book of Exodus. And there we find that a family, God's people, had gone into the nation of Egypt during a famine. This is at the end of the book of Genesis. And they were a family of dozens and over the course of some 400 plus years, they became a nation of millions, the nation of Israel. And the Pharaohs were originally kind toward them and then some new Pharaohs, some new political leaders and rulers ascended into power and became very cruel, very malicious toward God's people, enslaved them, mistreated them, and abused them. And so God showed up to redeem, to liberate, and to free his people from bondage, tyranny, and oppression.

This is one of the mega themes of the Bible and if you want to learn more about the Exodus and how, even here at Mars Hill, it is a foundational story for all of our biblical counseling. Pastor Mike Wilkerson has done us the kind service of writing the book, "Redemption." ([Link](#)) You should read it if you want to understand the Exodus story and how it teaches the big story of the Bible and how it undergirds life change. Nonetheless, the way that the story of the Exodus is told is that God's people were in slavery to this horrible king, this Pharaoh, and he was beating and oppressing them in every conceivable way.

And God then raised up a man named Moses as his prophet, his mouthpiece, and his spokesman. And through Moses, God spoke to the Pharaoh and commanded, "Let my people go. These are my people. These are not your people. I am the real God, you are a false god." And so it is a clash between kings and kingdoms. And then the Pharaoh was told by God through Moses, "If you do not obey, there will be escalating consequences and punishment." And so there were a series and succession of plagues. Every time that God extended a hand of grace so that Pharaoh might repent, Pharaoh hardened his heart. Pharaoh hardened his heart. He became more defiant, more difficult, and more obstinate. It culminated with the most tragic consequence of all, and that was the plague on the firstborn. And things had escalated and Pharaoh had not relented or repented or released the people of God. And so the word was given to him, "Either you let God's people go, or God will judge the whole nation, and the firstborn son in every home will die." So it'd be like me losing buddy Zac, my 11-year-old boy. I can't even emotionally go there. I can't even consider that. And God was honest and God was just and God was patient and God was truthful and God warned them. And they refused.

And death came in a night to all the homes in Egypt and there was great wailing and mourning as sons died in massive numbers, with one exception. God had also made a provision: "Those homes that have faith in me, those homes that trust me, they can demonstrate their faith—" because faith is an internal conviction that results in external action. Faith is an internal conviction—books like Romans emphasize this—that results in an external action. Books like James emphasize it in that way. And God said, "If you have this internal faith in me, I want you to have an external demonstration of that faith for me. Take an animal, a lamb, treat it as a substitute, and sacrifice it so that it dies because the penalty for death is sin. Take the blood of that Lamb and paint it over the entryway, the doorpost of your home. And then when death comes, death will literally pass over all homes that are covered by the blood of the lamb." Those families who had faith in God demonstrated it in that way and their sons were spared. Ultimately then God did liberate his people through a series of miracles. They were redeemed to be free to worship him.

THE BIG STORY OF THE BIBLE

That's a story that's part of the big story. The big story is that we have a Pharaoh named Satan, that we are in a slavery called sin, and that we need to be redeemed and delivered. And Jesus is the substitute. He is the one who sheds his blood so that we literally might be covered by the blood of not just the lamb, but the Lamb of God, so that the wrath of God and the death for sin would pass over us. And Paul says just this to the Corinthians when he says, Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been slain. Now this happened many, many years before the coming of Jesus. And that was prophetic. That was preparatory. That was anticipatory. Preparing God's people for the coming of Jesus, to connect that story to the story.

And so all of this happens with Jesus going to Jerusalem at the season of Passover, where he is going to substitute himself as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the Lamb who is our Passover sacrifice, so that our sin would be atoned for, that our enemy, our Pharaoh, would be defeated, that our sin would be forgiven, that we would be redeemed as the people of God to worship God freely. And so it's the season of Passover.

JESUS, THE SON OF DAVID

And as Jesus is passing through town, there is this blind, poor beggar. And let me tell you this, there was not just one. This was a strategic place for those who begged for their survival to position themselves. A bunch of spiritual people going to meet with God, this is probably the best place and time to ask them for money. So he's not the only beggar. There are beggars lined up along the roadway. There are beggars everywhere. And this particular beggar cries out, saying something that no one else in Luke's Gospel says. So it's very significant. He says, "Jesus of Nazareth," and he speaks of Jesus, "the Son of David." And he says it again, "Son of David." So he says it twice. "Jesus is the Son of David." So he cries out as Jesus passes by, "Jesus, Son of David." They said, "Be quiet. Jesus is busy. He's very important. We're going up to Jerusalem. You beggars just keep asking. Enough

already.” And so what he does, he yells louder. “Jesus, Son of David!”

What does that mean? Here’s a blind man who sees Jesus by faith. We can easily pass over this title, but it is very important. Jesus, Son of David. They would have heard that as a very significant, theological statement. This is a declaration that Jesus Christ is the King of kings.

This blind beggar is making this declaration while God’s people are under Roman rule. This was a low point in the history of God’s people. They were not free, they were back under foreign oppression. It wasn’t the Egyptians, now, it was the Romans. But the laws were written against them. They were mistreated and abused. Furthermore, there was significant taxation levied against them that funded the government that oppressed them. And so they wanted liberation and deliverance and freedom. They wanted their Exodus and they wanted a different king. They didn’t want to say, “Caesar is lord.” They wanted their King to be their Lord and God to be their Lord. And so he cries out, “Jesus, Son of David.” That was a very dangerous thing to say because it was a critique of the Roman government. It was saying, “There’s someone above Caesar, and here he is, the Son of David.” Because David was a what? A king.

God makes covenants throughout the Bible. I’ve got a whole chapter in this on a book I co-authored called, “Doctrine,” ([Link](#)) where we unpack the covenants in the Bible. These are agreements that God makes with his people. And one of those is something called the Davidic Covenant where God makes a covenant with his people through King David. David started as a poor, rural, simple boy who grew up to be a mighty king. And again, that little story connects to the big story.

Like David, Jesus was a simple, humble, rural, poor boy who grew up to be the King of kings. And what had happened was when David was king, God came to him and spoke to him. It’s in 2 Samuel 7:8–16, I’ll read it to you. Here’s what God said to King David maybe a thousand years before Jesus was even born. And so here we’re connecting all of the Bible and all the history to Jesus. “Thus says the Lord of hosts,” that’s the God who rules over the angels and the demons and the entirety of the spirit realm. “I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more.” And “Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” He uses that word here a lot. “And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

Now they had had in their history good and bad kings, but the best king they ever had was David. He brought peace, protection, and prosperity. And in his reign was the presence of God. Peace, protection, prosperity, and the presence of God. However David was not a perfect king. He was man after God’s own heart. He also was a sinner and a murderer. So he was imperfect, though a great king, an imperfect sinner like the rest of us. And ultimately, he died. His reign, his rule came to an end. And after that, the nation had some very grievous and godless kings and fell into disrepair. And God came to David and said, “There will be a day when I raise up from your family line. He’s going to be one of your relatives, another King. Not a little-k king like you, but a big-K King of kings. He’s going to bring peace, prosperity. He is going to bring the presence and protection of God. In fact, it’ll be God himself. ”

God is going to rule one day as King. How do we know it’s God? Because his kingdom will endure how long? Forever and ever. That’s the kingdom of God. And this promise was given to David and as you continue to read in 2 Samuel 7, he was overwhelmed with his promise from God. And from that point forward, God’s people were aching and yearning and waiting, “Where is this King? The one who brings peace, protection, prosperity, and the presence of God? Where is he?” And the blind beggar said, “He’s right there. Jesus, Son of David.”

LUKE CONNECTS JESUS AND DAVID

This is how Jesus is proclaimed on the earth as the King of kings, Lord of lords, God among us, fulfillment of prophecy, centerpiece of history. Isn’t that amazing that God would choose to do that through the homeless, poor, unkempt, blind beggar on the side of the road. No band would ever debut an album with that marketing plan, right? No book is going to be released with that as the advertising promotional campaign. “How are you going to launch this?” “Well, we’re going to have one homeless guy yell it a couple of times. And I’m sure from there, billions of people will sign up for this cause and it’ll roll for thousands of years.”

Do you know why billions of people agree with this man’s declaration and continue to follow Jesus a few thousand years later? Not because he was a powerful man, but because there’s power in the truth about Jesus. That’s how powerful the truth about Jesus is. That’s amazing. Now Luke, a masterful storyteller and a medical doctor, he’s writing the true, Spirit-inspired story of Jesus. And he has already been connecting Jesus to David. And because most of us are Gentiles and not Jews, we may just read over it and not fully grasp it. So he is taking the story of David and connecting it to the story of Jesus. David was a simple boy who became a great king. And Jesus was a simple boy who is the King of kings.

JESUS’ BIRTH IN BETHLEHEM, THE CITY OF DAVID

There are two places that he had previously connected Jesus and David. And I want to share them with you just ‘cause I want you to fully appreciate how Luke is telling the story. One is in Luke 2:4–6, surrounding the timing of the birth of Jesus Christ, God became a man. This is his entrance into history. “Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of,” who? “David,” there it is, “which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,” there he is again, “to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.” Here’s how Luke informs us that the birth of Jesus occurred. There was a young girl named Mary. She was probably a teenager, maybe the age of a junior high student. She was betrothed, or engaged, legally bound to be married to a man named Joseph. She had never been with a man. She was a godly woman. And she became pregnant by a miracle of God the Holy Spirit, so that her child would be Immanuel (God with us), Jesus Christ. Now, her husband-to-be, Joseph, was a carpenter. Probably a teenage boy, hard-working, and God revealed to

him, "She has not betrayed you. This is a miracle, the fulfillment of prophecy." All the way back to Isaiah, 700 years prior, it had been predicted that God would come born of a virgin. Isaiah 7, here it is. So Joseph, being a godly man, said, "Then I will follow through with my commitment to enter into marriage with this young woman." They didn't have any intimate relations until after Jesus was born.

Where was Jesus born? Well, his parents were from the small town of Nazareth. But the prophecy had been given 400 years before Jesus' birth in the Old Testament that the Messiah, the Savior, the King of kings, God among us, Immanuel, would be born in what town? Bethlehem. The prophecy was given this way: But you, O Bethlehem, though you are small among the tribes of Judah, from you will come forth for me one who is from ancient times. And the Hebrew there is that he's from eternity. He's lived forever. He's without beginning and end. That's God. And that this eternal God would be entering into human history, born in the town of Bethlehem.

Now Jesus' mother and his adoptive father lived in the town of Nazareth. So how in the providence of God could we have Mary in Bethlehem at just the right time to give birth to Jesus so that Scripture would be fulfilled? Well, the godless king decided, "I think I can make more tax revenue. What I need to do is have a census account for everyone so I can increase taxation. So everyone needs to go to their hometown where their family ancestry can be traced to." Jesus' adoptive father, Joseph, was of what family line? David. So he and his pregnant, very pregnant, wife Mary, went from Nazareth to Bethlehem and Jesus was born in Bethlehem, adopted into the family line of David, born in Bethlehem, which is historically the city of David. Because God rules history. God is sovereign. God knows the future, that's why the Bible makes promises and prophecies and predictions that always come to pass, because it proves that God wrote the Bible and rules history.

JESUS' GENEALOGY

The second place we learn the connection between Jesus and David is in the genealogy. And in the genealogy, we may just read it, thinking it's interesting, but for those who knew the Bible, they knew that Messiah, Savior, King of kings, Immanuel (God with us)—that he would come through a certain family line. And so we've learned that he had to come through the line of David.

Here's what we read in Luke 3:23-37: "Jesus, when he began his ministry, he was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph—" Joseph, again, was his adoptive, not his biological, father, the son of who? David. See what Luke is doing? He's connecting Jesus and the Passover, and Jesus and David. Jesus takes away our sin. Jesus is our King. And all of this is proclaimed during the season of Passover from the lips of the blind beggar. It's an amazing story.

WE'RE IN THE TIME BETWEEN THE TIMES

Now some of you will ask, "If Jesus the King is to bring peace, protection, prosperity, and the presence of God, then why is the world still filled with sin? Why is there still injustice and tyranny and evil and death?" Jesus lived, walked ultimately to Jerusalem, was crucified, and became our substitute, the Passover Lamb who was slain so that the wrath of God would pass over us. He died and was buried, and then he rose. He's ascended into heaven. Right now, he is seated on a throne. And one day, he will return. When he returns, the kingdom of heaven will overtake the kingdoms of earth. And we will have no more elections and no more politicians. We will have one King, Jesus Christ, who will bring perfect justice, love, mercy, grace, joy, and generosity to all of his people forever. That's our Jesus.

And this does correspond with the story of David. There was a very godless king who was ruling and reigning when David was anointed as king. So there's a godless king who's ruling and David is the one who is going to get rid of the godless king and going to be the godly king. And so David is anointed as king, but the other king is still ruling. And so there's a long season between the anointing of David as king and him actually taking the throne and ruling the kingdom. And during that interim period between his anointing and his ruling, he was gathering faithful, loyal subjects and followers unto himself, and he was influencing the kingdom for good.

We find ourselves in history at that time where Jesus has been anointed as King of kings, he is gathering loyal subjects unto himself through the preaching of the gospel and the planting of churches. And that's why Mars Hill exists, to invite you to be loyal to him as his faithful subjects. And then just like David did take the throne and rule and reign, Jesus will take the throne and rule and reign. And so we're in the time between the times.

JESUS HEALS THE BLIND BEGGAR

Well, what happens to the blind man? We then read that Jesus gives sight to the blind. Luke 18:40-43, "And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' He said, 'Lord.'" That's a great statement, isn't it? The blind guy knows that Jesus is Lord. "'Lord, let me recover my sight.' And Jesus said to him, 'Recover your sight; your faith has made you well.' And immediately he recovered his sight."

Now let me say this. We believe that Jesus Christ did heal this man. We believe it, that it was an actual, literal, physical healing. We believe that Jesus did do miracles, that he does do miracles, and that he will do miracles. We believe that. It doesn't happen a lot. That's why they're called miracles. By definition, they're unusual. How many blind beggars were there? Many. How many got healed? One. But we do believe that God can heal, that Jesus does heal, and that Jesus will heal. This is why we pray for the sick. This is why James, Jesus' own brother, said, are any of you sick? Let the elders anoint you and pray for you. We do that after our services. We do that for our people. We believe in praying for the sick. And yes, we have seen, and by God's grace we will see, those prayers answered, and some people actually, literally, physically healed because God who made the world, Jesus Christ, rules over the world, Jesus Christ.

And this man is healed. For the first time perhaps in his life, at the very least in a long while, he opens his eyes. And what is the first thing that he sees?

The face of Jesus. The face of Jesus. That's amazing. And friends, if we have faith in Jesus, we will die, our eyes will be closed, and our eyes will be open and who will we see? Jesus. 1 Corinthians 13 gives this promise to all believers. It says now we see in part, like we're looking through a fogged window on a cloudy day. But then we shall see him face to face, face to face. Jesus says, "You have faith." And this is the key, friends. The key is not just that he has faith, but he has faith in Jesus Christ. It's not just enough to have faith. It's the object of faith because it's not faith that saves, it's Christ that saves. It's not faith that heals, it's Christ that heals. And it's faith in Christ that saves and heals.

FAITH PRECEDES SIGHT

Faith is three things theologically. One, it is truth. It's the truth about Jesus. He's Lord, God, Savior, King, Christ, born of a virgin, Immanuel (God among us). He is our substitute. He is our Passover Lamb. He is our risen Savior. He is the sinner's friend. He is the son of David, the King of kings. He is, like the blind man said, "Lord above all."

It's the truth plus belief, not just knowing the truth, but believing the truth. Yes, Jesus is my substitute. He's my Lord. He's my God. He's my Savior. He's my King. He's my substitute. He's my all. I believe that personally. So it's truth, belief, and trust. You trust that. You say, "You know what? The truth is the Bible says that Jesus promised that he'd never leave us nor forsake us. I believe that, so I trust that, even when I don't feel like it's true and I feel like God has abandoned me. I go to the truth and I believe it and I trust it." And that's an inward conviction that leads to an external action. I live as a Christian because I trust.

What came first for this man, friends? Was it sight or faith? What came first? Faith preceded sight. Faith always precedes sight. You have to trust before you see. You have to trust Jesus before it all makes sense. You have to begin with faith. The truth has to be believed and trusted, and then you see. Some of you are waiting to see. Let me say you are blind. You begin with faith and then you see. You don't have all the answers. You won't know all the details. There is no certainty regarding the future and God's purposes and provisions and plans for our lives. But what we do is we trust him by faith. And in time, we see. This is a story that connects to the story. I pray it would connect to your story, that your story would be, "Yes, I trust Jesus and now I see more clearly."

JESUS WAS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

All of this is in fulfillment of a promise that God gave. In Isaiah 61:1, 700 years before Jesus was born, a promise was given. You will know that the one you've been waiting for has come when some things happen. Now, knowing this, Jesus early in his ministry enters into a synagogue on the Sabbath to read the Scriptures. He unrolls the scroll of Isaiah. He goes to Isaiah 61:1 and he reads it. Luke records this. He says in Luke 4:18, quoting Isaiah 61:1, here's Jesus, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me." Jesus functioned, led, preached, taught, healed, cast out demons, and predicted the future by the power and the presence of God the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was compelled by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus obeyed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

He was and is God, but while on the earth he chose to submit himself to the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit as an example for you and me to follow in as believers to live our lives not by our own power, but the supernatural, life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. He says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and," what? "Recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed," to Satan and sin and addiction and death and oppression, "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Isaiah says, "You'll know that it's all coming true when you see a few things, one of which is the blind see." Jesus began his ministry reading this prophesy, and then said, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." What he's saying is, "The whole Bible's about me. Isaiah 700 years ago told you I was coming. Here I am. If you don't believe me, watch my works, heed my words. I'm going to preach and I am also going to testify through my miraculous power. When you see the blind see, you will know that God is among you."

THE BLIND MAN'S EYES ARE OPENED

All of this is in fulfillment to the Bible. And this man is blind, and then he sees. He trusts and then he is delivered. And he experiences two miracles at once. He experiences a physical miracle, where his eyes are opened. He experiences a spiritual miracle, where his soul is also opened and able to see. And so he is able to say, "Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus, son of David, Jesus, my Lord." That's a supernatural miracle in his soul. And his eyes opened physically. And so he experiences two miracles simultaneously: one physical, one spiritual.

Here's my question: Do you have faith in Jesus? Do you have trust in Jesus? Otherwise, the power of the Holy Spirit is not unleashed in your life. It is like an outlet and a plug. They have to be connected. Your laptop and mine, or your phone and mine, they don't recharge if we just plug the cord in. We also have to plug the cord in to the power source—the source of life.

Jesus Christ is the object of faith. Faith is plugging in to the resurrection, Holy Spirit life of Jesus so that we might experience his power transforming our life. That includes spiritually in this life, where we're changed by the power of Jesus. This man was changed by the power of Jesus spiritually. Some of you will experience physical healing in this life. Some of you, your physical healing will come on the other side of this life after the resurrection of the dead in the fullness of the kingdom of God. But the children of God receive both spiritual and physical, supernatural healing, life-changing, history-altering power from Jesus.

WE ARE THE BLIND MAN

What does this mean for you and me? This is a story that's part of the big story, and I hope would be your story because here's the truth, friends. We are the blind man. We are the blind man. This isn't just something that Jesus did. This is something that Jesus still does. Luke 18:43, "And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God." Now, this is confirmed by who? Who writes this book? Luke. What's his vocation? Medical doctor. So this is a certified miracle confirmed by a medical doctor.

And how does this man respond? What does faith look like for him? Again, faith is truth and it's belief and it's trust. It's an internal conviction that leads to an external action. Here's his external action. Number one, it's worship. He worships Jesus. It says he glorified God. He's praising Jesus, he's happy, and he's excited. He's celebrating. "Here's who Jesus is. Here's what he's done for me. He's changed my life. I can't believe it. Thank you, Lord." Worship, worship, worship is what comes out of a faith-filled heart.

He has worship that leads to a witness. It says that the other people saw this and they began praising God. Part of our ministry, friends, is to boast and to brag, but not about ourselves, about Jesus. "Here's who he is. Here's what he's done. It's amazing! Here's what he's teaching me." As we boast in the Lord, as we tell our stories, you tell your story.

Some of you, your story, like this man, it starts very shameful and painful. It doesn't start, "Everything was great and I met Jesus and it's still great." His story is, "I was blind and I was homeless and I was haggard and I was an outcast and I was rejected and I was poor and I had a scraggly beard and hadn't had a haircut in years. And I had a threadbare coat and I sat by the side of the road and I tried to guilt religious people into giving me money. And then I met Jesus and he changed me, and I've never been the same since. And he's fantastic." That's the story.

The truth is that's always the story. One way or another, if we're honest, the story begins shamefully. It ends gloriously. The difference-maker is Jesus. And this man, he has worship, he's really excited, that leads to a witness, as he can't hide his story. Don't hide your story. "Oh, but I've done some horrible things." Then talk about them. "Some terrible things have been done to me." Then talk about them. And talk about the difference that Jesus makes and the hope that Jesus gives and the redemption that Jesus provides. Because your worship is part of your witness.

And then, thirdly, he has a walk. And this is true of all Christians. It doesn't begin with sight. It begins with faith. We trust in Jesus. He does a miracle to open our understanding, to see him. We worship him, we witness to him, we walk with him. And it literally says this man, what did he do? Followed Jesus. This is probably the simplest analogy of the Christian life. You know what it means to be a Christian? Trust Jesus and stick close to him. Go where he goes, do what he does, stick close to Jesus, walk with him. Walk with him. So it's about worship, witness, and walk. That's evidence. That's the external demonstration of the internal transformation that comes to someone who meets Jesus. He walks with Jesus.

BLIND BART

Now, there are four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that each tell the biographical story of Jesus. And they emphasize different details. They don't contradict one another, but they supplement one another. And over in Mark 10, he gives us the account of the healing of this man. And he actually provides his name. You want to know what his name is? Bartimaeus. Bart. Bart. The guy's name's Bart. And it's not in the Bible, but church history and some reputable Bible scholars say the reason that Mark included his name is that this guy became pretty legendary because he was fully committed to Jesus for the rest of his life. When his eyes were opened, he could have gone anywhere, he could have done anything. What did he do? Followed Jesus. That's what his new heart, by the power of the Holy Spirit, wanted to do. Jesus didn't look at him and say, "You now belong to me. I'm your new slave master. You're chained to me. Follow me wherever I go." No way. His eyes opened up, "It's Jesus! I'm going to stick close to you. That's what I want to do. Now that I have a new heart, new nature, new desires, Jesus, wherever you go, that's where I'm going."

History records (so it's not an equal authority of the Bible) that this guy actually got up and followed Jesus to Jerusalem. I don't even think he probably took time for a shower. It's like, "Jesus has got a huge posse and one really stinky homeless guy. What's that?" "Oh, that was Blind Bart." "Well, now that he could see, he should shave." "Well, he'll get to that, but Jesus walked away and he just wanted to stick close, so he'll get a haircut when Jesus slows down, but Bart has been right next to Jesus ever since he got a new heart and some functional eyes." History tells us that he followed Jesus all the way to the cross. All the way to the cross. He was there with his eyes that now worked, watching his Lord get murdered.

And apparently, if history's correct, when Jesus died and was buried, Blind Bart didn't abandon him. He hung around. I'm sure he was telling other people, "Look, I know he's dead. I promise you, I've seen what he can do. He'll figure this out. Just wait a little while." Three days later, Jesus rose from death and there was Blind Bart. "Hi Jesus! Nice to have you back. My eyes still work. Where are we going now?" And he followed Jesus. And after Jesus ascended into heaven, we don't know, Blind Bart might have been there with functional eyes. "There goes Jesus, okay. I can't follow him now. I got a thirty-inch vertical. That's not going to be enough." History records then he became a witness, preaching about Jesus, talking about Jesus, going places, telling his testimony for the rest of his life.

SIN IS LIKE BLINDNESS

That's a Christian, somebody who meets Jesus, gets changed, never recovers, worships, witnesses, walks with him. Walks with him. And friends, what keeps us from this is another form of blindness. And what I love about the Bible is the Bible will take physical truths and use them to teach spiritual truths. Because the same God who rules over the physical world rules over the spiritual world. And so the Bible often uses the analogy that sin is like blindness. That sin is like blindness. Paul says to the Corinthians, as one example, there are many in the Old and New Testament, that the god of this world has what? Blinded the minds of unbelievers so they don't see the glory of God and Christ. See, non-Christians are not stupid. They're blind.

Yelling at them won't make them see. Hating them won't make them see. Telling them, "It's obvious. Do you not see it?" "I'm blind. No, I don't. And now you just seem mean and cruel. And since I've always been blind, I don't even know what you're talking about to have sight." Does this explain some of your frustration with non-Christian family, coworkers, friends? "Jesus is God. How come you can't see that?" "I don't."

So we need to pray for a miracle of God, where Jesus touches them and opens their spiritual eyes just as he's opened our spiritual eyes. But sin is like blindness. Number one, it is an incurable condition. This man's condition was incurable. He needed a miracle. Our sin condition is incurable. We need Jesus to do a miracle. Number two, sin blinds us so that we don't see God clearly. We don't know him rightly, particularly about Jesus. Had you, for example, asked me prior to Jesus opening my blind eyes at the age of 19, "What do you think about Jesus?" "Oh, he's a nice guy, said some nice stories, helped some people, fed the poor." "Is he God?" "I don't see that." "Is he Lord?" "I don't see that." "Is he coming again to judge the living and the dead?" "I don't see that." "Should he tell you what to do?" "I definitely don't see that." I didn't see Jesus for who he was. When we're spiritually blind, we don't have the ability to cure our incurable condition. We don't see God and Christ for who he is.

Number two, we don't see ourselves for who we are. We don't. We don't see ourselves for who we are. So some of you think, "I'm a really good person." You don't see yourself. Some of you would say, "Oh, I see myself. I see how sinful, broken, damaged goods I am." But if you don't have any hope, you don't have any joy, you don't have any Christ, you don't have any sight. People tend to see themselves as not needing a Savior or either being beyond salvation. One leads to pride. The other leads to despair. Neither lead to Jesus. We don't see ourselves. You're not damaged goods. You're not beyond hope. You're not broken irreparably. You're not beyond the grace of God.

How'd we look at Blind Bart? There's no hope for him apart from Christ. But in Christ there's hope for him. Now, with Blind Bart, there's no hope in him. But in Christ, there's hope for him. You and I are exactly the same. There's no hope in us, but in Christ there's hope for us. So we could see ourselves and see our sin and be honest and be repentant and come clean and tell the story. And the story is, we're the villain, he's the hero. It was a total wreck. He showed up. I love Jesus.

And thirdly, categorically, but fourthly in my points, we don't see others clearly because of sin. Some of you look at people, you think, "They're beyond hope. They're beyond help. I don't know what to do for them. I don't know what to do with them." See, once our eyes are spiritually opened, we see people as Christ sees them. "Ah, they're blind. They need Jesus. They need the power of God. That's what they need." And it gives us a heart of compassion because we remember, "I was blind too. And without Jesus, I'd be as blind as they are. And so I'm not angry with them but I'm brokenhearted for them. And if I'm going to talk to them about one thing, it's going to be Jesus."

JESUS IS STILL CHANGING LIVES

I got the most encouraging letter today. Most of my letters are not encouraging, just so you know. A judge in Oregon today sent me a letter. It was on my desk and it had this on it, two crisp \$100 bills. A judge sent me two \$100 bills. My first thought was, "This could be bad." And the judge said, "Apparently some years ago there was a homeless kid who was a meth addict who came to your church and met Jesus and was talking to you," to me, "and said—" and I think—I don't remember the story but apparently, according to the letter, I asked him something like, "Is there a safe place you can go to get clean and to get better?" And he said, "I could go home to Oregon." I said, "Well then, now that you have Jesus, you need to go home to your family and a safe place." He said, "I can't afford it," so I gave him \$100 to pay for his bus fare. I took it out of my pocket. And the judge said, "He's doing great. He's still walking with Jesus. His whole life has changed. Here's \$200, do it two more times." I read that and I just thought, "That's amazing." I mean, on my desk this morning, homeless, drug-addict, meth kid, I don't know how many years later, doing great. Still what? Worshiping Jesus, apparently witnessing for Jesus 'cause the judge knew about it, and walking with Jesus.

See, this isn't just something that Jesus did. This is something that Jesus does. And isn't it great that we get to be a part of it? That's amazing. And we get to talk to people about Jesus and see their eyes open up. We get to see literal salvation in the midst of what we call Mars Hill Church.

I never get over this. I never get over—see, 'cause we get to be kind of in the position where we're with Jesus, alongside of him, talking to people about Jesus. "Okay, let me tell you about Jesus. Let me tell you about sin and who he is and what he does," and all of a sudden we see blind people see. And literally, their spiritual eyes open up and you know whose face they get to see? They get to see our face. And the hope is that they would see the love of Christ in the face of his people and that Jesus would allow us, this is amazing to me.

I never get over this, that Jesus does this for people and that sometimes he puts us there and says, "Okay, you try it. You talk to them about me. See what happens." "Okay Lord. Alright, well, here's—oh my gosh, they were blind and now they see." He's like, "I know, that's what I do." That's amazing. We get to be a part of that. We get to talk to people about Jesus and see them go from spiritual blindness to sight. They see Jesus. They worship him. They witness. They walk. One day they die, they rise, and they see him face to face.

RELIGION IS THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND

And some of you would ask, "Well, is this about religion?" It's not, it's about Jesus. Jesus already told us earlier in Luke's Gospel, it's a great line, "Religion is the," what? "Religion is the blind leading the blind." That's religion. That's religion.

Think of it this way. Think of a line of people, think of a long line of people. Blind guy, hand on the shoulder of another guy. Okay, next guy, he's blind too. Next guy, blind, blind, blind. Long line, hundreds, thousands, millions of people. Everybody in line is blind and their shoulder has a hand on it. Somebody's trusting them. Faith. Their hand is on someone else's shoulder, trusting them.

They all have faith but not saving faith 'cause they have the wrong object. It's not faith that saves. It's Christ that saves, and it's faith in Christ that

saves. You get all the way to the front of the line. "Okay." It's usually at the front, there's a guy in a hat, you know? There's a guy in a hat wearing a robe or a dress or a guy wearing a dress or a suit, looks very official. You get to the front, you think, "Well, I hope that guy's not blind." 'Cause everybody's got faith in him. You get to the front, "Oh man, it's a blind guy." They're all following a blind guy, and they're all blind. This isn't going to end well. That's religion. Religion is the blind leading the blind. What we're talking about is blind people, spiritually speaking, having their hearts and their understanding and their minds opened up to see the face of God and the face of Christ and to, by faith, put a hand on his shoulder. Just say, "Jesus, I trust you. I'm following you." 'Cause he's the King and he brings a kingdom that never ends.

Have you met Jesus? Do you know him? Do you trust him? Do you worship him? Do you walk with him? If not, I pray that today you would have your eyes open. Why don't we do this? Why don't you close your eyes and I'll pray for us.

PRAYER

Father God, as we close our eyes, we remember that apart from Jesus, we are spiritually blind. We don't see you Lord, we don't see ourselves, we don't see others. We are blind. God, for those of us who are Christians, we just want to humbly say, thank you for spiritual sight. Thank you for opening our eyes, spiritually speaking, that we might see Jesus, that we might see ourselves and our sin, that we might see others, that we might know that there is no hope in us but in Christ there is complete hope for us.

God, as our eyes are closed, we remember those, God, who are still blind spiritually. We pray that you would open their hearts and minds. We pray that you would have us to be your voice and face to love and to serve and to speak about Jesus and that the gospel would have the power of opening blind eyes. Forgive us for the times, Lord, that we've been angry or mean or pushy or rude to people who are blind instead of sympathetic and compassionate and patient and prayerful and truthful. God, as well, I pray for those who are here that don't know you, maybe they know about you, maybe they're religious. I pray, God, that you would send the Holy Spirit to open their understanding to give them spiritual sight. And Holy Spirit, we invite you to remind us of this magnificent spiritual truth taught through a physical story, that you open blind eyes.

So God, every time we open our eyes, please send the Holy Spirit to remind us that Jesus opens blind eyes. God, every morning, perhaps, when we're tired or frustrated or complaining or ungrateful and our eyes open, let us start with worship and thanks. And let us remember that, God, you have opened our blind eyes. God, every time we squint, every time we rub our eyes, every time we open our eyes, please remind us of this great story of Blind Bartimaeus and just let us remember we're just a Blind Bartimaeus.

In Jesus' name, amen.