

# The One Who Heals Our Blindness

"Follow Me on the Road" Series, March 8 & 9, 2025 | Mark 10:46-52 (Plus 8:22-26)

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The human eye is a miracle.

**It's one of the most complex organs in the human body with over 2 million working parts.**

The eye includes more than just the eyeball. It includes the muscles that move it, the eyelids, our tear glands, and the optic nerve that sends signals to the brain.

The cornea protects the front of the eye, like a windshield.

The iris gives the eye its color and controls how much light enters the eye.

The lens focuses light on the back of the eye, like a camera lens.

In the back of the eye, the retina is like the film in a camera.

Cells there capture the light and send signals to the brain along the optic nerve.

Then the brain interprets those signals.<sup>1</sup>

## **But with it, can we see?**

I'm going to show you a picture. Look at it carefully. [Show "Observe" picture for 10 seconds.<sup>2</sup>]

Not that you've looked at it, let's answer a few simple questions:

Are there cars parked on the sides of the road?

What color is the pickup truck driving on the road?

Any minivans around?

What's the speed limit?

Are there any pedestrians on the road?

You probably got some of these details right. Perhaps many of them.

But we've all experienced people looking at the same situation and seeing different things.

Which reminds us that while our eyes are miracles, they don't always see clearly if at all.

## **Can we see spiritually? That's a more important question.**

Many of us hear that the human eye is intricately designed and see a miracle—the unseen hand of our loving Creator shaping that which could not exist without Him. We are moved to awe!

But some people hear about the design of the eye and are not moved to awe.

They cannot see spiritually. They experience spiritual blindness.

John Calvin, the great Protestant reformer, describes spiritual blindness this way: "But we are drunk with the false opinion of our own insight and are thus extremely reluctant to admit that it is utterly blind

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<sup>1</sup> <https://2020visioncare.com/the-eye-a-marvel-of-complexity-with-over-2-million-working-parts/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://nusforensic.wixsite.com/website/how-observant-are-you-answer-the-5>

... man's keenness of mind is mere blindness as far as the knowledge of God is concerned." – John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 2.2.19

Confident in ourselves, we sometimes miss what's really happening and what's really there.

### **Can WE see, or are we spiritually blind?**

In our Scripture reading today, we meet a blind man.

He is healed of his blindness, which reminds us of the incredible greatness of Jesus.

But this passage reminds us that some people are not physically blind but spiritually blind.

How is our spiritual eyesight?

Jesus saw someone no one else saw.

**Jesus was still on the road in Mark 10:46-49:**

***And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. 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!" And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."***

**In this passage, Jesus was in the town of Jericho which was, in a sense, a long way from Jerusalem.**

Jericho was less than twenty miles from Jerusalem.

But it was 850 feet below sea level and very hot for a good portion of the year.

Jerusalem was also 3,500 feet up, a hard climb for anyone, but it is a reminder that the road to come for Jesus would not be easy.

**Bartimaeus, a blind man, sat by the roadside.**

The name, Bartimaeus, simply means "son of Timaeus."

His name must be important because he is the only named recipient of a miracle.

It's good, though, that we know this man by name. Bartimaeus. He was blind. Know his name.

**Why? Because the crowd sought to push Bartimaeus out of the way.**

When the text says that Bartimaeus was "by the side of the road," it's more than a location.

As a blind man, Bartimaeus would have been beside the road in order to beg because there was no other provision for blind people to live.

But to say that he was "by the side of the road" also means that he was apart from everyone.

You can see it in the reaction of the crowd to him. They kept trying to quiet him down. The message is clear. Bartimaeus was not one of them. He was not important.

The people of Jericho were demeaning and dehumanizing Bartimaeus.

I want you to put yourself in Bartimaeus' spot for just a moment. Imagine that you were—left out, pushed to the side, and silenced. Imagine that was one of your children.

It's terrible to consider, but we sometimes do that to people with diverse abilities. We sometimes push them to the side and tell them to be quiet.

When we do, we dehumanize them, and we dehumanize ourselves.

### **Jesus didn't do that.**

Jesus heard Bartimaeus calling for Him. Over the sound of the crowd and the hustle and bustle. When Jesus heard Bartimaeus calling, He stopped.

Jesus told the crowd to call Bartimaeus to Him.

That demonstrates that Jesus was seeing the situation clearly. Here was a child of God who also needed the attention of God and would benefit from God's healing touch.

Jesus saw the situation clearly and saw Bartimaeus with perfect spiritual vision.

And we see the nature of God. Here again is Jesus, the Son of God, selflessly serving people that the status-seekers and the selfish crowds ignored. Here again we see the love of God.

### **Can we see people as Jesus sees them?**

We want to avoid the mistake the crowd made of shuffling Bartimaeus off to the side.

Instead, we have the opportunity to follow Jesus' example.

Like Him, we get to surround ourselves with children of God—some of whom have different abilities from us.

When we do, we are blessed. And fully human. And seeing them and the world clearly.

### **A blind man saw Jesus clearly.**

**We read what he did in Mark 10:47-51. Let's back up for just a moment here before moving forward:**

***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!" And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart. Get up; he is calling you." And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight."***

### **Bartimaeus refused to give up.**

From the side of the road, Bartimaeus called out to Jesus.

The crowds tried to silence Bartimaeus, not wanting him to bother Jesus or to distract the attention from them and from what they wanted.

But Bartimaeus kept shouting, kept calling out to Jesus!

### **Bartimaeus called Jesus both 'Son of David' and 'Rabbouni' - titles with profound significance.**

"Son of David" identified Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah from King David's line. Bartimaeus is the first person in the Gospel according to Mark to call Jesus that.

Our English Bibles read that Bartimaeus called Jesus, "Rabbi." The term he actually uses here is "Rabbouni" which means "My Rabbi." Bartimaeus is the only one in the book of Mark who uses this term. It's a prayer term, one that a person normally applies only to God.

So, Bartimaeus is clearly calling Jesus the Messiah and raising the possibility that Jesus is God Himself come in the flesh—a spiritual insight.

### **By contrast, the disciples do not see Jesus clearly.**

Last week we talked about a time when James and John came to Jesus with a request to be the people sitting at Jesus' right hand and left hand.

That passage falls immediately before this one.

So, let's put them side by side:

James and John came to Jesus' side on the road; Bartimaeus cried out from the roadside.

Jesus asks both James and John as well as Bartimaeus, "What do you want me to do for you?"

James and John selfishly ask for status; Bartimaeus asks to see.

Neither James nor John really know who Jesus is even now; Bartimaeus calls Him "Messiah."

Who sees clearly? The sighted men are spiritually blind, and the blind man sees spiritually.

### **Can we see Jesus clearly?**

You may be like a child in elementary school who knows the answer and is ready to raise your hand to answer the question.

But Mark is slowing us down here, wanting us to ponder.

We're surprised that the disciples are spiritually blind, but the blind man sees clearly.

Mark is upsetting our expectations, and that should make us think about ourselves.

Can we see Jesus clearly? We think we know the answer. But do we?

### **Jesus healed the man's blindness.**

#### **He did it in Mark 10:52:**

***And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.***

### **Jesus made Bartimaeus well—and so much more.**

Jesus told Bartimaeus to go on his way. Jesus was giving Bartimaeus his life back.

Jesus didn't just restore his sight. The word Jesus uses can mean "heal" or "save."

Because of his faith, Jesus did something more for Bartimaeus than just restore his sight.

Jesus made him well.

### **Then the man who had been by the side of the road followed Jesus on the road.**

We've already seen how enthusiastic Bartimaeus could be.

When the crowds told him that Jesus was calling, Bartimaeus jumped up and came to Jesus.

And here, instead of going home, Bartimaeus started following Jesus.

He joined the crowd of people who were going with Jesus toward Jerusalem and the cross.

### **Who is the real disciple?**

Bartimaeus called Jesus "Messiah" and even implied that Jesus is the Son of God in the flesh.

He jumped up and came to Jesus when the Savior called.

Rather than going home, Bartimaeus left everything and followed Jesus on "the road" or on "the way."

That phrase describes this whole section of Scripture.

Back in chapter eight, Jesus set out on the way or on the road to Jerusalem.

On the way, Jesus has retaught His disciples everything they needed to know.

Being on "the way" came to be a way of referring to Christians.

**Acts 9:2** describes Christians as those:

***[those] belonging to the Way...***

Then in **Acts 19:23**:

***... there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way.***

Bartimaeus, it seems, was a REAL disciple.

### **Who is really blind?**

Back when Jesus got on the long road to Jerusalem with His disciples, He paused and healed another blind man. It is the only two-part healing in the Gospels.

Here, just before Jesus gets to Jerusalem, He again heals a blind man.

In between, Jesus was on the road with the disciples.

It's a plot sandwich. Jesus' time on the road with the disciples is sandwiched between two miracles where Jesus healed blind men. What's the point?

The point is that the disciples are the ones who are really blind, spiritually speaking.

We've already asked if we see clearly. But let's refine the question a bit. Are we actually blind?

The crowds are blind. The religious leaders are blind. The disciples are still somewhat blind.

Are we, in fact, spiritually blind?

### **Will we let Jesus heal our blindness?**

**Spiritual blindness** is the inability to perceive **our need** and **God's nature**.

We can't see our need. We are sinful, but we somehow convince ourselves that we are righteous. We are wrong about so many things but tell ourselves that we are right.

So, we just don't perceive our own need accurately. Frankly, we need to be saved!

Neither do we see God's nature. God is righteous; He has never sinned, but we accuse Him of doing all kinds of wrong. God is right; He is right, and His ways are right. We can't see that.

Nor can we see Who Jesus really is, the way that He genuinely offers us salvation. On top of that, He offers us new life and eternal life. And He does it all because He loves us.

When we are spiritually blind, we can't see any of that.

**If you have not yet come to faith in Jesus, spiritual blindness is not yet having eyes to see.**

Paul describes it as being “... **darkened in their understanding ...**” - Ephesians 4:18.

The things of God “... **are folly to him ...**” - 1 Corinthians 2:14.

This isn't an accident. Paul writes in **2 Corinthians 4:4**:

***In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.***

Satan does not want us to see Jesus clearly, meet Him, fall in love with Him, and be saved.

**If you are a Christian, sometimes it's like we have our eyes open—but only part-way.**

Becoming a Christian is like God giving us spiritual sight for the first time. **2 Corinthians 4:6** says:

***For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.***

But we can stop light and sight from spreading to every corner of our beings. When we shortcut God's process of making us new, Peter writes:

***... he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.*** - 2 Peter 1:9.

And when we know the right thing and do not do it, here is what happens:

***... darkness has blinded his eyes.*** - 1 John 2:11.

We can fill spots in our lives with darkness and blindness again.

Many of us are walking around with our eyes open—but only part-way.

### **What can we do?**

We can recognize and admit that we are blind or may be partly blind.

We can trust God as the only real cure for our blindness.

We can ask sincerely and in faith that God open the eyes of our spiritual sight—all the way!

And when our eyes are open, we can follow Jesus resolutely without looking back, holding back, or going back.

We can ask Jesus to heal our spiritual blindness.

### **There is so much more to see.**

Most of the time, we think we see everything there is to see. Accurately.

But there is so much to see that we are totally blind to.

For instance, bees see very differently than we do. They don't see the color red, but they can see ultraviolet light.

And it turns out that many flowers are colored with ultraviolet colors that we cannot see that act like giant bullseye markers for bees to follow when they are looking for pollen and nectar.<sup>3</sup> Here is what a bee sees when looking at a flower.

That's just the beginning of what there is in God's good world for us to see that we have not yet seen and may never see, or understand, or fully grasp unless we let Jesus heal our blindness.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://news.ncsu.edu/2024/07/27/wms-what-bees-see/>

**Will we let Jesus heal our blindness?**

In many ways, we are Bartimaeus. Blind. Not physically blind like him. Spiritually blind. Or possessing blind spots.

But Jesus has come for us. We are sitting by the side of the road as He passes by.

He knows us by name. He knows YOU by name.

His is calling to us, calling you—asking what we want.

“Jesus, Son of David, Son of Man, and Son of God, let us recover our sight!”