

[Mark 8:22-26](#) ²²They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. ²³He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" ²⁴He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." ²⁵Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. ²⁶Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't even go into the village."

[Mark 10:46-52](#) ⁴⁶Then 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. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." ⁵⁰Throwing 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.

I want to continue with the prophets of the Old Testament but for now we are going to detour through the scripture celebrating the ministry, the life, the sacrifice, and the resurrection of the Lord, I though we would look at the life of Jesus and the reason we are in this Easter season.

I want us to start with the opening of the eyes of the blind. We often read of the miracles of Jesus, the deaf ears, the restoration of life, the healing of the lame etc...In the scripture we read today Jesus heals two different blind men. These healings can be a picture of our faith.

PRAYER

Player 1

The blind man from Bethsaida...

Have you ever found yourself in a place of unbelief? A place where your faith has wavered or you felt shaken by a situation that occurred and you asked out loud, God are you there? + I believe the blind man of Bethsaida was in that situation. Bethsaida was a place of unbelief. In Luke 10:13 Jesus said **“Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.”**

I am not sure where this man’s faith was.

I am not sure where the faith of the people was. Did they believe or were they searching for faith? They were coming from a city of unbelievers.

Regardless, I love what Jesus did, He took him by the hand and lead him outside of the city. Jesus lead this man from the place of unbelief.

There are times in our lives when we are going to come from a place of unbelief. Times when we need that personal touch from God. Are we going to allow him to lead us away from the noisy and confusion into that quiet place? Or are we going to choose to stay in the city of doubt...

The Lord understands our circumstances and the Lord knows our times of doubt. Remember the man who said Lord I believe help me in my unbelief. This is a perfect example of Jesus helping someone in their unbelief. When Jesus first touched the man’s eyes, he asked him if he could see. The man said the people look like trees. There is a coaxing of faith here. He was coming from unbelief and stepping into faith. I believe this is a moment of the Lord encouraging him to continue in faith. Jesus did not give up on the man. If the Lord does not give up on us then why are we so willing to give up on God. A second time Jesus touched the man’s eyes and his eyes were opened. The man’s eyesight was completely restored. More importantly the man’s faith was made complete...

The lesson today from this man, do not give up if your faith is weak. Don’t give up before your miracle is complete. He is doing a work in all of us. We all need encouragement from time to time.

The last line of this man's story holds great importance. ²⁶Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't even go into the village."

Whatever you do, never return to the place of unbelief. Do not return to Bethsaida.

Player 2

The life of Bartimaeus was at a standstill. His life was reduced to sitting on the side of the road begging for money or food, taking a chance on the kindness of strangers. This day the city of Jericho was full of people. The time of the Passover was approaching, and people were on the way to Jerusalem.

Beggars lined the street hoping that they might receive some token of kindness from the travelers. Rumors began to spread that Jesus was in the city. As the crowds moved forward so did the news that Jesus was coming.

Think for a moment the blind faith of Bartimaeus. He could not see Jesus but he had heard of Jesus and he knew Jesus held the key to life for him. Nothing would stop this man from receiving his sight that day. As the crowds approached Bartimaeus cried out Jesus have mercy on me. Scripture reads; **Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"** ⁴⁸**Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet...** have you ever felt like the world wanted to silence you, that the closer you got to the Lord the harder the struggle became. It must have felt that way for Bartimaeus. They told him to be quiet. They discouraged him from calling out, "many rebuked him" but he cried out all the louder...

I believe there are needs that we pray for and Satan will do whatever he can to discourage us, to silence our prayers, or our calling out. He does not want us to succeed. He does not want us to see Jesus. He does not want us to receive the healing. We have to push through. Bartimaeus pushed through. The more they rebuked him the louder he became. Bartimaeus was within speaking distance to his miracle and he was not giving up. He shouted over the crowds Jesus Son of David have mercy on me.

The crowds could not discouraged Bartimaeus, we do not need to be discouraged either **Joshua 1:9** ⁹**Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."**

Psalm 147:3^L He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. Psalm 55:22^L Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved. Isaiah 41:10^L fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Hold to those scriptures when you are discouraged...Bartimaeus held to what he knew, he knew Jesus could heal him and he received his sight that day...When Jesus called to Bartimaeus, Bartimaeus did not hesitate. The scripture reads that Bartimaeus jumped to his feet throwing his cloak aside and went to the Lord. Jesus asked *"What do you want of me?"* *"To receive my sight Lord."* And the response from Jesus was *"Your faith has healed you."*

Bartimaeus did not let Satan steal his faith and he found his healing. Don't let Satan steal the good things of God from you. Receive your healing and follow Jesus.

Player 3

Where do we stand in the game of life? Are we the man from Bethsaida coming from a place of unbelief? Are we willing to allow Jesus to lead us into a deeper relationship with God? Are we willing to at least attempt to believe for a miracle? And once we receive our sight do we remain in belief or go back to our unbelief?

Are we the Bartimaeus of faith? Seeking God, refusing to give up on our miracle? Not being silenced by the waves of change or the noisy of the world.

Or are we player 3 telling the faithful to be quiet? They rebuked Bartimaeus, a blind beggar for calling to Jesus. It happens quite often, I have not been privileged to stay in one church my entire life. One church is good. You learn the people, your faith is grounded, you have your connections, and you flow as one unit. I have been in several churches with many faith backgrounds. I have been in some churches where the poor and what is considered the unpleasant in the eyes of some have been silenced and even pushed from the church.

What if Bartimaeus would have had a more tender spirit and his one chance for healing was ended because someone discouraged him. I don't want to be that crowd. I don't want to be that player on the field. If I am going to be player 3 I want to at least have the attitude of the ones from Bethsaida, whatever their motives they were bringing the blind to Jesus and once there, I am sure their eyes were opened too.

We are not all strong, but we are all a fallen people who need the Lord. We need to encourage one another. Today I may be strong in faith and be able to see Jesus clearly, tomorrow my sight may be blurred by illness or grief. I may need someone to lead me to Jesus. You may be the one who needs and encouragement in faith.

Player 3 are you trying to silence the faithful or encourage the faithless. Remember we were once all blind and in need of healing...

Pastor Cherryl M. Register
Greenville United Methodist Church

Encouragement Story – A Group of Frogs

by Stephen on December 10, 2018
in [Awakening Stories](#), [Motivational Stories](#)

As a group of frogs was traveling through the woods, two of them fell into a deep pit. When the other frogs crowded around the pit and saw how deep it was, they told the two frogs that there was no hope left for them.

However, the two frogs decided to ignore what the others were saying and they proceeded to try and jump out of the pit.

Despite their efforts, the group of frogs at the top of the pit were still saying that they should just give up. That they would never make it out.

Eventually, one of the frogs took heed to what the others were saying and he gave up, falling down to his death. The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Again, the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and just die.

He jumped even harder and finally made it out. When he got out, the other frogs said, "Did you not hear us?"

The frog explained to them that he was deaf. **He thought they were encouraging him the entire time.**