

Crossroads Community Church

Spring is upon us as ordained by God, the sunshine and the gleeful chirp of birds ushered us to praise our faithful God. Worship was refreshing like Spring rain and heartfelt as the warm sun. Pastor Don blessed the Lord in prayer and prayed for the many needs of our community. Dear Father in heaven help us see that you are the provider and sustainer of all our needs, remove our spiritual blindness and restore our focus on you, in Jesus name, Amen.

When we stop and think about the walk of the cross, we may sometimes just think about the portion between Pilates' court to Calvary however scripture depicts a much more detailed and strenuous walk. Jesus came to Jerusalem one week prior to his crucifixion fully aware of what was going to take place from His betrayal and arrest, His suffering to the crucifixion and His resurrection all to fulfill what God had sent him to do, (Luke 18:31-34). His full journey was prophesied in scripture; His Betrayal, in Psalm 41:9, His Crucifixion in Isaiah 53:4-7 and His Resurrection in Psalm 16:10-11.

Jesus was determined to complete His mission and on His way to Jerusalem He made a familiar stop in Jericho and a blind man named Bartimaeus was blessed, (Luke 18:35-43). In 1st Century Palestine blindness was a common problem and those afflicted were left to be beggars therefore Jericho was an opportune spot for them as many travellers came through. Blindness carried a negative cultural and religious stigma; people considered it a curse or a punishment. In another occasion the disciples asked Jesus if the man's blindness was his fault or his parents', people thought blindness was deserved for something wrong someone had done, (John 9:1-2).

We can learn from the encounter between Jesus and Bartimaeus that there are stages to go through to be healed. The first is obvious, eyes that cannot see leaving him to beg relying on someone else's mercy because there is nothing he can do to change the situation. This describes figuratively what our spiritual condition is like before meeting Jesus, (2 Corinthians 4:4). We once were all there in spiritual darkness and we could not do anything on our own to remove this blindness. However in order to have our sight restored we must realize and admit we are as spiritually blind, (Luke 18:36-37). Bartimaeus despite not being able to see asked what all the excitement was about and when he was told that it was 'Jesus the Nazarene' the healer passing by his heart was moved and he called out to Jesus to help him see. He immediately recognized him as the Messiah as he called him Son of David as in prophetic writings, (Isaiah 11:1-3). Bartimaeus believed that Jesus was the son of God sent to save the world. Perhaps he may have heard of Jesus' declaration recorded in Luke 4:18, never the less he believed Jesus could heal him.

Do we believe Jesus can give us the deepest longings of our hearts according to His will? We must first cry out to Jesus in faith and boldness as Bartimaeus did when others tried to silence him he just yelled louder 'Son of David have mercy on me!?' (Luke 18:39). He took courage to break cultural etiquette of the day. As followers of Jesus we too should take courage to stand against popular culture with faith in His grace and receive His mercy, (Hebrews 4:16, Luke 18:40). Bartimaeus was also being specific with Jesus about what he truly needed. Jesus asked what He could do for him and Bartimaeus responded 'I want to see!?' What do we need Jesus to do for us, have we put it into words? Audible prayers are powerful when said with utmost trust in Jesus, and when we have faith in His perfect will He blesses us with what He knows to be what we truly need He heals us from the inside out, from inner darkness into His light for all to see and praise His name, (Luke 18:43).

Beloved spiritual blindness is not selective, it is the state of every single one of us before coming to Jesus, and when we come to him as Bartimaeus we must recognize our need for Him, believe He is who He says He is, in faith ask Him for what we truly need and when we receive any blessing according to His will, we will naturally praise Him and be a testimony to those around us. When Jesus miraculously does anything for us however big or small our hearts are filled with inexpressible joy and our lips should be quick to declare His mighty works so as to point many to God. Everything Jesus does is to bring glory to God and so should we, let us not keep Him and His miracles a secret, let us boldly profess Jesus as the 'Light in the Darkness!?' Have a fabulous week in the light of His glory and grace, Asherey Shalom!

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