



From the Manger to the Cross, the Men in Christ's Life: Blind Bartimaeus

by Kris Swiatocho

Editors note: This is a part of a series.

My stepfather is only one example of a man who has impacted my life as a result of his relationship with Christ. Throughout this series, I want to share with you about some of the other men who have impacted my life solely because of their relationship with Jesus. I believe as I share that you, too, will connect with them and discover for yourself how God has always had a plan for you, is working it out in your life and will never leave you.

How is your life? Are you fulfilled? Are you getting everything out of it you have wanted to? Is your life turning out the way you thought it would be?

There have been times in my life where I never have seemed to get it. Times I have lived the same way day to day but expected a different result. Times that I spent just enough time with others, gave of myself just enough, spent time with my family just enough and gave to God just enough. But what is enough?

For myself, I am not ready to live a life where I am content that what I am giving God is enough. Am I content as a single adult? Yes, I am really content where God has me ... even if I do get lonely, frustrated and confused by his direction. But this isn't the contentment I am talking about. I am talking about content with my part of this journey God has me on. No, I am not content and I will tell you why.

Bartimaeus was a blind man living in Jericho. He would sit along the road, day after day, doing the same thing and basically getting the same result. Probably enough change to just get by. Now, could Bartimaeus stay there for the rest of his life? Sure, and more than likely he would continue to get just enough based on his efforts. And this enough would feed and clothe him. But Bartimaeus decided he didn't want to stay where he was. He wasn't content with where he was. He wanted his life to be different. Bartimaeus not only prayed for his life to be different, but he yelled it from the mountain tops. "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

When is the last time you really wanted your life to change? I mean, really change. No, I am not talking about the 911 Christian behavior where you cry out to God only when you are in trouble. Bartimaeus wasn't in any trouble, no more than normal. But the one thing Bartimaeus was, that most of are not, is we are never quiet enough to hear God when He is near. Near enough to us because we are walking with Him—daily, hour by hour, minute by minute. Close enough to hear his breathing, to know his footsteps, to know his voice. Near enough to know when to ask for real help, because you have made a real decision to change.

Right now, as I am writing this, I am at my own crossroads yet again. As most of my readers may know, I am a diabetic, type 2. I have gone up and down over the years with my sugars. I do well for a while, only to slide back into old patterns. I love to eat. I love the social aspect of eating, not to mention the variety of all the foods God has made. But my diabetes, without continuous management, could literally lead to my own blindness not to mention death.

But now, I am where Bartimaeus is. I am ready to not only listen to God, but also to jump to my feet with a joyful heart because He is going to heal me. Does this mean my diabetes could go away instantly? Sure, if it is Jesus' will. But for me, I believe the journey of learning to eat right with exercise is the only way that will lead to a lifestyle change. A lifestyle that can guarantee success, so that one day I can say I am not a diabetic. One day I will be cured from my own blindness.

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted



all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

— Mark 10:46-52

What have I learned from blind Bartimaeus:

1. You must acknowledge you need healing.

Bartimaeus knew he needed healing. He had been on the side of this road many times, begging for money, for food. I can't believe that anyone would want this type of life. To sit day after day, praying someone would give you something to eat. Perhaps this day you might have only gotten scraps. Scraps not even fit for a dog. Or maybe it's a day you get an apple, a fig or something cold to drink. Maybe, just maybe, you get really blessed and someone throws you a coin. I pray Bartimaeus catches it before someone else sees it. Can you see Bartimaeus scrambling to find the coin in the dirt as if his life depends on it? But wait, his life does depend on it.

So what about your life? Would you rather stay where you are? Trying day by day to get by? Just enough money to pay the bills, or just enough of serving God to make him happy or just enough kindness to strangers so you have done your "part"?

Bartimaeus taught me that it isn't enough. At some point in time you need to stop this madness. At some point in time you need to acknowledge that you don't want to stay where you are, that you are ready for change. Bartimaeus was ready to change.

When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

— Mark 10:47

2. You must know where to get the healing.

Bartimaeus knew who the Great Physician was. He knew that Jesus could heal him, even instantly. He didn't demand Christ to heal him, but instead in humility asked him for mercy.

Sometimes we talk to God like he's Santa Claus. OK, God, here is what I want. Now give it to me. In fact, I think we are even teaching our kids, nieces, nephews, etc. the same principle. No one seems to know the value of work, of waiting and being patient, of being obedient. Bartimaeus had obviously heard of Jesus and who he was. He knew he could heal him. But at the same time, based on how he asked him, he also knew it might not be God's will to heal him.

Is there something in your life that you have ask God to heal you from? Something you have ask for? Maybe a spouse, a better job, better home, etc.? How are you asking for it? Bartimaeus taught me that God is the only one who can give me what I need. The only one who can cure me of anything. But all things must be asked in his will ... with patience and humility

When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

— Mark 10:47

3. Don't ever let anyone stop you from speaking the truth, especially when God has revealed it to you already.

I get so tired of people telling me what I should do or should say. Most people speak things to me because of their own fears, of their own experiences. People, understand that God had told Bartimaeus of who He was. Bartimaeus had every right to shout out to Jesus. He wasn't shouting to be rude, but realized they were outside and there was a crowd. He had



to shout to get Jesus' attention. Now did Jesus know what Bartimaeus was thinking before he shouted? Sure. I mean Bartimaeus could have whispered or touched his cloak like others, and Jesus would have known. However, this wasn't about Jesus knowing Bartimaeus needed healing, but it was about teaching us today of where we need to go for the healing. It was about letting others know of our faith. It's about letting others see our worship, our submission, our humility.

Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"
— Mark 10:48

4. It's OK to be sad when we aren't where we want to be, however, happiness is based on circumstances and joy is based on our relationship with Christ.

Based on the men who told Bartimaeus to rise to his feet and cheer up, Bartimaeus must have been sad. I mean, wouldn't you be, too? When you spin (stay in the same place in life and never change), it can bring sadness in your life, even depression. I am sure Bartimaeus must have felt both.

We need to understand that true happiness (joy) is from our relationship with Christ. That it is OK to feel sad sometimes; even Jesus felt sadness, but this is based on our situation and not what's inside. Yes, Bartimaeus should have been cheerful as Jesus was asking for him, however, when you are stuck (spinning), you get so used to that life that joy seems to be unreachable. We do need reminders that Christ brings us the joy. Joy based on our relationship with Him.

Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

— Mark 10:49-50

5. When Jesus calls us to do things, we must not only be ready but excited because of what is coming.

Have you ever been in a situation where God is calling you to do something outside your comfort zone? Maybe it's talking to someone about your faith, teaching a Sunday school class, or going on a missions trip. You kind of just freeze up. "Oh God, I can't do that ... I don't know how to do that." Well, God says yes! He will equip us. We need to remember that God is still in control. He knows everything about us. He knows what we can handle and what we can't. He wants us to rely on Him and His guidance, His training, and His provision.

Yes, being stretched is hard sometimes. There is a huge amount of fear, but like Bartimaeus there can also be a huge amount of joy. It can take us places we never could have imagined on our own.

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

— Hebrews 13:20-22

6. We need to be clear about what we want from God.

I used to ask God for all kinds of things, all the time. "Oh Lord, please bring me this special person" or "God, I want a new car so badly" or "God, please help me get along with my brother." What I need to be asking for is for God's will, whichever way it turns out. Just asking God for someone special could be a personal disaster in my life. I had one of those and yes, he was special but was living a double life. Oh and yes, I could use a new car but I can't afford the payments. So, I could have gotten a little more specific and said, "God, I want a new car and no payments" (which could happen). It's just that getting a new car doesn't fix things. I could go into huge debt. Then, asking the Lord to get along with my brother wasn't going to solve the real issues that we have. The prayer needed to be for him to know Jesus. If he could know Jesus, in time, God would bring us together.

Do you see what I mean about being specific of what you are asking God? Bartimaeus was asked by Jesus, "What do you want me to do for you?" Now Bartimaeus could have said, "Give me something to eat" or "I could use some money." This



would have solved the immediate need, but long-term it wouldn't change the real need which was to have his sight.

So what have you been asking God for? Do you need to change what you are asking? Do you need to stop asking for some things? Do you need to stop thinking of yourself and think of what is best for others?

Yes, I still drive the same car, and I haven't met Mr. Right yet. But what is wonderful is that my relationship with my brother has greatly improved. He knows the Lord now, and as a result we have an open door of conversation. We have found common ground. As we both grow, God is growing us together. Isn't that what it's all about? Growing in Christ to be more like Christ to share with others about Christ.

What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."
— Mark 10:51

7. Faith not only heals us, but can give us a new life.

Bartimaeus not only was healed of blindness, but he started to follow Jesus. He became a disciple. Bartimaeus had a new life with a new direction. As we grow in Christ, as our faith grows, we get the courage to do things and go places and try things we would never do. We also gain in strength in our knowledge of who Christ is in our lives. When you are that close to Christ, when you really understand His power, you will desire to follow Him no matter where he goes.

"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.
— Mark 10:52

Do you need healing today? Do you have spiritual blindness? Is God trying to get your attention? Aren't you tired of spinning? Of going nowhere? Stand up, shout to the Lord, throw off your cloak and tell Him what you need, what you want to change, and then take the next step and follow through on your part by following Him.

Get ready. He's just about to pass by you. Can you hear His steps?

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TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries helps churches, pastors and single adult leaders evaluate, develop and support their single adult ministries through high-energy speaking engagements, results-oriented consulting and training and leadership development conferences and seminars. Click here to request a FREE "How to Start a Single Adult Ministry" guide.

FromHisHands.com Ministries is Kris's speaking ministry. If you've ever heard her speak, you know that Kris is the kind of speaker who keeps the crowd captivated, shares great information and motivates people to make a difference in the lives of those around them! She speaks to all church audiences on everything from "first impression" ministry to women's topics to singles and young adults. She can speak on a Sunday morning, at a woman's retreat or for a single adults conference. Bring Kris to your church today!

Singles and Relationships by Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell

Many singles are Christians who wonder if God will ever bring a mate their way or if they should just stop focusing on a future with a marriage partner and live the single life to the fullest. Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell offer solid biblical answers for singles in this newest title in Dick's popular 31-Day Experiment Bible study.