

LESSON 3

SEPTEMBER 19, 2021

UNIT I. GOD'S PEOPLE OFFER PRAISE CELEBRATING EXPECTANTLY

DEVOTIONAL READING: James 5:13-18

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43

PRINT PASSAGE: Mark 10:46-52

KEY VERSE

Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. (Mark 10:51, KJV)

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“What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.” (Mark 10:51, NIV)

LESSON AIMS

As a result of experiencing this lesson, the participants should be able to do these things:

- Compare and contrast spiritual and physical blindness.
- Appreciate how God is attentive and responds to our needs.
- Practice reaching out to those who are marginalized by society.

KEY TERMS

Disciples (verse 46)—Greek: *mathétēs* (math-ay-tes’): learners; pupils.

Cry out (verse 47)—Greek: *krazō* (kraz’-zo): to scream; to cry aloud; shriek; “shout” (NIV).

Mercy (verse 47)—Greek: *eleeō* (el-eh-eh’-o): to have pity or mercy on; to show mercy.

Rebuked (verse 48)—Greek: *epitimaō* (ep-ee-tee-mah’-o): honored; meted out due measure; hence, censured; admonished; warned; “charged” (KJV).

Rise up (verse 49)—Greek: *egeirō* (eg-i’-ro): to waken; to raise up; “rise” (KJV); “on your feet” (NIV).

Silent (verse 48)—Greek: *siōpaō* (see-o-pah’-o): to be silent, either voluntarily or involuntarily; “hold. . . peace” (KJV); “quiet” (NIV).

PREPARING THE LESSON

- Refer to the *Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher’s Edition* for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.
- Review last week’s student assignments (“Your Life” and Your World!).
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

People respond to life challenges and victories differently. How can we respond in ways that are encouraging for ourselves and others? Bartimaeus’s boldness and faith in Jesus gave him the courage to ask for and receive his sight from Jesus.

THE LESSON IN FOCUS

People use the word see in both a literal sense (referring to the sense of sight) and figurative sense (referring to comprehension and understanding). Those with clear insight are able seek out the people who are most willing and most qualified to assist them with their desperate situation. Like Bartimaeus, most people are easily able to discern who is or isn’t capable of providing the help they need. During times of intense, desperate need, people are usually far more concerned with

finding a solution to their problem than with worrying over what people might think about them. In dire situations, people freely set aside their concerns with protocol and etiquette and seek help for their circumstances, often by any means necessary. People tend to show loyalty and gratitude toward those who responded graciously toward them at a point of desperate need. Every Christian should be responsive to the cries for help from those around them and respond to those physical and spiritual needs.

THE LESSON IN CONTEXT

Having received his sight, Bartimaeus demonstrated an eager willingness to follow Jesus (see Mark 10:52)—an eagerness that stood in stark contrast to the rich man who would not follow (see 10:22). These contrasting images are consistent with other depictions of Jesus as a polarizing figure—most people either embraced Jesus wholeheartedly or rejected Him altogether. The encounter with Bartimaeus occurred during the last three months of Jesus’ ministry—between the Festival of the Dedication (see John 10:22-28) and Jesus’ arrival in Jerusalem for Passover. By this time, Jesus’ reputation throughout the region had been firmly established (verses 40-42). As His death drew nearer, Jesus spoke more freely about the persecution that awaited Him in Jerusalem (see Mark 10:32-34). His closest followers began to understand that following Jesus into Jerusalem was as dangerous for them as it was for Jesus (see John 11:7-16).

Bartimaeus addressed Jesus with two significant titles. The first, “Son of David,” recognized the royal lineage that qualified Him to rule as Messiah (see Matthew 9:27; 12:23; 15:22). “My teacher (Rabbi)” recognized the religious authority that qualified Jesus to speak for God (see Matthew 23:7). Luke’s version of this account records that the same crowds that tried to restrain the blind man became the first group to praise God when Jesus restored the man’s sight (see Luke 18:43). People who were once marginalized by society became powerful witnesses for Jesus after an encounter with Him (see Mark 1:45; 5:20; John 4:39-42). Restoring sight to the blind was a miracle Jesus performed many times (see Matthew 12:22; 15:30; Mark 8:22-26; John 9). In the healing narratives, physical blindness is often a symbol of spiritual blindness (compare John 9:39-41). Jesus’ healing of Bartimaeus’s physical blindness was possibly a foreshadowing of the gradual healing of the disciples’ spiritual blindness.

OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below.)

1. Share the excitement you feel when you receive an unexpected gift.
2. Share a time when you felt that someone was undeserving of a gift they received.
3. Do you think it is appropriate to celebrate in anticipation of receiving a gift? Why or why not?

INSIGHTS

Christians trust that they can go to God in Jesus’ name for the healing of any spiritual or physical deficiencies they may experience. We approach God, then, with the unwavering confidence in His power to help us in every situation and circumstance. This same confidence in Christ leads us to point others to Him whenever they are experiencing both physical and spiritual challenges. Every human soul can benefit from the example of Jesus’ life and teachings, as well as His love and saving grace.

EXPLORATION

Christians must never be ashamed to give witness to others of what the Lord has done for them. The Gospel is spread to others through the believer’s testimony and witness of God’s love wrapped in the person of Jesus Christ. They must be willing to take the risks to follow Jesus not merely out of religious duty or obligation, but out of gratitude for what He has done.

KJV

46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his *disciples* and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.

47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to *cry out*, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have *mercy* on me.

48 And many *charged* him that he should *hold his peace*: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

NIV

46 Then 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.

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

48 Many *rebuked* him and told him to be *quiet*, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Jesus and His disciples and many followers— some interested seekers and intrigued spectators— were headed to Jerusalem. Jesus was entering the final chapter of His earthly ministry. On the road to the to Jerusalem, Jesus had strategically revealed Himself to His disciples through teachings and healings, many of which they would only understand after spending time with Him during the period between the Resurrection and His ascension back to heaven. The text identifies the beggar as “blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus” (verse 46b). Throughout time, it seems that people have commonly been labeled and referred to by their condition of misfortune. It takes great determination and courage to even think of yourself beyond others’ low assessment of who you are— but that is exactly what Bartimaeus did. By faith, he dared to believe that he could be more than the blind man that others constantly said he was. Upon hearing the sound of Jesus’ approach, Bartimaeus lifted his voice and shouted with passion, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” (verse 47, NIV). Once Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was passing by, he began to cry out—an indication that he had also heard of Jesus’ reputation as a healer and miracle worker. Not only had he heard about Jesus, but he also had faith that if Jesus had worked a miracle for anyone, then surely He could do it again, for his sake. Many people had spent years with Jesus, following Him for the miracles and the blessings, yet they never understood who He truly was. How fascinating it is that a man without eyesight, one with no considerable financial or social status, was fully able to Jesus for who He truly was—the Son of David. Bartimaeus sought mercy from the man who was both “Master and Messiah.” He humbly asks another for help in submission, referencing Him as His master or teacher.

“Son of David” was a Messianic title (see Ezekiel 34:23-24), set aside only for the Messiah who would come from God down the lineage of David. Calling for mercy was also a sign of submission; Bartimaeus realized that only Jesus had the power to do what he was requesting. While Bartimaeus was unable to see, he bore living witness to Jesus’ earlier words, “my sheep know my voice” (see John 10:27-28). The crowd tried to silence Bartimaeus’s voice, but they could not silence his hope and confidence in God. In fact, Bartimaeus shouted even louder—the sound of Christ’s approach was too close for him to not be passionate and persistent in his desperate and hopeful call for help. This is the attitude all Christians should have. We believe with high expectations that God is able to supply our every need.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:**

How can the church maintain a worship atmosphere that does not hinder people from worshipping God freely?

- **Young Adult Question:**

Jesus paused when He heard Bartimaeus calling to Him. What is your typical response to the poor and homeless in your community who ask for mercy in the form of money or a meal?

COMMENTARY ON MARK 10:49-52

KJV

49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, *rise*; he calleth thee.

50 And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

52 And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

NIV

49 Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! *On your feet!* He’s calling you.”

50 Throwing 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.

When Jesus says, “Be of good comfort,” He literally says, “Be of good cheer” and “Be courageous”—in essence, “Cheer up.” The verbs of verse 50 suggest that Bartimaeus moved without hesitation. He “casts away” or throws off his cloak and jumps up, despite his blindness. Bartimaeus was determined not to miss this rare opportunity and blessing. Luke’s account of the incident mentions that the people brought Bartimaeus to Jesus (see Luke 18:40). Comparing Mark’s and Luke’s versions, the reader may conclude that Bartimaeus jumped up, threw off his cloak, and was led to Jesus. The point of Jesus’ question to Bartimaeus created the opportunity for the man to acknowledge his need for Jesus rather than for Jesus to understand Bartimaeus’s needs. In His being omniscient, Jesus never needed to ask a question.

The word King James translates as “Lord” in verse 51 is translated as “Rabbouni” in other translations. The Aramaic word is a high form of respect, a strengthened form of “rabbi,” combining the meanings of “teacher” and “Lord.” It was also used by Mary Magdalene at the Resurrection (see John 20:16). Bartimaeus received a miracle in response to his eager, persistent faith and his recognition of and trust in Jesus. The verb used in the phrase “received his sight” (verse 51) comes from the Greek word *anabelepo*, meaning “to have sight restored.” Because Bartimaeus was willing to move on a word, he experienced the wonder of receiving his sight. An additional wonder can be found in Jesus’ proclamation that Bartimaeus’s faith made him whole (verse 52). The word translated as “whole” was originally written as *sozo* in Greek, meaning “to save.” Thus, Bartimaeus was healed, saved, made whole by the wonder of faith. His faith was bold enough to defy embarrassment and have him shout out for God, even when others told him to be quiet. Because of bold faith, he immediately received the restoration of his sight. Afterwards, the

Bible says that he “followed Jesus in the way” (verse 52). Earlier followers of Jesus were called followers or believers of “The Way,” a sect of Judaism following the teachings of Jesus Christ as the way to salvation and a relationship with God.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

• Adult Question:

How can we display our faith to the world?

• Young Adult Questions:

- (1) The crowd discouraged Bartimaeus’s bold faith in Jesus. How do you respond when people try to discourage you from believing God for great things?
- (2) Share a time when you dared to trust the Lord to help you through an overwhelming situation that only He could address. How did you respond when God gave you the miracle you needed?

LIFE APPLICATION

• Refer to Adult Book

(See student lesson’s “Your Life” section.)

—This week, reflect on God’s love and thank Him for blessings to come.

(See student lesson’s “Your World!” section.)

—This week, share your love of Jesus with someone. Stir their faith by sharing something meaningful that the Lord has done for you.

• Refer to Young Adult Book

(See student lesson’s “Your Life” section.)

—Sometimes, Christians find themselves in hopeless, dead-end situations. When your back is against the wall and you can’t see your way out of the situation, learn to call on the Lord with the same faith of Bartimaeus. Let your faith remind you that nothing is too hard for God.

(See student lesson’s “Your World!” section.)

—Believers must remain confident that God is able to do anything. He can heal both spiritual and physical deficiencies. Often, the only thing that blocks you from your miracle is a lack of faith and persistence. When faith fills your heart, your conversation will reflect what your heart believes. Not only is God listening, but also, so are the people around you. What do they hear in your words—faith or doubt?

NEXT WEEK’S LESSON

The lesson topic for Sunday, September 26, 2021, is “Celebrating in Unity.” The Devotional Reading text is Psalm 134, the Background Scripture text is Acts 2:32-33, 37-47, and the Printed Text is Acts 2:32-33, 37-47.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord, grant us peace through the many ups and downs of life. Give us humility that we may never get puffed up or look down on others. We are ever grateful for life and love in the Lord, Jesus Christ. It is in the name of Jesus that we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

BELIEVERS PRAISE GOD

(September 20-26, 2021)

MONDAY, September 20: “A Priestly Kingdom, a Holy Nation” (Exodus 19:1-8)

TUESDAY, September 21: “Worship God Alone” (Exodus 20:1-6)

WEDNESDAY, September 22: “When Kindred Live in Unity” (Psalms 133–134)

THURSDAY, September 23: “Praise in the Heavenly Community” (Revelation 4)

FRIDAY, September 24: “The Day of Pentecost” (Acts 2:1-12)

SATURDAY, September 25: “Jesus Is Lord and Messiah” (Acts 2:22-36)

SUNDAY, September 26: “A Community of Praise” (Acts 2:37-47)