

## Faith Sees

**Luke 18:31-43** And taking the twelve, he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. <sup>32</sup> For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. <sup>33</sup> And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise." <sup>34</sup> But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said. <sup>35</sup> As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. <sup>36</sup> And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. <sup>37</sup> They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." <sup>38</sup> And he cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" <sup>39</sup> And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" <sup>40</sup> And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, <sup>41</sup> "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me recover my sight." <sup>42</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Recover your sight; your faith has made you well." <sup>43</sup> And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

*In the Name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

1 From the side of the road, the blind man could see Jesus. He couldn't see the crowds passing by; he only heard them. He couldn't see what was going on; he had to ask. But when they told him who was drawing near to Jericho, the blind man saw. Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. What his blind eyes could not have seen, Bartimaeus beheld by faith. This One from Nazareth, this Jesus, was the Son of David. By faith, Bartimaeus cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" The crowd couldn't see what Bartimaeus saw. So they rebuked him and told him to be silent. But Bartimaeus' faith would not allow him to keep silent. He cried out even more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

2 What the blind man saw the disciples did not. Once again in St. Luke's account of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, He made clear why He was going there at all. "Everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise." But the disciples could only see what seemed to be before their eyes. And they hadn't

followed this Jesus thinking they were forming a funeral procession for Jerusalem.

Seeing, they did not see.

3 The blind man knew this One from Nazareth was the fulfillment of prophecy. He likely knew that in Nazareth Jesus preached a sermon. There Jesus read the scripture from the prophet Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." After reading this, Jesus sat down and declared to those around Him, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." Not only was Jesus of Nazareth the One who could give sight to the blind, He was the One to proclaim good news to the poor, the Lord's favor." So blind Bartimaeus asked for exactly that, the Lord's favor: "Son of David, have mercy on me."

4 Except for faith, Bartimaeus could not have known whom he asked. And, just maybe, if it kept Bartimaeus from judging Jesus' mission by His appearance or the height of His stature, Bartimaeus' blindness helped. Samuel was blind like the disciples. They sought a savior to deliver them from Roman rule in Jerusalem, not someone to be delivered to the Roman rulers. And Samuel was grieved that Saul the warrior king disobeyed the Lord's command and so was rejected by the Lord as king of Israel. Saul had seemed the perfect candidate to be king of the Lord's people. He was handsome, he was strong, and he was taller than any rival. So Samuel sought a comparable replacement for Saul. But seeing, he did not see.

5 So the Lord rebuked Samuel for his blindness. His eyes were blind to the qualities the Lord sought in a king for Israel: "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature," the Lord said. And so, one after another, the Lord rejected Jesse's sons. Not Eliab, nor Shammah, nor the seven others, these were not whom the Lord

had chosen. Instead, the Lord chose the youngest, the shepherd David, to be the king of Israel.

6 Seeing, you do not see. Your eyes would make you blind. They would have you look for a savior who saves you by serving as your example, your moral compass. Your eyes would look for a Jesus who could make your life easier, your wallet fatter, your days longer. Your eyes would look for the son of Saul, the warrior king who will stand up to any foe, not the Son of David the shepherd king who went to be delivered over to the Gentiles, to be mocked, shamefully treated, spit upon, to be killed. Your eyes would look for a Jesus who welcomes you as you are, not who sees your sin as so great that it must be answered for by His own death. So repent. Your eyes will not find what you by nature seek.

7 Your eyes would not see in Jesus the Son of God and the Son of David. Your eyes would not see in his progression toward Jerusalem the hope of your salvation. Your eyes would not see in the man delivered to the Gentiles, mocked, beaten, spat upon your only hope for deliverance from sin. Your eyes would not see in the One the nailed to a cross, the Jesus from Nazareth, the God through whom all things were created. Your eyes would not see in Him the accomplishment of all written by the prophets. And yet, seeing, your eyes do not see. He is the Lord, Jesus of Nazareth, the One sent to proclaim good news to the poor and give sight to the blind.

8 For you, for Bartimaeus, for the disciples, for Samuel, Jesus, Son of David died on the cross. And He has had mercy on you. Through His death, He paid the penalty for all your sinfulness, all your blindness. And He has given to you new eyes, the eyes of faith. "Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone, Who did for all the world atone; He is our one Redeemer." Faith sees what your eyes could not: a Savior in Jesus on the cross. Recover your sight, your faith has saved you.

9 Faith continues to see what eyes cannot. Though your eyes see ordinary water sprinkled on a forehead, faith sees in Holy Baptism death and new life according to the promises of God. Though your eyes see just a man in robes, faith sees the Lord's representative sent to you to forgive your sins. Though your eyes see simple wine and wafers, faith sees the true body and blood of Jesus at His altar, given to you to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of your sins. And though your eyes see your own slow progression of years, though your eyes grow dim with age, faith sees and knows that your Lord will return to claim those who are His own. Faith will see endless years spent in His presence. "Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then [we will see Him] face to face."

*In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

*Soli Deo Gloria*

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