

Lost & Found Center Teaching Series



# A BARTIMAEUS GENERATION

## **Introduction**

There is a story of a blind beggar named Bartimaeus which can be found in Mark 10:46-52. It may only be a few verses but it speaks prophetically to our generation. Let's dig in and see what it is saying, and see if you agree with me. Here's the passage:

**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 NIV

This is a wonderful story. Whenever the power of God is released and someone is healed, it's special and important, but there is just so much more here than that.

## **Then they came to Jericho**

First the city is Jericho. And this is no coincidence. When we see the setting is Jericho, then we need to perk up and pay attention to what God is saying. Whenever God does something significant in a place and we end up back there again we need to remember what made that place special. It may help us understand what's going on. Everyone knows a little of the story of Jericho but let's do a quick review.

Moses had led Israel out of slavery from Egypt, but instead of going directly into the land God had promised them, Israel had to wander in the desert for 40 years. God did this until the generation that had disobeyed and did not believe had died off. At the end of that time period, Moses died and Joshua assumed the leadership of the people. He was the one selected by God to lead the people into the "promised" land.

This is what happened:

**Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns**

**in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in."** Joshua 6:2-5 NIV

Jericho then represents a supernatural victory over an incredible seemingly impenetrable stronghold. The first city that the Israelites defeated in the promised land set the tone for everything. The priests led the way carrying the Ark of the Covenant, which was the symbol for the presence of God. The symbol of the city's strength was their wall. God himself dealt with the wall. God himself brought down the stronghold. All the people had to do was shout.

Jericho then represents a supernatural victory over an incredible seemingly impenetrable stronghold.

Are there strongholds in your life that need to be dealt with?

### **Enter Bartimaeus**

Bartimaeus was sitting on the side of the road begging the Bible says. He was no drifter. He had history. He was identified as the son of Timaeus. How long had he been there? It doesn't say but he'd been there long enough for everyone to know his name, his family and his situation. He was blind and he was poor and he had been reduced to begging.

What's wrong with this picture?

Bartimaeus sat in the shadow of a place that represented an incredible victory. He sat in a land of promise delivered to his people by the hand of God. Yet he sat out of the way on the sidelines – broken, with no one to help him.

Here's the difficult part if you can face it. This is our generation. This is who we are. Many of us are Bartimaeus. Discarded without hope - ineffectual in our lives –out of the way –not in the game –not using our gifts –powerless with no one to help. His blindness speaks to hopelessness. His blindness speaks to a lack of purpose and direction. His blindness speaks to a lack of vision for the future. His blindness speaks to strongholds. As impenetrable as the walls of Jericho must have once seemed, the walls of his hopelessness can seem even more daunting. Are we Bartimaeus? Are we a generation beset with strongholds? Is this who we are?

What do you think when you think of the future? For those who are in Christ the future is full of light. Full of hope and possibilities unimagined because of our God. What do strongholds do? They limit the light of God. They darken. They reduce our choices.

Those beset by strongholds are in the darkness. Strongholds limit light, the light of God.

**They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.**  
Ephesians 4:18 NIV

I will never be able to do that because I'm too shy or too scared. I can't do that because I struggle with drugs, or alcohol or pornography. I have too much of a temper. I feel that I will never have enough money. I will never be respected because of my height or my weight or my ethnicity or my education or my upbringing.

Strongholds bring darkness. They block the light of possibilities of creativity of God's purposes in your life. Strongholds generally are not hidden but obvious and defiant. They are often things that we know are there but we refuse to see. Strongholds cause blindness because they bring darkness. They cause a loss of clarity and purpose. Can you feel the strongholds of this generation? In your own life? Does a stronghold dominate your life?

**Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.** Psalm 119:115 NIV

One of my favorite verses that you hear every time you hear me. The word of God brings light to our darkness. Place a lamp at your feet and you'll see where you stand. You may not always like it, but it is critical for you to always know where you stand. Lift the light up and you get direction. It's not only about where we are going but where we are right now.

### **Window of opportunity**

Enter Jesus just passing through. Remember:

**(Jesus is) far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.**  
Ephesians 1:21 NIV

Enter Jesus with all rule, all authority, all power and all dominion. His rule is higher than any ruler. His dominion extends past all boundaries including time. His authority or right to rule has been earned with blood. He possesses and commands all power. Jesus is victory. He is the immovable object and the irresistible force. He overcomes all obstacles. Nothing can successfully withstand him. He sees Jericho and remembers. He passes through walls. He passes through our strongholds. He has overcome death. He is undefeated. He is our window of opportunity.

Is Bartimaeus in the right place at the right time? No, the presence of Jesus creates the timing. Just like the Ark of the Covenant, which represented the presence of God as they

carried it around Jericho, the ark passed by Jericho again only this time through the person of Jesus. The presence of Jesus creates the opportunity. Jesus doesn't only create the opportunity; he is the opportunity. He is the opportunity for deliverance and restoration. But Jesus is passing through.

### **The Pain of the Crowd**

Let's look at crowd. The Bible says that Jesus and his disciples together with a large crowd were passing through Jericho. And Bartimaeus heard from the crowd that it was Jesus. So it looks like the crowd here was helping. But what happens when Bartimaeus begins to call out to Jesus. The word says:

**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,**  
Mark 10:47-48 NIV

Many rebuked him it says and told him to be quiet. What type of people rebukes a broken man who cries out for deliverance? Aren't these the same people who had told him that Jesus was passing by? Weren't these people following Jesus? Hadn't they heard him? Hadn't these people seen Jesus in action? Is it thinkable that those walking with Jesus preferred some to be healed and others to be ignored? Could the crowd have stigmatized Bartimaeus because he was a beggar? Stigmatized means to view with disgrace or shame. Who is the crowd today?

If it is painful to think of ourselves as Bartimaeus, how much more painful is it to think of the crowd as the Church. How painful is it to think that the Church stands in the way of our deliverance? Who I ask you are the stigmatized ones today? Who is Bartimaeus?

Paul once told Timothy:

**I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.**  
1 Timothy 5:21 NIV

Do nothing out of favoritism. Do not disqualify your spiritual authority and defile the purposes of God through favoritism. Yet it seems that favoritism is a wall in the church, a stronghold as well. Strongholds darken, limit possibilities. Limits our understanding of who Jesus is and what his heart is. Strongholds can darken our understanding of the purposes of God so much that we can yell "shut up" to a person crying out for deliverance. Who again is blind in this passage anyway?

Jesus stops. We have enough evidence to know that Jesus responds when called regardless of what we think or want to think. Notice how the crowd reacted once Jesus intervened:

**Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." Mark 10:49 NIV**

After Jesus responded to Bartimaeus' shout the crowd then became encouraging. Do you think they were surprised? Too bad they couldn't be encouraging from the beginning. But do you think the crowd learned something this day, watching Jesus in action. Can we learn something this day watching Jesus in action?

The Christian life is difficult enough to have to overcome the Church for deliverance. But there it is. Be aware of it. Don't be crushed if it happens. They are just having difficulty seeing. Appeal to a high authority.

**And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, Ephesians 1:22 NIV**

### **Bartimaeus Sees Before He Sees**

But notice something about Bartimaeus. He begins to see before he begins to see. Notice the words carefully. He hears that **Jesus of Nazareth** is passing by, but to whom does he call? Look at the change in the term used for Jesus.

**When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! Mark 10:47 NIV**

Bartimaeus hears Jesus the man from Nazareth but calls to Jesus the Son of David, the Messiah, the everlasting king from the line of David. As the angel told Mary:

**You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." Luke 1:31-33 NIV**

Even though Bartimaeus was blind, he began to see Jesus for who he is. He began to see with his most important eyes first - the eyes of his heart.

### **His seeing helps him overcome**

So notice the amazing part here. The crowd tells Bartimaeus that Jesus of Nazareth is here. There's a crowd. There are voices. He is on the sidelines and he needs to do

something because Jesus is on the move. He must call out. But it is not that easy is it? He must overcome. He must overcome his own unworthiness. He must overcome his own shame and hopelessness. He must overcome his own inner voices. But there are outer voices as well. He must cry out above the crowd noise. He must overcome the crowd opposition as well.

How does he go from sitting on the sideline to going forth? How does he do it all? By Seeing. By seeing who Jesus is, he is able to cry above his own inner voices and above the crowd and above the circumstances. Our key to escaping the Bartimaeus generation is to begin to see.

This is a prayer for this generation, the same prayer Paul prays for the Ephesians. This prayer is in two pieces:

**I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.**

Ephesians 1:17 NIV

This is for the crowd in us, that the Holy Spirit in us may help us know him better, so we could know what he likes and what pleases him, so we could know he dislikes partiality of any kind, so we could avoid being an obstacle to his purposes, so we could know his heart and how much he cares for everybody.

**I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.**

Ephesians 1:18-19 NIV

This is for the Bartimaeus in us, that our heart would be enlightened – that our hearts would be filled with light. That we would see and understand in our heart and be established with the knowledge of 3 things.

1. The incredible hope that we have in Christ. This is a hope of incredible and endless possibilities. This is a hope of freedom and victory over any and all strongholds. This is the hope of thriving and not just surviving in any and every situation.
2. The incredible inheritance that is laid up for us because we are now God's children – things so wonderful the Bible tells us that are beyond comprehension. Things so awesome that there is nothing in this world in which to reference them. This is our new lot. This is our new future.
3. Incredible power that is here to transform us and to sustain us – the same invincible power that can overcome or reverse anything – even death. That is the power that follows us.

He wants us to see and know three things about ourselves now that we are in Christ: incredible hope, incredible destiny, and incredible power.

### **Bartimaeus goes to Jesus**

Lastly we can see the effect of what Bartimaeus sees in his heart. It gets him to the right place.

**Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.** Mark 10:50 NIV

And although Jesus knows what Bartimaeus wants, still he asks him:

**"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.** Mark 10:51 NIV

Doesn't it seem that God always seems to ask questions that he knows the answer to. Why do you think he does that? Maybe he wants us to articulate to him exactly what we want. He wants us to express ourselves. He wants us to show him that we have learned a few things. That we understand what we need and that we ask for that very thing. The Lord is not big on us praying in a lot of generalities. When Jesus asks you "What do you want me to do for you?" What are you going to say? Just bless me or have you anything specific? Do you have anything to say? Do you have anything in your heart?

Bartimaeus said:

**"Rabbi, I want to see."** Mark 10:51 NIV

Isn't that perfect. Bartimaeus revealed what was in his heart. He expressed it. That is the very thing he needed and he asked for it. Count me in with Bartimaeus, I want to see as well.

Jesus, responded:

**"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you."** Mark 10:51 NIV

Express what's in your heart to the right person. That's faith. Jesus gets Bartimaeus to reveal his heart. Bartimaeus puts his trust and hope in Jesus.

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1 NIV

**Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.** Mark 10:52 NIV

**Bartimaeus Generation is not all that bad**

Finding out we are Bartimaeus is not really all that bad because the story does end with his healing. Deliverance, salvation or any victory starts with a realization of our condition and if we can face it then maybe we can look to the One with all the answers.

This is a generation of people that have not fulfilled their purposes in God. This is a generation of people who have been beset by various strongholds. This is a generation of people who can't seem to get help, even in the Church of God. But the Lord is looking to restore vision and light to the place where it is needed most, to our hearts. May your prayer be Ephesians 1:17-19.

**I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.**

**I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.**

Ephesians 1:17-19 NIV

**Notes**

**For Questions or Comments please respond to [lostandfoundcenter@yahoo.com](mailto:lostandfoundcenter@yahoo.com) and visit [www.lostandfoundcenter.org](http://www.lostandfoundcenter.org) for additional information.**

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