

A Blind Beggar

“Unknown by Name”



“Blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. 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.”

Mark 10: 46-47. KJV

No one had heard much about Bartimaeus. He was just a blind beggar that sat by the side of the road. That did not mean he didn't hear what was going on, and that did not mean that he could not have the same faith as anyone else. Sure, nobody called him by name. He was just the “blind beggar” that begged for money so he could eat and be clothed.

There are many people like that in the world today. There is a saying, attributed to John Bradford that says *“There but for the grace of God, go I.”* John Bradford, a prominent English preacher, had a good life, he thought. He supposedly said this well-known quote as he witnessed a group of criminals being led to their execution.

At age 45 he was also led to his execution because he professed Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior and would not relent. Queen Mary had him burned at the stake. This quote was never written by him in his lifetime; it also has never been refuted. However, it has been embellished in many forms in song and poetry.

One of the best known “variations” of this quote is from the musical Brigadoon, but it fits us today in another way. In Brigadoon, it is sung by a young man, Tommy, who has found his true love, but as I think about him, I can also associate this same feeling with our acceptance of God and how we react to other people when we see their situation. Some of his lyrics include:

*“I saw a man with his head bowed
low;
His heart had no place to go.
I looked and I thought to myself with a
sigh:
There but for you go I.
I saw a man walking by the sea;
Alone with the tide was he.
I looked and I thought as I watched
him go by:
There but for you go I.”*
Brigadoon, 1947, Lerner and Loewe

Have you ever felt rejected or alone? It is probably something all of us have felt at times, even in a crowd. But, we know we are not alone. Yes, we know that we have Christ beside us and all around us, but we can still sometimes feel alone.

Kindness is the language
which the deaf can hear and
the blind can see.

Mark Twain

Imagine, if you can, being blind, and not being able to see people around you. And then, you realize that there is someone coming that you have heard can heal you, and save you. Wouldn't you shout out for help as blind Bartimaeus did? But, just like so many of us would do today, the people around him tried to hush him. Jesus heard him and called out to him. He asked him what he wanted. Bartimaeus asked for his sight. That may seem like a huge request, but the blind man had a faith that the people around him did not. Christ was “up to the task” then, as he is now. “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.” Mark 10:51. What a wonderful gift. Jesus didn't say “If you give me so much money,” or “If you do a certain thing.” It was immediate without anything asked of the blind man.

But Bartimaeus wasn't poor. He was rich in many ways. He had a faith that those around him did not have. We have often heard people say when a tragedy takes their home by fire or flood that they still have their family, and they still have their health. They

also have a loving God that sees every need regardless of how big or small it is, if they only ask.

Those who need help are not always the blind beggars. Sometimes they are just the “unlovely,” and we often wear blinders, and see what we want to see.

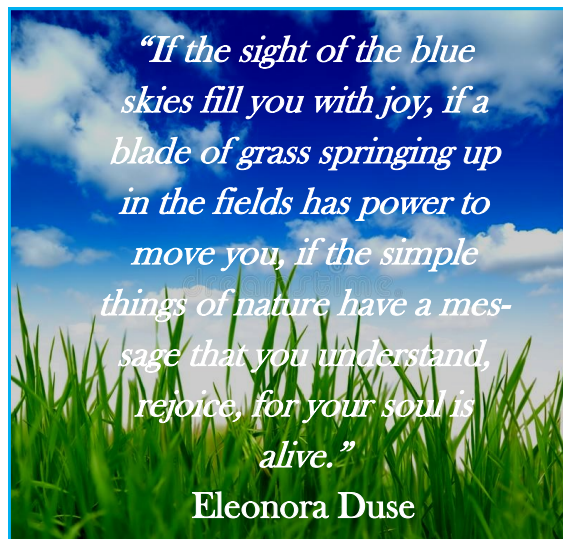
Sometimes, they appear to be very self-controlled and in command of their needs and much better off than we are, but they can still be a blind beggar in need of a faith.

Fanny Crosby, a well known hymn writer of the 1800’s, was blind from the age of six weeks due to a person pretending to be a doctor and treating her eyes. As a blind person, she wrote over 9,000 hymns. A minister was feeling sorry for her and said to her “*I think it is a great pity that the Master did not give you sight when he showered so many other gifts upon you .*” Fanny responded “*Do you know that if at birth I had been able to make one petition, it would have been that I was born blind?*” said the poet, who had been able to see only for her first six weeks of life. “*Because when I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior.*” One of her best known hymns is still sung today, “To God be the Glory.” We can see God in nature, but Fanny said she saw God’s glory through love.

There is a beautiful Christmas song “Mary, Did you Know” that speaks to the power of Christ about many things. Part of the words are:

*“Mary, did you know that your baby boy will give sight to a blind man?
Did you know that your baby boy will calm a storm with His hand?
Did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod?
And when you kiss your little boy,
you’ve kissed the face of God.”*

It doesn’t take long for us to realize that we have a wonderful gift if we have sight because we can see God in all His splendor, but we also must realize that the blind can also see God’s beauty but through a medium we cannot comprehend.



“The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision.

Helen Keller

Prayer: Dear Lord and Saviour, thank You for the wonderful gifts we have received from You that we so often take for granted. Help us to see those in need of something that we can provide. Sometimes it is just a simple “hello” or a simple act of kindness. And, Lord, help us to see You more clearly, and follow You more dearly every day. Amen

1. Have you ever been blessed by seeing through the mind of someone with a handicap you don’t have, i.e. blindness, deafness, sickness?
2. How did you respond initially?
3. Has this encounter changed your thinking in any way by helping you to realize the position of others, and also enhancing your gratitude for what you have?
4. How can we reach out to others less fortunate than we are?
5. Can we have sight, but no vision?
6. Are you known by name to God?

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