



## The Gospel According to Luke

### Wk. 91 "Blind"

By Pastor Jody May

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#### Luke 18:31-43 ESV

##### Jesus Foretells His Death a Third Time

<sup>31</sup> 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.

##### Jesus Heals a Blind Beggar

<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.

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**(My personal fear of going blind)** If we took a Psychological Inventory of everyone in this room at this moment, chances are that 'going blind' is one of our top 10 fears. Why is that? When you break that down it has several nasty connotations to that: You can't work, well at least like you used to (Bachelor's degree or higher: 598,000 (15.7%), Number living below the poverty line: 1,048,600 (27.7%), employed full-time/full-year in 2016 was 1,120,700 or 29.5%,<sup>1</sup>), you won't see the ones you love anymore, your ability to travel decreases drastically, your chances of injuring yourself will go up all of which lowers your life expectancy. It's no joke to go blind, it's a serious matter.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nfb.org/resources/blindness-statistics>



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In the scripture today we will discover a worse condition than physical blindness and that is the condition of **SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS**. With spiritual blindness there is no aid, there is no help from the federal government, you are on your own to cope and what’s worse **if you remain spiritually blind** you will not enter into the Kingdom of God. Today’s passage is to explain our condition, to elevate our need of Christ, and to give Him praise for being the only one that can cure blindness.

### 1. The Dangers of Spiritual Blindness

#### Jesus Foretells His Death a Third Time

<sup>31</sup> 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.

This is not the first time that Jesus has explained to Him his destiny, of being betrayed, tortured and murdered. Luke has informed us that Jesus will be rejected by Jewish leaders (9:21-23), betrayed by one of His own (9:43-45), rejected by His generation (17:24-25), and now rejected and crucified by Gentiles (18:31-34). Then vs. 34 opens up a dilemma for us that hopefully you are catching: they understood **nothing**, it was **hidden**, and they could not **grasp** what Jesus was saying. In all three accounts it says the same thing, this is not some secret metaphor, this is straight up information on his death. The reason they don’t understand is because they are **spiritually blind**.

#### What is Spiritual blindness?

To be spiritually blind is **not to see Christ**, and not to see Christ is **not to see God**:

#### Colossians 1:15-16 ESV

##### The Preeminence of Christ

He is the **image** of the **invisible God**, the firstborn of all creation. **16** For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether



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thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—**all things were created through him and for him.**

### **2 Corinthians 4:6 ESV**

For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the **knowledge** of the **glory of God** in the **face of Jesus Christ.**

Spiritual blindness is a **grievous condition** experienced by those who do not believe in God, Jesus Christ, and His Word.

### **Romans 2:8 ESV**

but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be **wrath** and **fury.**

### **2 Thessalonians 2:12 ESV**

in order that all may be **condemned** who **did not believe** the **truth** but had **pleasure in unrighteousness.**

The result of this condition is **those who reject Christ are the lost.**

### **John 6:68-69 ESV**

<sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? **You have the words of eternal life,**<sup>69</sup> and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

Being lost is a condition that **can’t be overcome**, you can’t fix it.

### **2 Corinthians 4:3-4 ESV**

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are **perishing.** <sup>4</sup> In their case the god of this world has **blinded** the minds of the **unbelievers**, to keep them from **seeing** the **light** of the gospel of the glory of **Christ**, who is the **image of God.**

Worst yet it can’t be overcome because **God the Father is in charge of that condition**, it is the result of the wrath of God from the fall.



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### Deuteronomy 29:4 ESV

But to this day the **Lord has not given** you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.

Jesus agrees with Deuteronomy.

### Matthew 11:25-26

At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, **Father**, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have **hidden these things** from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; <sup>26</sup>yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

Peter in his 2<sup>nd</sup> letter writes that in the last days people will mock what they don't know/understand:

### 2 Peter 3:3 ESV

<sup>3</sup> knowing this first of all, that **scoffers** will come in the last days with scoffing, **following** their own **sinful desires**.

Jude, the brother of Jesus quotes Peter, he knows him, knows Peter's story:

### Jude 1:18-19 ESV

<sup>18</sup> They said to you, "In the last time there will be **scoffers**, following their own **ungodly passions**." <sup>19</sup> It is these who cause **divisions**, worldly people, **devoid of the Spirit**.

### **Spiritually blind people can be religious people and still follow ungodly passions.**

That happened all the time in the 1<sup>st</sup> century church, for blind people exist in the church.... The problem is they don't necessarily know they are blind because they are helped by people who can see Jesus and the Kingdom, **BUT spiritually blind people cause divisions** because they lack the Spirit, they can say they follow Jesus but at the heart of them, they are out for themselves.

Now let me show you back in the text what is going on with some religious people in our passage this morning and possibly why Jesus is telling the disciples again this truth and that is to prove a point.



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The last thing that was said to Jesus before His confession of what was going to happen in Jerusalem came from Peter.

### **Luke 18:28 ESV**

And Peter said, "See, we have left our homes and followed you."

It seems Peter is hunting for some self-justification by works. He's comparing the rich young ruler to himself, he's pointing out to Christ we are not like Him. Peter may not be rich, but Peter is exactly like that man for he wants to **use Christ to get ahead in the world.**

Perhaps you remember this exchange between Peter and Jesus:

### **Matthew 16:21-23 ESV**

<sup>21</sup> From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. <sup>22</sup> And Peter took him aside and began to **rebuke him**, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." <sup>23</sup> But he turned and said to Peter, "**Get behind me, Satan!** You are a hindrance to me. For you are not **setting your mind** on the things of God, but **on the things of man.**"

Peter's mind, still at this point in Luke, is on the things of man, HE'S THE SCOFFER; Jesus you don't know what you are talking about! In Mat. 16:17 Peter had correctly called Jesus the Christ, so in this exchange you see that Peter had plans for Jesus, I don't know what they were exactly, but an outflowing of those desires was **Jesus you AINT DYIN!** That's not the plan, Jack!

What seems to stand out in this text is that there is a reason connected to the disciple's blindness, this blindness that is still allowed by God. - **The boys think they have it all figured out...** By now they have seen enough of Jesus' workings, they know what He is capable of, they have even had a taste of His power doing their own miraculous works, they have fooled themselves into believing **they think they know how this is going to play out.**



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This is what it looks like when the desire for the things that you think Jesus can bring you is greater than wanting Jesus for Himself. **Here now comes the condemnation for the disciples** - At the transfiguration the Father told Peter, James and John, this is my Son, **"Listen to Him!"** Their desire to get something from Jesus had caused them to actually disobey Him, they had stopped listening to Him.

**Gospel Questions:** Maybe today, you are feeling concerned about being in the Kingdom of God? **How would one know?** Has your desire to get something from Jesus made it hard to see that you need Him more than the thing you think you need? Do you view the way you live life, all your rules, rituals, and rites of passage, as proof that you have in fact come into the Kingdom life? Do you look at other people and think to yourself, "I am better than them", or "at least I don't do that"? Do you spend time worrying about what you do or don't do, or what tribe you belong to that gets the most religious recognition, then you may be missing the whole point for this life! This life is not about proving why you should have eternal life, **but it is about discovering you have no hope but Christ!** Part of the message of the Gospel my friends is at your lowest of lows, when you have discovered that there is nothing righteous/good/redeeming in you, **then and only then** is when people stumble upon the narrow way into the Kingdom...

Let's move onto the second part of the passage today, and let's see what it looks like for the person who is honest with God and Himself.

## 2. The Beginnings of Spiritual Sight

<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."



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Mat, 20 and Mark 10 record this same story and you can discover the name of our gentleman is **Bartimaeus**. Bartimaeus is a professional beggar, we know this by his position on the outside of town where travelers could find him, that and along with the fact that the scripture even knows the name of his father. Perhaps it means that the locals knew of him, that the town had taken up the task of caring for him, for in that day and age blindness meant you could not work and most likely this was an effect of your sin.

In that day, blindness, like leprosy, would be viewed as an inherited curse. That your loss of sight was due to your sin or the sin of your father's, it was a curse. For a man, losing your sight was losing the ability to work, to build your identity, to have a family, to pass along an heir. This position in life had gotten Bartimaeus ready for his encounter with Jesus. Who knows, this could have been in direct result to Bartimaeus' sin, at least he believed it so.

You see, finding that "narrow way" into the kingdom sometimes has to come through very dire circumstances. Remember the prodigal son, remember the widow, and in contrast remember the Pharisee and the Rich Young Ruler. It seems **people are not ready to enter into the Kingdom until they hit some type of Spiritual Bottom**. I am not saying all, some people's disposition is not as tough, it takes less to convince them they need Jesus, but for others it takes a **1,000 ft belly drop of the soul into concrete** to get them to see they're in trouble! **The door to the Narrow Way is to actually discover you are blind and you have no hope.** Bartimaeus had been molded to believe that his physical condition was the same as his spiritual condition and that Salvation MUST be found outside of himself.

#### **Proverbs 9:10 ESV**

**The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.**

So Bartimaeus, happens to be in the right place at the right time, that's not coincidence it is Divine Intervention, it is where Total Depravity, is overcome by





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Unconditional Election, through the gracious gift of Irresistible Grace. Watch as Bartimaeus calls out for his last chance:

**<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!"**

Bartimaeus knew of Jesus, the reputation had been heard, and most likely to himself he had come to believe that if ever he had the chance, he would throw himself at the mercy of Jesus. "Son of David" in three words he speaks truth and condemnation on himself, for what if the local synagogue ruler would hear him? He has just admitted publically that Jesus, as the Son of David, is the legitimate heir to the throne and that **HE was the Messiah**, and not only that he asked his king for mercy.

**Mercy was not to get what you deserve.** Bartimaeus saw himself as deserving of punishment, eternal damnation, nothing in Him was deserving, there was no one to compare himself to, he was unclean, unable to make sacrifices, all he could do was call out, and may I just add not asking as a beggar but a strong declaration, **have mercy on me!** He would not be quieted; this was his last chance. Then Jesus grants him an audience, in the other texts it says he jumped up to get to 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."**

Let me recover my sight... Jesus says one word, "**see.**" Then Jesus makes a declaration in the text "**your Faith, has made you well.**" In the Greek, these words mean, "saved you". Words that Jesus uses as code in the NT to say **you have come into Kingdom life BECAUSE you believed in me.** You may be asking how does restoring sight get you into heaven? It was based in what Bartimaeus was believing in. He believed that Jesus as His Messiah could give Mercy on behalf of God removing his punishment for sins, **the byproduct is healing,** meaning He believed in Jesus as His only hope to become right with God. That





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Faith was a gift, Jesus saw it in him, because Bartimaeus knew he could not enter into the Kingdom under his own power, and he put all his hope only in what Jesus could do.

Bartimaeus, never did any comparing, the only thing he could say was I am the lowest of lows, I can't even hide the proof of my sin, everyone sees it in me. Spiritually Blind people upon receiving sight, the first thing they see is their only hope is Jesus, and by Irresistible Grace they are drawn to Christ.

### 3. The Blessings of Corrected Vision!

What does it look like when the truly understanding blind person receives his sight?

**<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.**

People who are gifted true sight for the first time also recognize where it came from and they are **eternally grateful**. **Eternal life** brings one into **eternal joy** because it puts in you the **eternal desire to eternally follow** Jesus, that's how the doctrine of the **Perseverance of the Saints** works out.

Bartimaeus not only had received sight but he had received purpose! He had discovered what all those years of being blind meant, they were to prep him for his encounter with Jesus and then in response he was to follow Him to proclaim to all who Jesus was. **My family, that's why people with spiritual sight don't spend a lot of time pointing out in others what's wrong with them, they are too busy pointing out what's best in Christ!** Then the result of that is that people praise God FOR what they see in you.

Family, let's diagnose this simply this morning, do you spend more time pointing out the fault in others or do you spend more time pointing to the excellencies of Christ? Is your life caught up in devotion to Christ because you are seeing what He has delivered you from? Have you hit your bottom yet, are you tired of bumping into the immovable objects of dead faith? Today, are you ready not to



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be timid about your Spiritual Blindness, do you desire to call out to Jesus for Mercy because you believe He is your only hope? Let's all approach the Throne of Grace this morning and ask our Lord to be Merciful to us all.

**PRAYER**

**COMMUNION**

**BENEDICTION**

Go in the name of the Father, who has ordained our spiritual blindness and who has also graciously elected to call us out of it.

Go in the name of the Son, who heals our blindness with the power of His Word, and may His Word be all illuminating for you this week.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that propels us into the world following and making much to do about Jesus so that people will praise our God.