

# Scriptural Truths

## E-Mail Meditations

The Lord Will Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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### Saving Faith That Works

#### Introduction

Several years ago I had the privilege of having ministry meetings in Macedonia. One of the sights that is firmly fixed in my mind's eye is that of a beggar sitting in his rags and with an emotional pleading look seeking something from those who went into the ornate church. He was not the only one for there were many who, due to deformities or mental illnesses, sat in the same condition. It was and is tragic. It brought to mind the day the Lord, when entering Jericho, saw a blind man sitting by the highway side begging (Mk. 10:46). His name was Bartimeaus.

- a) Bartimeaus was the son of Timaeus. Perhaps he was from a family of some renown. Hard times, however, still befell him. His blindness reduced him to begging alongside many other beggars. There he sat along a highway, a place of higher traffic, seeking a little help to get through another day.
- b) Then one day Jesus came by and Baritimaeus' life was mightily changed in a moment of time after receiving his eyesight. That was a great day when he left the ranks of blind beggars to follow the Lord Jesus with new eyesight and new purpose of life. His situation displays the power of faith at work. The Lord said to him, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole" (Mk. 10:52). What did the Lord mean when he said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole?"

#### Baritimaeus' Faith at Work

##### **1) By faith he believed Jesus was more than the Jesus of Nazareth.**

- a) If we compare the references to the Lord in Mark 10:47 we can see how Bartimeaus considered Christ to be more than a native of Nazareth and more than a mere man, which was the general thinking of the day. He was able to apply to the Lord the Messianic name, "son of David." How this knowledge came to him we're not told neither does it matter. Having heard of the Lord, the Spirit of God opened His mind to the reality of Jesus as the only one who could give him sight. The man needed a work of God. All the decisions to be a better person or to follow religious rituals would be to no avail. All he could do was to call on the Lord. Later, Peter was preaching and his words were, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). His faith required thinking and his convictions about Jesus that made Him conscious of the necessity of His crying out to the Lord for mercy. No one else could help him. All the rabbis, chief priests, scribes, rulers of the people were all helpless. They could say pious things but could never give him sight. The faith that saves begins in the soul as a personal need and the conviction that only Christ and His work at Calvary can meet the sinner's need. The Lord helps those who cannot help themselves but recognize their need can be met by the Son of God.

## 2) **By faith he recognized the Lord to be full of mercy.**

- a) Mercy is the Lord's delight. It is observed that there isn't an instance where the Lord was asked for mercy and He refused (Matt. 9:27-28; 17:15; Lk. 1:50, 54, 58, 72, 78).
- b) We need to fill our prayers with pleas for mercy. Christ gives to undeserving sinners what they never deserve, pardon, forgiveness, and spiritual favour with God. To plead what we deserve would not be a prayer, but a death sentence.

Conscious of the Lord being there at Jericho and passing by, Bartimeaus realized this could be his last opportunity, and like a drowning individual, he grasped this opportunity and cried, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me" (Mk. 10:47). As a beggar he had nothing of his own to offer for help. Mercy was his only hope, and in grace he pleads for mercy. Yet the cry of this needy man was heard by the ears of the Lord who came to show mercy to needy souls. This is the way of salvation. As the hymn writer wrote, "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling, naked come to thee for dress, helpless look to thee for grace". This becomes our chief plea in prayer. Faith sees the Lord full of mercy. All grace to sinners flows through Him. Paul wrote: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us" (Eph. 2:4). How wonderful to know that as we read the scriptures there isn't an instance where the Lord was asked for mercy and He refused.

## 3) **By faith he responded with unstoppable hope.**

- a) That same spirit of hope should fill our hearts in the place of prayer. Let us go to the Lord in spite of all hindrances and oppositions, and let our hope be stirred that the Lord is the One to answer our needs and solve our problems.
- b) There was significant opposition to his cries for help. Many charged him that he should hold his peace. Matthew's account states that they "rebuked him" and the sense is that they repeatedly opposed his cries to gain the Lord's attention. Through faith, hope filled this man's heart so that he could not be silent, therefore, "He cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me" (Mk. 10:48). When an individual sees themselves bound for the full fledged fury of God's wrath against their sin, that Hell and its fierceness is waiting like an open chasm for them, nothing will stop that individual from crying to the Lord for mercy.
- c) At this point man's opinions mean nothing. All ones own endeavors are seen as futile activities, all denying of God are seen as foolishness, the scriptures scream that even in this life the individual stands, "Condemned already" (Jn. 3:18; Jn. 5:24). There is no need to wait until the judgment, the sentence has been declared, there is no appeal, it is final, "Condemned already". Those who die in their sins will forever be condemned to the Lake of fire for all eternity. In such a condition faith cannot be silent, it will cry out seeking the Saviour for mercy.

## 4) **By faith his prayer was answered.**

- a) The Lord's heart was moved toward him to answer his request (Mk. 10:49-52). The request for eyesight was immediately granted and faith was attributed as the reason for His healing. The Lord loves to see that faith in the hearts of men. Man who was given a free will has the ability to believe or not believe, to accept God's gracious offer of salvation or reject it.
- b) Faith is believing that which God says and acting on it. When the God who "cannot lie" (Titus 1:2) offers full salvation and deliverance from the power of sin and eternal damnation, He is genuinely sincere. Faith in the promises of God is not a work. One cannot have too much faith or not enough. It is not a matter of trying really hard to believe, it is not a transaction where I give God my faith and he gives me salvation. We know the character of God, He would never lie to us, but gives us the promise of eternal life. All we have to do is take God at this word. God says, Christ is the only way of salvation, that salvation is a gift (Rom. 6:23), and because it is a gift it cannot be worked for. The individual who is depending on their good works, trying to live a good clean life and fulfilling religious rituals for salvation is insulting Christ and calling God a liar. Salvation is by faith (Eph. 2:8-9) and "without faith, it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11:6).

## 5) **By faith Bartimeaus went to work for His Lord and Saviour.**

- a) The conclusion of the matter was that Bartimeaus received his eyesight through the miraculous power of the Lord, but he did not go back to begging. He went on to use his new-found eyesight to follow the Lord, "in the way" (Mk. 10:52). He found the will of God for His life and he used his restored eyesight for the Lord's glory.
- b) Faith doesn't stop looking unto Jesus and doesn't stop following the Lord. Where there is no interest in full discipleship for Christ there is no evidence of faith in the soul. Where grace abounds in the life, the life will abound in new works for the Lord.
- c) J.C Ryle wrote, "Grace really experienced will make a man feel daily, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits..." The man who boasts of having an interest in Christ, while he does not follow Christ in his life, is a miserable self-deceiver, and is ruining his own soul."

- d) These are times when men and women need clear views of what it means to believe the gospel and follow after the Lord for salvation. We take our stand on a sinner's justification by faith alone as the sole ground of our assurance for heaven. We also stand where the Bible commands us to take up our cross and follow Christ, or else we cannot be His disciple. As the apostle James would put it, where there is faith at work in the soul it is a faith that works (Jam. 2:20; 26).
- e) Bartimeaus is a wonderful example of true justifying faith at work.

. . . Rowan Jennings

**SALVATION IS NOT YOUR  
GOOD WORKS, RELIGION  
OR RITUALS,  
IT'S GOD'S WORK  
ON THE CROSS.**

*For by grace are ye saved through faith;  
and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:  
Not of works, lest any man should boast.  
Ephesians 2:8-9 KJV*

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