

Your Faith Has Saved You

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- [0 : 00] Two men, dressed in pilots' uniforms, walk up the aisle of the aircraft. Both were wearing dark glasses. One is using a guide dog. The other is tapping his way along the aisle with a cane. Nervous laughter spreads through the cabin. But the men enter the cockpit, the door closes, and the engines start up. The passengers begin glancing nervously around, searching for some kind of sign that this is just a little practical joke. None is forthcoming. The plane moves faster and faster down the runway. And the people sitting in the window seats realize they're headed straight for the water at the edge of the airport property. Just as it begins to look as though the plane will plow straight into the water, panic screams fill the cabin. At that very moment, the plane lifts smoothly into the air.
- [1 : 07] The passengers relax, laugh a little sheepishly, and soon all retreat into their magazines and books, secure in the knowledge that the plane is in good hands. Meanwhile, in the cockpit, one of the blind pilots turns to the other and says, You know, Bob, one of these days they're going to scream too late and we're all going to die. Lying. Blind humor. Blindness. The inability to see anything, including light. It impairs one's ability to do what sighted people consider normal. Like reading. Taking a walk. Enjoying a sunset. Doing regular work. What it does, though, is it heightens their dependency on their other senses. And so blind people learn to see and understand the world through hearing.
- [2 : 26] Smelling. Touching. Tasting. Tasting. In our story, Bartimaeus. Has a blindness that forces him to become a beggar. To become one who is totally dependent on others for their gifts of charity, for their help, for even simple compassion. He's dependent. Here at the end of Mark chapter 10, Jesus heals this blind man, Bartimaeus. And he declares to Bartimaeus that his faith has made him well. And literally what Jesus says is your faith has saved you. Now that word save can mean save from physical. So to deliver him, rescue him from a physical issue.
- [3 : 35] But in the New Testament it becomes a bigger word than that, doesn't it? To be saved from something even bigger than a physical danger. A spiritual, eternal danger. And so it carries those overcrowded in this passage. And here is this man who is blind, yet has a perception that his own disciples do not have. He has never seen a miracle of Jesus, yet he believes something about Jesus. Mark has shown us that the disciples of Jesus are in fact the blind sighted.

They have eyes, but they don't see. Blind sighted. Sight. S-I-G-H-T-E. Mark has been revealing the problem of their spiritual blindness from the middle of chapter 8 of Mark.

Remember where Jesus had just fed the 4,000. And he comes to the disciples afterwards and he's warning them about the leaven of the Pharisees. And the disciples think he's talking about bread.

[4 : 59] That they forgot to bring bread. And so Jesus says, what are you arguing about bread for? Do you not yet understand? So he's confronting their understanding.

Do you not yet see? Do you not yet think? And he uses, do you not yet put it together? Are you not connecting the dots yet?

And to illustrate that, then he takes them on a review of the two feedings. He says, when we fed the 5,000, how much was left over?

And they remember the detail. They got the Sunday school answer. Oh, 12 baskets, one for each of us. Good. Okay. When we fed the 4,000, how much was left over?

Seven baskets. And he said, do you understand? And they're, you know, blank faces, I'm sure, staring back at him.

[6 : 07] Are you thinking through? Are you connecting some dots yet? Who can do that? Who can feed that many people from basically nothing?

Have you thought about that? Are you through what I'm doing and what I'm saying? Are you understanding?

Nope. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, we get it. Then that very dialogue is followed by a unique healing of a blind man.

Remember in Mark 8, 22 and following, where Jesus, remember, touches the man's eyes and he's partially seeing. Remember, it's a unique miracle. I mean, usually when Jesus heals, he just speaks and boom, it's done.

Right? Here's where he wants to teach them something. And so he touches the man's eyes and he sees shapes, but he can't make out any details.

[7 : 14] It's like men are like trees walking around. It's like if I took my glasses off, that's what I would, you know, be like that. Can I see shapes? I don't know who you are. And it illustrates the need of the disciples who they see in part.

They see the big shape. They see, yeah, you're the one. We know you're the one. Peter confesses in a few moments in chapter 10. You are the Messiah. We get that.

What they don't see is the kind of Messiah he is. Because they've already read into that Messiah thing what they want it to be. What they've always learned from their synagogue school, what the Messiah is supposed to do.

He's supposed to be another King David. He's supposed to conquer the enemies. So they see in part, but they don't understand.

And so we see that repeated over and over again in Mark 8, 9, and 10. As Jesus reveals to them, he begins to open up to them what kind of Messiah he is.

[8 : 27] He says the Messiah, the Son of Man, will suffer many things. He will be rejected by Jewish leaders. He will be turned over to the Gentiles to be executed and killed.

And then, after three days, he will rise from the dead. He tells them this three times. In chapter 8, chapter 9, chapter 10. And after each revelation, there's an objection or an insensitivity of the disciples.

A blindness of the disciples. Because when Jesus tells them the first time, what does Peter do? Peter goes from, you're the Christ. To, no, Lord, I will not let that happen to you.

And Jesus, who had just called him the rock, now calls him what? Satan! Way wrong.

You're thinking the thoughts of man, not the thoughts of God, in terms of who you think Messiah is. And then after Jesus reveals it the second time, what happens? He hears them dialoguing, arguing on the way to Jerusalem about who's the great.

[9 : 41] Another lesson. He's talking about descending and humility. They're talking about prestige and power. They're on two different playbooks.

And then we see it again the third time in chapter 10, 32. He reveals again more details about his suffering and rejection, his death and his resurrection.

And again, what happens next? As if he didn't say that. James and John, the sons of thunder.

By the way, Lord, we want you to do something for us. Write a blank check. We want you to give us whatever we ask you. Okay, what is it? We want to sit on your right and left in glory.

Oh, do you? I told you I'm descending and suffering and being killed and you want to what?

[10 : 43] Now, he didn't say it that way. He graciously taught them. Again, reminds them, if you want to be great, be last.

If you want to be first, be the servant of all. You descend into greatness in God's kingdom. So they've been blind, in other words.

They know he's it. They know he's the Messiah. But they have no clue as to what this Messiah is doing. And now in Mark chapter 10, at the end, we encounter someone who cannot physically see, but perceives in Jesus something amazing.

For a blind man. For one who has not been following him. Who makes some rare statements about Jesus. So let's look into this.

And what I want to do is break down this passage. A very simple picture here, but I want to break it into two subjects or two questions. Because part of the passage is about Jesus.

[11 : 50] And the titles that this man uses of Jesus. I want to do a little teaching, kind of unpack those titles about who this man understands Jesus to be.

And then, secondly, we'll take a look at the man. And ask, what is saving faith? Because Jesus declares at the end that his faith saves him.

So I want to go back through the story and kind of look at how does that faith show itself in this story? In other words, what does saving faith look like? What are its marks? Okay, so that's what we're going to do.

So first of all, how is Jesus identified? And why is he called this? And what is it that blind Bart sees?

That no one else sees? So, here in this, there's two titles that we see in reference to Jesus.

[12 : 54] In verse 47, first he's called the Nazarene. Our translations, I think, say of Nazareth. But literally, it's Jesus the Nazarene.

Obviously, identifying him, describing where he's from. And also to distinguish him from all the other Joshua's around.

Jesus's around. Very common name. This one is the one from, you know, Galilee. The Gentile area. Nazareth. As Nathanael said, can anything good come out of Nazareth?

Nazareth? So that one. What's interesting is, Mark doesn't tell this, but Matthew does.

Because Matthew's writing his gospel to the Jews. And he wants to point out just about every place where Jesus fulfills scripture. And so in chapter 2 of Mark, verse 23, he points out that Jesus is called the Nazarene to fulfill the prophet.

[13 : 58] And there's one prophet, Isaiah, who in Isaiah chapter 11, calls Jesus the Nazar. The Nazarene.

Same Hebrew root. He's the branch of Jesse. The Nazar. The Nazarene. That's free.

That's just extra. But it's, Isaiah 11 is one of those messianic passages that talks about, you know, this David, this branch of David will come and the Spirit of God will rest on him.

And he's going to bring a peaceful kingdom. Those kind of images. Bless you. Can I mean that in a Christian way? I'm always saying that now.

Since I heard there's another meaning. So, he's given the title, the Nazarene, a description. But notice in verse 47 and 48, it's called him something else.

[15 : 07] And it's the first time in the gospel of Mark these words come from a human tongue. Back in Mark 1, he's called son of David by the unclean spirit.

I think, or am I confusing that with Nazarene? This is the first time from human lips it comes in the gospel of Mark. First time this term is even used. He's called son of David.

Who's the son of David? What does that mean? That was a common title in the first century to the Jews of the Messiah.

We know the Messiah comes from David. He's a descendant of David. The gospel of Mark chapter 1 records this exact lineage of Jesus from Abraham through David.

And through David's son Solomon by her whose name we shall not mention. A little scandal in Jesus' family tree.

[16 : 18] Actually, there's several scandals in his family tree. And then down through Joseph. So he is of the royal line through the father as the descendant of David and heir to the throne.

Interestingly, Luke gives us Jesus. But he traces it through different son of David. Matthew goes through Solomon.

Luke goes through Nathan. And on down through Mary. So from both father and mother, Jesus is a descendant of David.

For the royal line through the father, the bloodline through the mother. He is the son of David. What was David known for?

Why is the son of David? Why is it David that becomes this image for the Messiah? Why is David the type? You know, the foreshadow.

[17 : 32] What is it about David? He's a shadow, right? What about the shape of David that points to what the Messiah will be like? What do we know about David?

What stood out about David? Before the big fall. Before the big fall. And he proved he wasn't the Messiah.

He was a man with a heart for God. I mean, he was truly a lover of God. He was raised up as the man who would conquer all of Israel's enemies.

A time unknown in history. He conquered everyone. Well, he left free for his son to take care of. Three men.

Solomon, you will knock these people out. You will take them down. But otherwise, he had... And the scripture says he had peace on all sides. So Solomon begins to inherit their father and daddy.

[18 : 41] Work. Established his kingdom. The most impressive kingdom ever. For 40 years. For 40 years.

And... He became the measure... Of what every other king was judged by.

Because as you read through the book of Kings. You read through the book of Chronicles. It will say... At the end of each king's life, it will say... How he compared to David. Oh, he was faithful, faithful, faithful.

But not as faithful as David. Or he was evil, evil, evil. Not even close to his father, David. David...

Type. He's what we're looking for. But he's only the shadow. He's only the outline. He's not the detail.

[19 : 37] And then there's more to this. Because Jesus now takes this phrase... Or not now. A couple chapters later in Mark chapter 12. As he's talking to the Pharisees. He raises a question...

To them. And he says... How... Is the Christ... The son of David? Now first he kind of asked them generally... Who's... Who's the Messiah?

And they answer right away... Oh, he's the son of David. All of a sudden Jesus said... Well, I've got a problem. Because how is the Christ... The son of David... When in Psalm 110...

David says... The Lord says to my Lord. Sit at my right hand... And I will put all your enemies... Under your feet. So if David is the father...

How is he calling his son... The Lord? And the scripture tells us... That they were... Stop. They were silent. I never thought of it that way.

[20 : 34] You mean Messiah is... Bigger... Than David? Somehow this Messiah is greater... Than David?

He's no mere David? He's not just the son of David... He must be the son of... God. So...

This term is packed... With promise. What is the promise... About this coming son of David?

Let me give you just a little bit of history. In 2 Samuel 7... David is finished with all his warring. He has conquered his enemies. The Lord has given him rest...

On all his sides. And so now in his older age... David wants to do something... For the Lord. He genuinely wants to do something. He wants to build a house... For the Lord.

[21 : 28] Because he's built himself... A really nice house. Beautiful. Imported cedar, all that. I should do that for the Lord. I want to do that for the Lord.

And so he brings it to Nathan. He says... Lord, this is what I want to do. Nathan says... Good idea. Talk to the Lord for you. Nathan comes back and says... Lord says no. Lord says no.

Not for you. In fact, what he says to David... In 2 Samuel 7 is... The Lord basically says to David... When your days are fulfilled... And you lie down with your fathers... I will raise up your offspring...

After you. Who shall come right from your body. And I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name. You don't get to build a house for me, David...

But your descendant will build a house for me. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom... Forever. You... Your son Solomon...

[22 : 28] He got 40 years. That's the... You guys can do. It will be forever. So he's a little unique from you guys.

And I will be to him a father... And he shall be to me a son... When he commits iniquity... You say, well, that doesn't apply to Jesus. Oh, what did he bear on the cross?

Yeah, he took our sins. So he... So he receives what? I will discipline him with the rod of men... And the stripes of the sons of men. There's a cross. But my steadfast love will not depart from him...

As I took it from Saul... Whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom, David... Shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.

Get the idea of the time implications here? Forever. This isn't temporary. In accordance with all these words... And in accordance with all this vision... Nathan spoke to David.

[23 : 30] So this term, son of David... It's a unique... It applies to a unique... Descendant of Jesus. Because David had many descendants.

But there was only one... That fulfills this promise. Who rules his kingdom forever. Who fulfills this promise to David.

Who builds a house... For his name. Now Solomon built the temple. Is he talking about Solomon? No. That wasn't a forever temple.

That wasn't a forever house. There was a descendant after Solomon. Much later after Solomon. Who was born... The descendant of David... Joseph.

Whose son was named... Jesus. Who did build a house. Who did build a temple. And he said to his enemies... You'll destroy this house...

[24 : 28] And in three days I'll raise it up. He's the temple. And then that temple becomes... Remember the picture in Ephesians...

Of the stone... The living stones put together... Into a house... A temple... We become the house... In which he dwells. So in Mark...

This is the first use... Of the title... Son of David. And I want you to notice... That as the man... Uses it... Jesus doesn't correct him. Doesn't silence him.

He accepts the title. The man's got it right. He is the son of David. Remember Jesus has been keeping... On the low down... On the secret... This whole...

That I'm Messiah. Don't tell anybody. Don't tell anybody. Well... We're only days away from... Jesus is going to be pretty open... About this too. In fact in chapter 11...

[25 : 32] As he goes into Jerusalem... He's called... Hosanna. Blessed is the son of David. He accepts. Doesn't silence. Boldly tells... The Sanhedrin...

Yes I am the son of God. Which gets him killed. So he accepts this title...

From all people... A blind man. Who has never seen a miracle. Never seen Jesus...

Before... Jesus opening his eyes. What is it about this man? How does he come to have faith? When he cannot even see?

How is it that he seems to... Leapfrog over the 12 disciples... Who have been with him... For three and a half years? In his... Jesus is.

[26 : 28] How is that? Well... Let's look at that. Our second subject... Our second question... We notice in verse 52...

As Jesus tells him... Go your way... Your faith has made you well. Your faith has saved you. So that leads to the question... Then... Well if he...

He has faith... Then we should be able to trace it... In this story. We should be able to see marks of it... Popping up here and there. So what is saving faith? What does it look like?

What are its marks? There are at least five marks here... That I found... And actually as we looked at it this morning... People were coming up with other stuff... And saying... Okay... There's at least five.

Okay... There's probably more. But I want you to see the highlights here. So... Look at verse 46... He's described as Bartimaeus... A blind beggar...

[27 : 25] The son of Timaeus. So Mark is translating... For his Gentile readers... This Jewish... This Hebrew name... Bartimaeus. Son of... Bar...

You ever heard of a bar mitzvah? Son... Bar... Son... Of... So... Bar... Son... Of... Timaeus. Bar... Timaeus. Oh see...

You Gentiles got it, right? Got it. See Mark... They're coming along. So what's the first thing? He... Verse 47 says...

When he heard... That it was Jesus of Nazareth... The first identifying mark of saving faith is hearing. It begins with hearing. Well that lines up with what Paul says.

Faith comes by... Hearing. Not by seeing. By hearing. Faith comes by hearing. Specifically hearing the word about Christ.

[28 : 24] Christ... In Romans 10... 17. He heard. What did he hear? Mark doesn't... Doesn't... You know...

Satisfy our curiosity. What did he hear? I wonder what he heard. We can... We can imply some things... From the way he responds to Jesus. He certainly heard that Jesus has power to heal.

Because he's going to ask for healing. He's likely heard that he's healed blind people before. Which he had. He's probably heard that...

That... He has compassion on sinners. That's why the report of Jesus kind of goes out and it's like... Wow. No one teaches like this guy.

Nobody has power and authority like this guy. And so... Remember... Early in Mark... Mark told us that the fame and the reports of Jesus was going out everywhere. As far as the Decapolis.

[29 : 19] Certainly down to Jerusalem and Jericho. Jericho? Jericho? By the way... Jericho. Famous for an Old Testament story. Walls fall down.

This Jericho is actually located almost two miles away from the original Jericho. This is one that King Herod built. Where he set up a nice... Really nice palace for himself.

And this is where they meet. This is 20 miles away. It's a 20 mile hike from Jericho to Jerusalem. Which is 3,500 feet above Jericho.

So when you go to Jerusalem. You go through Jericho. And you literally go up. Temple. So the songs of ascent. We're ascending up to the Lord.

Now 3,500 feet... You know... To Coloradans is like... What's that? But this is Palestine. So different geography. So he hears these reports.

[30 : 24] He's a friend of sinners. He's a friend to the powerless. And so he hears. And then notice what does he do? As soon as he hears that it's Jesus who's passing by.

What does he do? Verse 47. He began to cry out. He began to shout. He began to scream.

Now he cannot see the crowd and multitude that's following Jesus. But he knows what's going on. He can hear it. He can hear it. He can sense it. And he can't see where Jesus is.

So what's he going to do? Jesus! Son of David! And what does he cry for?

Have mercy! Oh. The Lord hears those kind of prayers. He's praying. You can sense the urgency.

[31 : 30] The desperateness. Faith, you see. Cries for mercy. That's a mark of faith. It recognizes its unworthiness.

This is not a demand. This is not James and John, the sons of thunder, demanding a place. This is a lowly beggar who's desperate. Who knows he's got no hope.

Except that he's got a hope because he's heard about this Jesus. And Jesus is nearby. I'm not letting this chance go. And then notice, here's what's remarkable about this man, and I think it makes faith stand out.

Verse 48. He cries out for mercy, and what happens? Many rebuked him. Corrected him. You're not being appropriate.

You're a beggar. You're insignificant. You're a nobody. You're an outcast. You're blind because you sinned.

[32 : 34] That was the assumption of those days. Which is backed up by the Old Testament covenant. If you sin, I will curse you.

Right? So it may have been because he sinned. He's asking to recover his sight, so he must have had it before. So he's lost it.

And maybe it was because he sinned. I don't know. Doesn't tell us. But that was the assumption of those days. Remember Jesus healed the blind man from birth in John chapter 9?

Remember what the disciples immediately asked? Was this blindness because of his sin or his parents' sin? Because it has to be one or the other. And Jesus said, You mean not all.

It's because of sin. So we hear this. And so what does he do? He hears these messages.

[33 : 38] Have you heard those kind of messages from the followers of Jesus? Oh, we don't want your type. You don't look like us.

You don't talk like us. We don't like your language at all. You wouldn't fit in with us. So you just be quiet. Hmm?

We silly church people. We're just like the disciples. Just like John who said, I saw somebody casting out demons in your name and I stopped them. No.

Bad, John. What was he doing wrong? He's not with us. Yeah? But my name. Something like going on there.

We have our natural biases. We have our natural insecurities and fears. So we hear messages like that too.

[34 : 43] What do we do when we hear messages like that? Even from the followers of Jesus. Who may be really true followers of Jesus, but just partially blind.

Right? And maybe weep in some of those voices. Oh. Oh. What does this man do?

Is he discouraged by this? Verse 48. Then he rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But what? He cried out, All the more!

All the more! He intensifies his cry. He overcomes the barrier. His desperation is a doorway to faith.

And what is it that causes him to pray through? Not just push through. He's praying. He's calling for Jesus. He's praying through this barrier. Why would he do that?

[35 : 48] Well, one, he's desperate, yes. But he believes something about Jesus. He believes something about Jesus. This man reminds me of the Canaanite woman.

Remember her? Way up in Syrophenicia area. Remember her daughter was demonized. And she comes to Jesus, Have mercy on me.

Have mercy on me. And remember Jesus was silent. It kind of looked like he ignored her. And then the disciples try to, you know, get him. Tell her to go away. She's annoying. So the church is real helpful in that incident again.

And then Jesus is rude. And then he calls her a dog. Remember? Oh, children's bread is not for the dogs. But we know he was actually doing something else.

Because that little term dog brought her. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh. Even the dogs get the crumbs under the table. And remember what Jesus said about her? Great faith. Great faith. Great faith.

[36 : 46] Great faith. Long faith. Goes through the barriers. Goes through the obstacles. Doesn't listen to even the well-meaning church.

Disciples who don't quite have it all together yet. And they never will, by the way. He reminds me of her.

And then, this is great. Verse 49. This man screams out for the second time, Son of David, have mercy on me.

And Jesus, what? Stopped. Stopped. He's walking. Son of David, have mercy.

Out of all that, he heard that. Here is the son of David, who allows the cry of a powerless man to stop him in his tracks.

[37 : 53] And call him. So Jesus calls him. And suddenly, this crowd that was so discouraging to the man now becomes, ooh, he's calling you. Be cheer up.

You know, what a flippant, fickle crowd. They encourage him. And so when he hears that, what does he do? Verse 50. Throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.

I don't know about you, but I see a picture of faith in that. It's like there's some hope. And the hope enthuses him.

I mean, that's an eyewitness account of somebody. Peter's remembering this vividly. Throwing off his cloak. Leaping up. He could have just said, you know, he stood up and came.

But he threw off his cloak and he leaped up and came to Jesus. That's faith. And then Jesus says, what do you want from me?

[38 : 50] The same question he asked of James and John. What do you want me to do for you? He asked of this man, what do you want me to do for you? By the way, here's an application.

What if Jesus asked you that? What do you want me to do for you? It's a testing question. Because we've seen in one instance, he will not answer that question for James and John.

He will not give them what they want. And then for the blind man, he will. Interesting. What do you want Jesus to do for you?

Where's your heart? That should both encourage and caution you. So he asked to see.

He believes Jesus is able to transform him. And oh, Mark, he makes a big deal of this miracle. Doesn't he need to, he just draws it out in all bunch of words and pictures, right?

[39 : 56] How Jesus calls the crowd and makes it a big event. And everybody's in awe, right? Isn't that how Mark recorded it? No? It's pretty simple, isn't it? Jesus spoke.

And Mark says, immediately. He's healed. What did he speak? He said, go your way. Your faith has saved you, has delivered you, has rescued you, has brought you into safety.

The immediate effect of the power of Jesus' word. I want to remind you that every miracle that Jesus did was also a sign.

It showed the significance. The Gospel of John teaches that. He calls the miracles of the signs. They signify something.

They point to something greater than what he has just done. What he did was real. He does give the sight to the blind. He does give hearing to the deaf.

- [41 : 03] He does cleanse the leper. He does raise the dead. He does set free the captives of the enemy. But all that does is point to what he can do in a bigger, eternal way.
- It's a picture of the condition of lost people. We, in ourselves, are blind. And are deaf. And are lepers.
- And are lame. And as Paul says in Ephesians 2, actually we're dead. We're dead men walking. We don't even know how bad we are until God turns on the light.
- Gives us eyes to see. Gives us ears to hear. And then we embrace it. Right? So we see the same truth in Paul's testimony about his conversion.
- Remember how Paul was converted? Remember he's on his road to Damascus. He's on his way to persecute the Christians. This scandalous cult. This heresy. He's going to squash it.
- [42 : 07] Grab men and women by their hair and drag them. Literally, drag them. Later Paul talks about how he relished in that. He's later embarrassed by how he enjoyed it.
- But on that road, remember what happened? Light came on. And Paul, who was not seeking Jesus whatsoever, suddenly light comes on, goes blind.
- Oh, another picture. Blindness. And Paul responds immediately, Who are you? And it was someone that Paul did not expect it to be.
- We read of it here in Acts 26, 15. I said, Who are you, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus. Uh-oh. Whom you are persecuting.
- Uh-oh. But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and a witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you to do what?
- [43 : 24] Watch this. Here's your mission, Paul. I'm sending you to open their eyes. What happens if he opens their eyes?
- I'm sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.
- Paul goes on with his testimony. He's answering King Agrippa about his journey. He says, Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing, literally practicing, deeds in keeping with their repentance.
- Interesting, Paul uses these same words. He himself struck blind because he could not see. And in the blindness revealed, converted, changed, transformed, and then sent with this powerful word to declare that they should repent and turn to God.
- And that declaration of who Jesus is brings light. How does it do that? It's such a foolish message.
- [45 : 07] In fact, a lot of people in the world can tell you what the gospel is. Oh yeah, it's about Jesus dying on a cross and forgives all our sins and keeps you from hell. They can usually tell you something of that light.
- But when God is in the messenger and when he decides that time is right, that word is spoken and it has power to open eyes.
- We call it a miracle. A work of God. There's not a, here's how you get them converted. Here's how you get them converted.
- Speak the gospel. Just do that as faithfully as you can. As honestly as you can. As gently as you can. And as boldly.

It opens eyes so that they may turn. See, there's a step here that God says their eyes must be opened and then they'll be able to turn.

[46 : 14] Then they'll be able to repent. Then they'll be able to turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. But that can't happen until their eyes are opened.

God must work first. God must work first. And then the great blessing they receive forgiveness. But all that comes after the eyes are opened.

And that note that Paul added at the end of his testimony there that they should repent and turn to God performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.

Interesting. Is this all about works? No. No, but it's about the proof that your faith was real. That's the same message that John the Baptist is.

You know, show some works with your repentance. Show me your repentance. That's what James says, right? Show me your faith. If your faith doesn't do anything, if it doesn't work, it's not real faith.

[47 : 17] That's dead. That's just in your head. Let me see it in your hands and your heart and your feet. Not about earning, not about meriting, but about real transformation.

So, look at verse 52. The last thing I want you to notice. The fifth mark. Jesus says, go your way.

Your faith has made you well and immediately he recovered his sight and followed. Jesus on the way, which has become, for Mark, a technical term for discipleship, for walking with Jesus in the way of the cross.

He becomes a disciple. He becomes a follower. That's why we know his name, because he became a follower. True saving faith, see, lasts.

It abides. It trusts. It relies. It follows. It endures. When it falls, it recovers. It's not perfect. But it keeps beating.

[48 : 31] Keeps getting back up. Keeps returning. Keeps crying out. So, simple question for you. It's loaded, but simple. Do you have faith like that?

Have you heard about Jesus and come to believe? Have you then cried out to him with urgency for mercy?

Have you? Have you persisted through the barriers? See, that's where true faith starts to show itself. It's not the short-lived, like the seed on the rocks or the seed among the thorns that once the persecution comes, it's not, okay, I'm done.

But the belief overcomes the barrier. Even when God's people don't display the grace they're called to display, this faith overcomes that too, because it sees Jesus on the other side.

Yeah. It's that kind of desperate, not pretty-looking faith. It has a bold hope that once God begins to open the door, it's boldly going through that door.

[49 : 49] And it endures. It follows. Lives for Him because it's about Him. May we all have faith. Like Bartimaeus.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You for this record of Your encounter with this blind beggar who, though he could not see, was perceptive and understanding and believed.

call us like that. Help us to be like that. Even if we've been saved and walking with You for years, remind us again how we cry out to You.

That we get desperate for You. We get hungry for You. So that, Lord, our faith might endure, overcome, come, honor You.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. NING