

No one ever had to doubt that Bartimaeus had a hard life. In St. Mark's Gospel, we find him at the side of the road outside the city of Jericho, forced to beg for a living. We don't know how long Bartimaeus was blind. It may have been since birth or perhaps his blindness was due to an accident. But no matter when it happened, it seemed that nothing could change the fact that Bartimaeus was blind and would probably be that way for the rest of his life.

Then Bartimaeus meets Jesus. At first, he probably did not realize how significant this day was going to be for him. Out of faith, out of hope, he cried out to Jesus: "Jesus, son of David, have pity of me." Those who were around him at the side of the road tried to keep him quiet. But Bartimaeus only shouted louder: "Son of David, have pity on me." His shouting catches the attention of Jesus. No longer would Bartimaeus be ignored like so many other times in his life. He has a once in a lifetime opportunity to tell Jesus what he wants: that he wants to see. Jesus confirms this man's faith and restores his sight. No longer blind, his life forever changed, Bartimaeus begins to follow Jesus.

You may have noticed that every time after Jesus heals someone, we never hear a follow-up. We never hear the story a year or two down the road to see what happened to the person after they were healed. We can only guess or surmise what happened. But perhaps we don't need to know the ending, we don't need to know how things turned out because we already know that this person's life has been forever changed.

The blindness of life sometimes makes us feel just like Bartimaeus. Our blindness may not be physical, yet it may feel just as real. We may feel smothered, that life is closing in on us. Problems at work, problems at school, problems at home. These problems only cause us to have

one focus and to have a very narrow vision. This is the blindness that prevents us from moving forward. This is the blindness that causes us so much pain. We can also see how the world can certainly be blind to the message of the Gospel. We saw that on the news this week in Haiti as 17 Christian missionaries were kidnapped, and ransom demanded. It's ironic that this happened in the week where the Church celebrates World Mission Sunday. Even though these people were not Catholic missionaries, these Christian Missionaries, some even from Michigan, were seeking to carry with them the message of the Good News. But the world turned it into fear and greed and a desire for money. The kidnappers turned a blind eye to the message of the Gospel.

Like Bartimaeus, we may find that there really is only one place to go where our blindness will be lifted. Jesus is that place. Our faith, our hope, our commitment to never give up will be what helps to lift the darkness from our lives and will allow us to see once again. Like Bartimaeus, we must not be afraid to cry out to Jesus in faith: "Son of David, have pity on me."

Our life too can be forever changed. Our faith can lead us to a new way of life, one that will lift the blindness from our eyes and our hearts. It can open us up to see things that need to be one in the world around us. No matter what happens, have courage, believe, and trust in the Lord. "Go your way, your faith has saved you."