

SUNDAY OCTOBER 24<sup>TH</sup>

This week we explore seeing and being seen.

## JESUS HEALS BLIND BARTIMÆUS



GOSPEL READING: MARK 10: 46 – 52

Lord, we thank you for the gift of sight, but more than that, we thank you that one day we will see you in heaven. Amen.

There is a story in the Bible of a man named Bartimaeus. He had never seen the beauty of the world around him because Bartimaeus was blind. One day as he sat begging beside the road, he heard the sound of a large crowd of people coming his way. He asked someone what was happening and they told him that Jesus was passing by. Bartimaeus had heard of Jesus and about how he had healed many who were blind. He began to call out to Jesus. Others in the crowd tried to get Bartimaeus to be quiet, but he would not be silent. Jesus heard the voice of Bartimaeus calling out to him and he stopped and asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Teacher, I want to see!" said Bartimaeus. "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." The Bible tells us that immediately, Bartimaeus received his sight.

That is a wonderful story, isn't it? Unfortunately, stories about the blind don't always end that way. There are many blind people who want to see, and yet they are never healed. Fanny Crosby was one of those people.

When Fanny was only six weeks old, she was left blind by an illness. Even though she was blind for the rest of her life, Fanny was never bitter or complaining. Instead she made the most of her life by using the other gifts that God had given her. She had a wonderful gift for writing poetry and during her lifetime, she wrote over 8000 poems. Some of her poems were set to music and many of them are still in our hymnals today.

One day a well-meaning priest said to Fanny, "I think it is a great pity that the Master did not give you sight when He showered so many other gifts upon you."

"Oh no!" Fanny replied. "If I could have only one request, it would be to be born blind."

"Why?" asked the surprised priest.

"Because," answered Fanny, "when I get to heaven, the first face that these blind eyes will ever see is the face of Jesus, my Saviour."

Some, like Bartimaeus, receive the gift of sight. Some, like Fanny Crosby, are blind their entire life. One thing is certain, when we get to heaven, we will all see Jesus.

Lord, we thank you for the gift of sight, but more than that, we thank you that one day we will see you in heaven. Amen.

## Talk together

- Have you ever experienced something that you did not see clearly or did not understand?
- How might Bartimaeus have felt when he was seen by Jesus?
- What might you want to see more clearly about Jesus?

## Mark 10.46-52

Early in this section of Mark's Gospel, there is a story of the healing of a blind man (8.22-26), immediately before Peter's confession in response to Jesus' question: 'Who do you say I am?' Now, as the section draws to a close, we have a second story about the healing of a blind man. But in this one, the man has a name. And Bartimaeus is able to name Jesus and identify him as 'the Son of David' (v.47). Of course, at this point, Bartimaeus can't see who is passing. He knows because he is told, because he hears others – but he goes further. He sees something that the rest of the crowd doesn't notice. Note the crowd's response to Bartimaeus (v.48). After all, he's only a beggar so he doesn't count! But Jesus does stop, and he does speak to Bartimaeus. But what are we to make of his question to him (v.51)? Is this question deeper than it might appear to be? Is it about what Bartimaeus really wants? In verse 52, faith is what reaches out. It is confidence that Jesus holds the key and that he can and will act. It is about hope and expectations that are fulfilled. The section begins and ends with blindness, but it is all about discipleship too (8.31-38). We have repeatedly seen Jesus' disciples misunderstand or get discipleship wrong. But Bartimaeus, the outsider, ends the section by getting it right, and he follows Jesus along the road to Jerusalem, to David's city.

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## Activities

### For very young children

#### Play dough faces

##### Play and wonder at being seen by Jesus

Provide play dough and circles of card. Ask the children to make different faces of emotions/scenes in the story with the play dough, and then to make a face that looks like them on the card, as you remember that Jesus sees each of us.

#### Paint a person

##### Create a hidden image

Help the children to draw a person using a white candle to mark their paper. Provide bowls of watery paint and ask the children to paint over their picture. What can they see?

## FOR CHILDREN

### Hot seating - Imagine what people saw that day

- Invite the children to play the parts of different characters from the crowd. Ask them to imagine some of them were passers-by and had seen what was going on, and some of them may not have seen, but have heard about it later on.
- Ask them, one at a time, to come and sit in a chair and encourage the others to ask questions about what they saw or didn't see – and what they thought about it. Ensure you include what would it have been like for someone who couldn't see what was going on.
- Afterwards, discuss what the general feeling might have been: Did people believe what they saw? Did they see Bartimaeus in a new way? Did it help them to see there was something special about Jesus?

### Make the two faces of Bartimaeus

#### Illustrate how Bartimaeus felt before and after his healing

**You will need:** paper plates, pens/pencils.

- Give the children a paper plate, and ask them to draw Bartimaeus before he was healed, on one side of the plate.
- Then ask them to draw Bartimaeus after Jesus had healed him, on the other side.
- Talk about what life was like for Bartimaeus when he was blind: How would life have been different for him once he was healed? What did he learn about Jesus?

#### For older children - Read all about it

### Consider the story from a new perspective

**You will need:** paper and pens.

- Hand out paper and pens, and ask the young people to each write their own eyewitness account or news article about what happened.
- Ask everyone to think about who they identify with most from the passage. and write from their perspective, e.g. Bartimaeus, a bystander, Jesus, someone in the crowd who couldn't see.
- Gather together and share what they've written and why. Ask: How did doing this impact your understanding of today's passage?

#### Talk together

- Have you ever experienced something that you did not see clearly or did not understand?
- How might Bartimaeus have felt when he was seen by Jesus?
- What might you want to see more clearly about Jesus?

#### Talk to God: Now I see

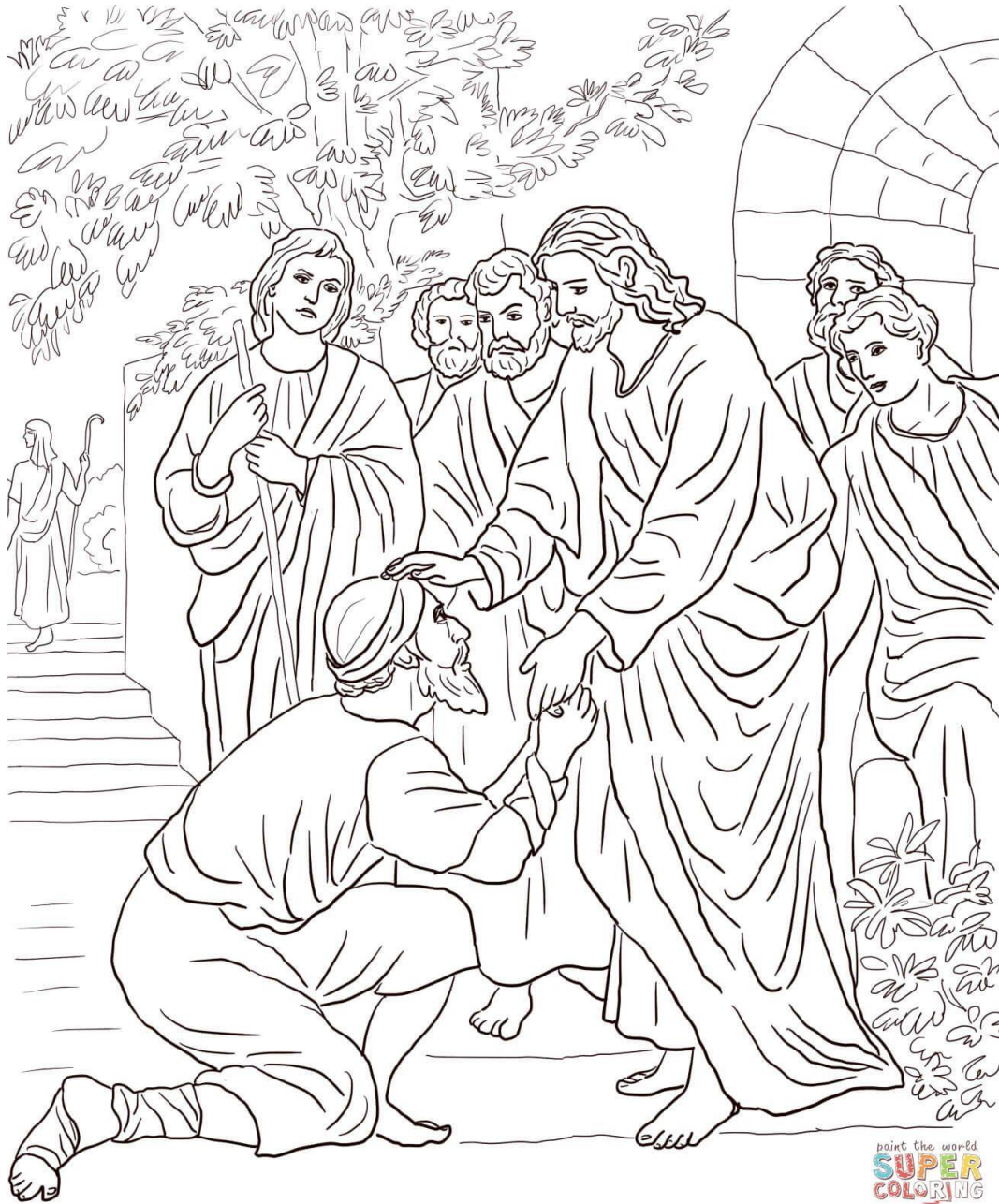
### Pray about seeing and not seeing

**You will need:** glasses outline [template](#) (see last page) printed on card, one per child, scissors, pens.

- Give out the glasses templates and invite the children to cut out the shape.
- Invite them to write, 'I was blind' on one side of the glasses and, 'Now I see' on the other side.
- Talk about the things that we don't 'see' or understand well, and how Jesus can help us grow in faith and 'see' things differently.
- Ask the children to wear the glasses and pray about the things that we don't see clearly; then to lift the glasses up and thank God for the ways faith helps us to see things clearly.
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## Colour this picture



Jesus heard the voice of Bartimaeus calling out to him and he stopped and asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Teacher, I want to see!" said Bartimaeus. "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." The Bible tells us that immediately, Bartimaeus received his sight.

Lord, we thank you for the gift of sight, but more than that, we thank you that one day we will see you in heaven. Amen.

# Blind Bartimaeus



"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." Mark 10:51 (NIV)

Words are taken from Mark 10:46-52 (NIV).

C I F J L E D I S C I P L E S  
Z R S O A X A X C X U P K F B  
K R S G L Z C I T Y Z H C L A  
D A I Q I L R U Q I U E H G R  
J B G W R F O O W U L A E X T  
S B H X A E D W A I I L E Y I  
B I T Y U C S I E D C E R N M  
F A I T H U O Y L D S D T R A  
L F E F S P C B Q Y N I O C E  
P T D E E R V M E H I H D Q U  
T T J K E E J V D G C S B E S  
D P M M V P T W B I G S N R R  
Y B L I N D O Y R H L I V T T  
S H O U T R S E H T Y W N A I  
B J J C C L J J U M P E D G E

Jericho	city	begging	cheer	faith
Jesus	blind	shout	jumped	healed
disciples	Bartimaeus	mercy	feet	sight
crowd	roadside	quiet	Rabbi	followed

## Blind faith

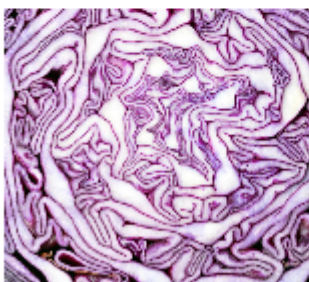
**Mark 10.46-52**

On his journey south to Jerusalem, Jesus is leaving Jericho when he hears his name called by a blind beggar, Bartimaeus. While some try to keep the man quiet, Jesus responds to the plea of Bartimaeus and calls him over. When his sight is miraculously restored, he follows Jesus.

Now read **Mark 10.46-52** see p.2 for text.

### A note on the passage

Bartimaeus appears to have heard of Jesus, and to have known something of his ministry, so he calls out to Jesus for mercy. No wonder he throws aside his cloak and puts aside the trappings of a beggar to go forwards in hope. He asks for just one thing, but that will change his life in every way. What would you ask of Jesus?



**Ask yourself:** What do you see – what is it? Can you think of a time when faith has helped you to see something differently?

## WORDS

Play a word game by adding another word in front of or after 'BLIND' e.g. blind faith, window blind. Are some of the results positive and others negative in their meaning? How might this change your understanding of 'blind' when applied to 'faith'? It might be fun to use Scrabble™ letters to help you to make your words.



It may seem a little surprising that Jesus asks Bartimaeus what he wants. When King Solomon had asked God for wisdom, he was also given wealth and long life, even though those had not been at the top of his list. The one change which would most affect our life will be different for each of us. In a quiet time each day, look back at a point in your life when you have had to make a decision, in faith. Make a note and, at the end of the week, look at those times as a map of your faith journey. If you can't identify such moments, read some chapters of the Acts of the Apostles to see how others acted in faith and how they were changed.

## LISTEN

When Bartimaeus shouted out, some ordered him to be quiet. Why did they try to silence him? Were they concerned for him or for Jesus? Were they worried that Jesus couldn't help him – or maybe that he could? When Jesus heard Bartimaeus, he called him over and listened to him. Despite the worldwide network of communication which we enjoy today, there are still some whose voice is not heard. Find out about the work of the Barnabas Fund which supports Christians who are persecuted for their faith and forbidden to speak out.

## Plant

If you have ever enjoyed a walk in woodland, you will appreciate the special atmosphere of ancient trees. They also provide natural habitats and improve air quality. The 'Queen's Green Canopy' is a tree planting initiative to mark her Platinum Jubilee in 2022. Everyone in the UK is invited to plant trees from this month through to the end of 2022. Have faith in the future that you can't yet see, by helping to create new ancient forests. Take part now! Either pop down to your local Garden Centre or request a free tree pack for your school or community from the Woodland Trust. [woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://woodlandtrust.org.uk).

## Believe



The phrase 'blind faith' is often used as an insult, yet it may be something we all practice every day. Take a tour round your home, noticing what you take for granted. Press a light switch; turn on a tap. Look outside at anything which is growing, or dying back in its natural cycle. You have faith that things happen, without any input from yourself. What was Bartimaeus expecting when he asked Jesus to have mercy on him? What do you have the faith to ask for?



