

Bible – Mark 10.46-52

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means 'son of Timaeus'), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'

Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'

Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.'

So they called to the blind man, 'Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you.' Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

'What do you want me to do for you?' Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, 'Rabbi, I want to see.'

'Go,' said Jesus, 'your faith has healed you.' Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Amazing Grace

There is a famous song called 'Amazing Grace'. The start of the song says:

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.

The song is about a transformation that God does. He took someone who was a mess and a waste and gave them a sweet sound and song to sing. This person was spiritually blind but now they have been freed and can see spiritually. It is a song of change and of being set free.

Bartimaeus

Bart had a similar story to the word of Amazing Grace, except he was physically blind but could then physically see! God is still doing this and setting people free spiritually all over the world today.

Bart was living a life of sitting by the road side and begging. His life wasn't great and wasn't everything that it could have been. But his life was about to radically change and it was one of those 'suddenly' moments that God does.

For him, the 'suddenly moment' was when he realised that it was Jesus coming right past. But he could have let Jesus walk right past and missed his moment. Sometimes people miss things because they don't step out or they don't put themselves forward for an opportunity. Don't be like that. Be like Bart – in the words of Bart Simpson, "do the Bartman"

Link to 'Do The Bartman' song – <https://youtu.be/BdLNA16FDWs>

Back on topic, Bart did something – he shouted to attract the attention of Jesus. He even did this when people told him to shut up. What kind of people were they?! There was a blind man there who was shouting to Jesus and wanted to be healed and people were telling the guy to shut up. They obviously weren't thinking about him! Don't be that kind of person in life. Be someone who encourages, helps, supports other people – don't be a negative numpty!

And you know what? Jesus heard Bart. He heard his shouts above the crowd and made time to stop for him. Jesus hears you, he hears your prayers, knows your dreams and sees your tears and he is always there to help – just as he did for Bart. Jesus stopped and spoke personally to Bart (he does the same for you too). He asked Bart what he wanted.

Was this strange? No. I have a friend who is in a wheelchair and people often want to pray for his healing. This is great but he also has other things he'd like people to pray for! Jesus was so good to Bart that he asked him what he wanted – and then when Bart told him, Jesus answered his prayer!

What is quite funny is that when Jesus stopped and called for Bart, the people who'd been telling him to shut up then started encouraging him! Don't put your trust in people who are fickle and change all the time – put your trust in Jesus who never changes who he is!

Bart threw down his cloak and ran to Jesus. Do you know what this shows? This shows real faith real trust, real passion and determination. As a Christian, you need all these things at times! Bart got up from the place where he was, left everything behind and ran towards Jesus. Now that is what faith is!

Bart told Jesus, 'Teacher, I want to see.' And immediately Jesus healed him, saying 'your faith has healed you.' How awesome is that! God wants to do the same for you today – so maybe ask God if there's anything you need to do to receive a healing, or do anything to pray for someone else to be healed or ask God how you can use your faith to see God-things happen!.

But there was one more thing – Bart then followed Jesus. Mark 16 tells us that we should go out and preach the good news about Jesus and that God will back up his word (the good news) with signs and wonders (amazing God-things and miracles to prove God is who he says he is).

Someone said that the church is the only organisation that exists for the benefit of the people who aren't members. The things that we do and say should point people to Jesus – people who don't know him and people who do. Because of what Jesus did, Bart decided to follow Jesus. The same is true today – because of the things that God uses us to do and say and pray, people will come to know Jesus.

The hymn writer of Amazing Grace, John Newton testified about how God changed his life. The testimony of Bartimaeus would be of how Jesus healed him and so he followed Jesus. And as we do the things that Jesus did, we too can see our lives change and see people around us have a God-story of how they were once lost but now they are found; of how they were blind but now they can see!

John 14.12-14 – Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

End

So what is God calling you to do today? How can you show your faith and see amazing God-stories happen, like Bart? The famous preacher, Reinhard Bonnke said that faith is always an action. He said that if you want to go on a car journey, you don't follow a parked car!

So, be open to what God says to you today. God is the same in his character but he is always doing new things. Maybe this is the time for your 'suddenly', or for someone else... Maybe this is the time for the new day!

And remember, God will never tell you to do anything that is against the principles and truths in the Bible or against his character – but he may ask you to do something that isn't exactly what people have done before!