

Unit I. God's People Offer Praise  
**Celebrating Expectantly**

**DEVOTIONAL READING:** James 5:13-18

**BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES:** Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43

**PRINT PASSAGE:** Mark 10:46-52

## KEY VERSE

Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. (Mark 10:51, KJV)

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“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)

## Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Compare and contrast spiritual and physical blindness.
- Appreciate how God is attentive and responds to our needs.
- Practice reaching out to those who are marginalized by society

## \*Key Terms

**Cry out (verse 47)**—Greek: *krazō* (kraz'-zo): to scream; to cry aloud; shriek; “shout” (NIV).

**Disciples (verse 46)**—Greek: *mathétēs* (math-ay-tes'): learners; pupils.

**Mercy (verse 47)**—Greek: *eleeō* (el-eh-eh'-o): to have pity or mercy on; to show mercy.

**Rebuked (verse 48)**—Greek: *epitimaō* (ep-ee-tee-mah'-o): honored; meted out due measure; hence, censured; admonished; warned; “charged” (KJV).

**Rise up (verse 49)**—Greek: *egeirō* (eg-i'-ro): to waken; to raise up; “rise” (KJV); “on your feet” (NIV).

**Silent (verse 48)**—Greek: *siōpaō* (see-o-pah'-o): to be silent, either voluntarily or involuntarily; “hold . . . peace” (KJV); “quiet” (NIV)

\*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)



## The Biblical Context

While the healing story of the blind man is recorded in all three Gospels, only Mark identifies Bartimaeus by name. Luke simply calls him “a blind man” (see Luke 18:35-43), and Matthew mentions that there was another blind man begging with him (see Matthew 20:29-34). Luke’s version of this healing account recounts that the crowd that had attempted to restrain the blind man actually praised God when Jesus restored his sight (see Luke 18:43). People who were once marginalized by society became powerful witnesses for Jesus after a personal encounter with Him (see Mark 1:45; 5:20; John 4:39-42). On many occasions, Jesus performed the miracle of restoring sight to the blind (see Matthew 12:22; 15:30; Mark 8:22-26; John 9). In that day, many regarded physical blindness as a symbol or sign of divine disfavor or spiritual blindness (compare John 9:39-41). Jesus’ healing Bartimaeus of physical blindness may have foreshadowed the progressive healing of spiritual blindness in Jesus’ disciples, in every generation.

## Introduction

Can you recall the carefree, happy days of childhood, specifically, the countdown to your birthday? Reminisce on the joy that filled your heart in anticipation of your special day. Maybe you had a special birthday wishlist, hugs and laughter from friends and family, or a festive, fun-filled celebration. Most children are filled with expectation as their birthday draws near, if for no other reason than that they will turn another year older. Before the day arrives, many children have already envisioned their party participants, imagined a birthday cake, and sensed the joy of playing games and opening gifts. Families celebrate birthdays in different ways—but nearly without fail, every child looks forward to celebrating his or her birthday. A hopeful sense of expectancy lifts our spirits and magnifies the joy of the actual event.

### ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

## A Sound and a Shout (Mark 10:46-48)

### KJV

**46** And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his *disciples* and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.

**47** And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth,

he began to *cry out*, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have *mercy* on me.

**48** And many *charged* him that he should *hold his peace*: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

### NIV

**46** 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.

**47** When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to *shout*, “Jesus, Son of David, have *mercy* on me!”

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

Jesus and His disciples, along with a crowd of followers, were travelling to Jerusalem (verse 46a). While Jesus made His way to a date with destiny, many were excited by the news of His miracles. Large crowds gathered wherever He went, hoping to be blessed by Jesus' ministry. As Jesus and His entourage departed from Jericho (fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem), a roadside beggar spoke up to gain Jesus' attention (verse 46). The text indicates that the man was known as "blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus" (verse 46). Note that he was referred to, first, by his condition, then by his given name. Imagine being publicly known to everyone by your greatest weakness and left to scratch out a living from the pity of others. As Bartimaeus carried on his normal routine, he heard a sound of an approaching crowd. He learned that Jesus of Nazareth was about to pass by (verse 47). Knowing that Jesus was near, Bartimaeus lifted up his voice, shouting with a hearty cry, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (verse 47, NIV). In just a few words, Bartimaeus calls for the "Master, the Messiah, and mercy." Amid Bartimaeus's desperate cries for help, those around him firmly told him to shut up (verse 48). When others tried to silence Bartimaeus's shouts for the Savior, he responded by calling even louder (verse 48). With a loud voice, Bartimaeus confessed his belief that Jesus was the promised Messiah, crying out "Son of David, have mercy," even as those with 20/20 vision had not yet identified Jesus so accurately.

### **Q WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

**How can the church maintain a worship atmosphere that does not hinder people from worshipping God freely?**

### **A Word and a Wonder (Mark 10:49-52)**

#### **KJV**

**49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.**

**50 And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.**

**51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.**

**52 And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.**

#### **NIV**

**49 Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you."**

**50 Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.**

**51 “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”**

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

As Jesus was passing by, Bartimaeus’s cries for mercy arrested His attention, causing Him to stand still (**verse 49a**). Do not miss the fact that Jesus stopped dead in His tracks when He heard Bartimaeus’s desperate plea. In that moment, the omnipotent Son of God put every other purpose on pause to engage a begging, blind man on the side of the road. Jesus called Bartimaeus to Him (**verse 49b**). Jesus instructed those who were nearby (very likely the same persons who had rebuked and attempted to silence the blind man) to bring Bartimaeus to Him. Seeing Jesus’ warm response, they began to encourage Bartimaeus to be of “good comfort” or “cheer up”—for Jesus was calling him (**verse 49c**). Filled with excitement, Bartimaeus jumped to his feet, throwing his cloak aside (**verse 50**). Beggars collected their alms in their cloaks. Expecting to be healed, Bartimaeus put the cloak away, for he would not be begging anymore! When Bartimaeus came near, Jesus asked one simple question: *How might I help you?* (**verse 51a**). Jesus knew the man was blind, but He allowed him the dignity of speaking for himself. Blindness had left Bartimaeus lonely and helpless, but trusting that Jesus could change his life, the man quickly stated his desire to see (**verse 51b**). Bartimaeus had apparently been able to see at some point (see NASB/NRSV), but the text does not indicate how long he was blind.

In addition to his public affirmation of Jesus as the Messiah, Bartimaeus also used a title of high respect. The word translated “Lord” (KJV) and “Rabbi” (NIV) (**verse 51**) is the Hebrew word *Rabbouni*, which carries a stronger meaning of masterful respect for a rabbi. Upon hearing Bartimaeus, Jesus spoke a word that allowed him to experience a wonder. Jesus told him, “Go,” for his faith had made him whole (**verse 52a**). The power of the healing was activated by his faith in Jesus as Lord, his acknowledgment of his condition, and his confidence that Jesus could heal him. Bartimaeus was healed immediately and continued with the crowd, following Jesus (**verse 52b**). Despite his condition, Bartimaeus was a true believer who was unmoved by others’ opinions of his urgent appeal to Jesus for help. The same passion that embarrassed others caused Jesus to stop and heal the man. Next to the healing of the soldier’s ear in the Garden of Gethsemane (see Luke 22:50-51), the encounter with Bartimaeus is the last healing miracle in the Gospels.

## **Q WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

**How can we display our faith to the world?**

## **A Closing Thought**

Like Bartimaeus, you have a reason to rejoice. Pause and look back over your life, reflecting on the many things God has done for you. Will you keep silent or will you rejoice and show gratitude? If Bartimaeus rejoiced because his sight was restored, you should rejoice even more

that yours was never lost. Bartimaeus also teaches us to celebrate the Lord, even before the miracle we asked for unfolds.

## Your Life

This week, reflect on God's love and thank Him for blessings to come.

## Your World!

This week, share your love of Jesus with someone. Stir the person's faith by sharing something meaningful that the Lord has done for you.

## Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, grant us peace through the many ups and downs of life. Give us enough humility and compassion that we will never look down on others. May we walk daily in a spirit of joyful celebration for life and love in the Lord Jesus Christ. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

While reading the Background Scripture, consider this thought: "How can we celebrate in unity in our home, church, and community?"

## Home Daily Bible Readings

<b>MONDAY, September 20</b>	"A Priestly Kingdom, a Holy Nation"	(Exodus 19:1-8)
<b>TUESDAY, September 21</b>	"Worship God Alone"	(Exodus 20:1-6)
<b>WEDNESDAY, September 22</b>	"When Kindred Live in Unity"	(Psalms 133-134)
<b>THURSDAY, September 23</b>	"Praise in the Heavenly Community"	(Revelation 4)
<b>FRIDAY, September 24</b>	"The Day of Pentecost"	(Acts 2:1-12)
<b>SATURDAY, September 25</b>	"Jesus Is Lord and Messiah"	(Acts 2:22-36)
<b>SUNDAY, September 26</b>	"A Community of Praise"	(Acts 2:37-47)

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