

- I used to wonder when I would read in the Gospel about Jesus healing someone and he would say something like, “Your faith has saved you”. I didn’t get the jump from being healed to being saved.
- However, I have since learned in the Ancient Jewish world view disease and illness were a sign of sin and punishment from God. A person who was disabled in some way was made that way because he was guilty of some sin. Physical healing was a sign of being restored back into God’s grace. Healing really was being saved.
- But today’s Gospel is about more than one man being saved and thus healed.
- We are told the person ^{healed} saved is Bartimaeus, a blind man and a beggar. As such, he would be an outcast.
- Yet, it is here at the lowly margins of society that faith is found. By calling out to Jesus for pity, Bartimaeus demonstrates his faith. And he calls Jesus the son of David; a title reserved for the messiah.
- Mark is saying the lowly outcast blind beggar not only has greater faith than most in his society, but in recognizing Jesus as the messiah, he also has greater vision.
- He does want his sight restored, but he is asking for so much more.
- In today’s Gospel, Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem to fulfill the Father’s will and to embrace His own suffering and passion. The

miracles He performs along the way are a sign that the Kingdom of God is at hand.

- When Bartimaeus is healed, he immediately follows Jesus.

Meaning, he is following Jesus to His passion and death. By following Jesus, Bartimaeus ^{demonstrates that he} gets it, he understands. That is what Jesus means by your faith has saved you. He tells Bartimaeus to go on his way. And what is the way Bartimaeus takes? He immediately follows Jesus. Jesus is the way for Bartimaeus. That is salvation.

- When he tells Jesus he wants to see, he is really asking for spiritual insight; for the vision to see reality as it truly is. That is the request to which Jesus responds your faith has saved you.
- Here we are, over two thousand years later. Do we get it? As some of our Protestant brothers and sisters like to ask, are we saved? Are we willing to embrace the suffering of Christ? Do we pick up our crosses and follow Jesus into the ^{pain} ~~dirty~~ and blood of his passion?
- As with so much of the gospels, we are invited to insert ourselves into the story and take the place of the blind beggar. We are the ones who must be open enough to the gift of faith to ask not for something material, but for spiritual insight and vision. We are encouraged to understand that this is how we will see, salvation consists of not just accepting Jesus as the Savior, but also in

picking up our crosses and joining ^{Him} ~~Christ~~ in His passion and suffering.

- Christ's suffering is all around us. Are we blind like most people, ^{in our society} or do we see like Bartimaeus? In this mass we are about to celebrate the sacrifice of Jesus. But the importance of our celebration doesn't end at the altar. It goes out into the world. The passion and suffering of Christ is there, in the world. Do we cast off our cloaks, beseeching Jesus for sight? And upon receiving it, immediately follow Him?
- Have you been healed? Has your sight been restored? Do you ^{see and} understand? ~~Do you see?~~ Are you saved?