

FAITH TO BREAK THROUGH LIFE'S LIMITS, PART 1

REFLECT

We have all, at one time or another, felt limited by life. Some of these limits will have been external limits that we feel from others around us, Other limits will be internal limitations and barriers of our own making, whether it be our attitude or our thoughts. These things can hold us back from receiving everything that Christ has in store for us.

In spite of our personal limitations, it's important for us to put our faith in God's Word. Jesus said that whom the Son sets free is free indeed, by which He meant breaking through our limitations and restrictions, moving those obstacles that inhibit and impede us. Jesus has come so that we can get through those limitations and get beyond them.

An excellent example of one who broke through his life's limitations is Bartimaeus. Those around him belittled him, judging him by his physical limitations. But within his heart, great faith was burning.

Mark 10:46-52 NKJV

46 Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. 47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

48 Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

49 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."

50 And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

51 So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."

52 Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

Jesus acknowledges our restrictions and limitations, that there are many circumstances and issues that impede us and that we have frailties that stop us from moving beyond these things. But we are not left in a hopeless place because whilst acknowledging our limitations, Jesus said that what is impossible with man is possible with God.

- Bartimaeus received an amazing experience, one that changed his life for ever. To encourage the members of your Connect Group, can you recall a time when you faced what appeared to be an impossible situation, but when you called on

FAITH TO BREAK THROUGH LIFE'S LIMITS, PART 1

Jesus, your limitations were overcome in an unexpected way.

RESPOND

There are five dimensions of Bartimaeus's faith that we can learn from, as he broke through the limits that were binding his life and overcame the restrictions that were holding him back. Today, we will take a closer look at the first two of these, to help us understand how our faith can break through the restrictions and hindrances that stand in our way.

The first dimension is this: FAITH HAS A VOICE. Bartimaeus's life had come to a complete standstill until Jesus came on the scene. Bartimaeus was at the lower ebb of his life, not only blind but also a beggar. On top of this, there was great pressure on him to stay quiet, not break the normal routine, to break rank. People around him discouraged him, told him to remain quiet and not cause a disturbance. Bartimaeus had the option of staying quiet, but something was aroused within his heart as Jesus walked by, and he unashamedly cried out to Jesus.

- Can you recall a time when you just sensed that you needed to break rank, to break the normal routine in some way, when you sensed that gentle voice of the Holy Spirit tugging on the strings of your heart to say or do something unexpected? It may have been something small, or it may have been something very significant to you. What was the result?

Psalm 107:2 NKJV

2 Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy.

2 Corinthians 4:13 NKJV

13 And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak.

The second dimension is that FAITH OVERCOMES OPPOSITION.

The shock or surprise in the story of Bartimaeus is that the majority of people on that day were against him. They called on him not to cry out. They were cold towards Bartimaeus and his obvious need. But Bartimaeus's faith overcame this external opposition. The behaviour of Bartimaeus was offensive to those around him, and they opposed him and sternly rebuked him. But that which offended the crowd

FAITH TO BREAK THROUGH LIFE'S LIMITS, PART 1

pleased Jesus. He did not see a man behaving offensively – He saw faith.

RECEIVE

External opposition comes in many forms, and can be disheartening and difficult to cope with. But in Christ, as Bartimaeus experienced, we can receive the strength to overcome that opposition. Bartimaeus refused to enter into conversation with the crowd. He didn't try to pacify them or explain his need to them. Bartimaeus's faith locked him into Jesus – he knew that the presence of Jesus can change everything!

- Is there anybody within your Connect Group (or somebody known to you) who is struggling with opposition from people? Pray this promise of Jesus, this dimension of faith over those people.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Spend time this week reading the record of Bartimaeus's miracle in Mark chapter 10. Spend time meditating on it, considering the fact that not only does Faith have a Voice, but Faith also Overcomes Opposition. Reflect on Bartimaeus's actions, how he remained focused on calling on the name of Jesus in the midst of opposition and how he blocked out all those voices that were speaking contrary to the Word of God. Remember that it is not your conditions in life, but your decisions, your faith-filled decisions that determine your destiny. God is as faithful in the valley as He is on the mountain-top!