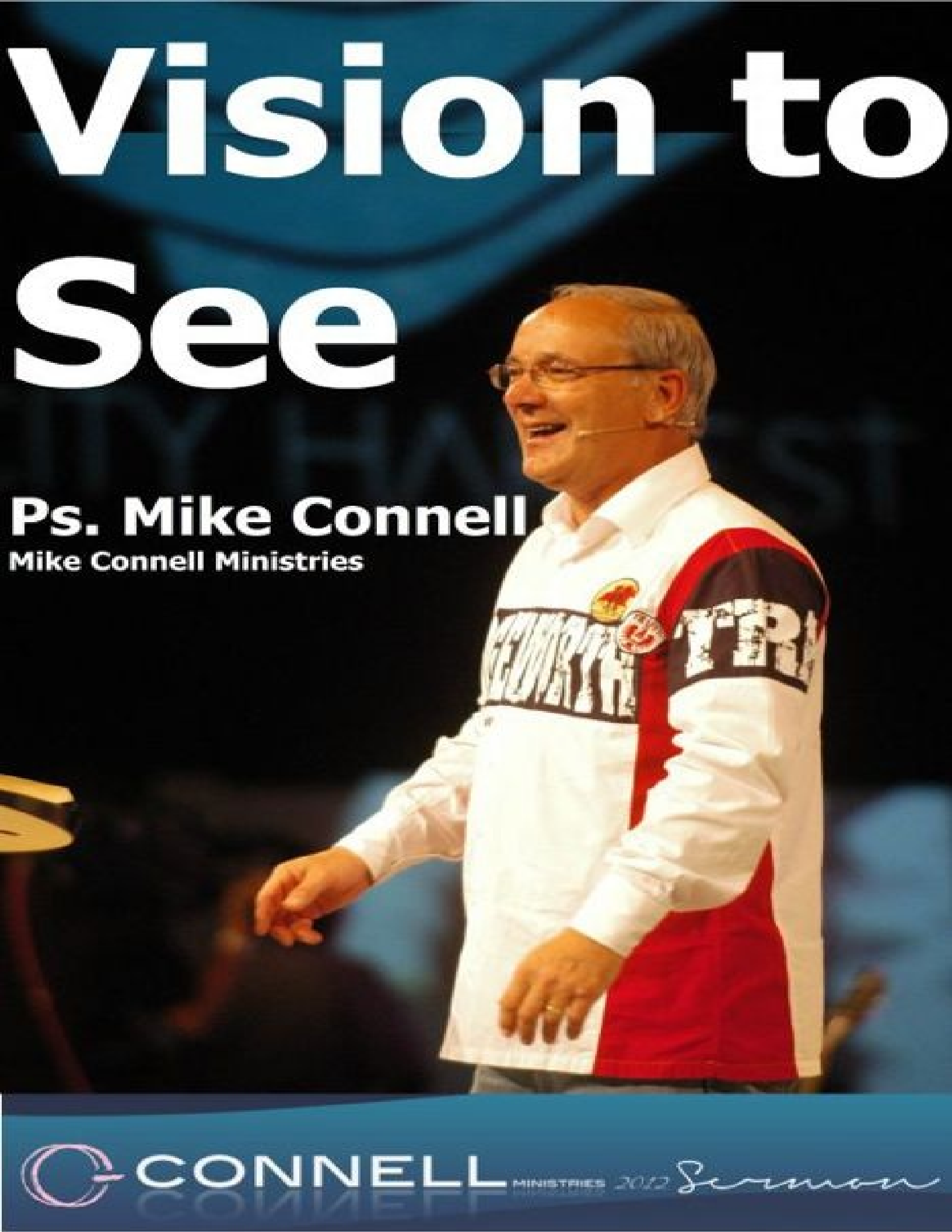
Vision to See



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CONNELL MINISTRIES 2012 Sermon

Vision to See

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Summary: *Proverbs 29 tells us that without a Vision, people are naked, or dwell naked, or dwell carelessly. One of the most important senses you've got in your life is vision, the ability to see. Imagine what it would be like to live in a world with darkness. This is the world that Jesus came into, a world with spiritual darkness, to help people. God wants you to have vision for your life, wants you to see*



I want you to open your Bible with me. We're going to look at Mark, Chapter 10, down to Gospel of Mark, Mark, Chapter 10. The Bible tells us in Proverbs, Chapter 29, it tells us that without a vision people are naked, or dwell naked, or dwell carelessly. One of the most important senses you've got in your life is vision, the ability to see. Imagine what it would be like to live in a world with darkness. This is the world that Jesus came into, a world with spiritual darkness, to help people. Can you imagine what it would be like if you were blind? The way your life would be affected, the way your life would be impacted? You'd live in a world of darkness. Think about that, constant darkness.

You would trip over things, constantly not knowing what you're tripping over but always you would walk with uncertainty because you never know whether you'll strike an obstacle or something, so instead of walking confidently you walk hesitantly, tapping with a stick, trying to see what's out there in your imagination. If you were blind and lived in blindness you'd live not only a world of darkness but you'd have no idea quite where you're going. You'd need someone to point you in the right direction. If you were in a world of blindness people could deceive you very easily. It would be very hard to be able to work out what's going on around you.

Imagine what it'd be like to live in a world of blindness. Horrendous. You could be easily led astray by someone. You would be easily deceived by people. Living a world of darkness is a horrendous thing and so we need to understand that there are different kinds of blindness and different kinds of darkness, so just picturing it now what it would be like physically, the kind of things that would happen in your life if you were blind - living in darkness, stumbling, unable to see your way, lost, dependent on others, easily deceived and easily losing your direction. This is what the majority of people in this world live like all the time.

God wants you to have vision for your life, wants you to see, so I want you to have a look at the story of this man who was lost in blindness and he came to

see. Let's go and have a look at it in Mark, Chapter 10 and at Verse 46; he came to Jericho, went down to Jericho with his disciples. There was a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus sat by the roadside and he was begging, so there are different kinds of blindness; first blindness that people can have is a natural blindness. That's what he had, but there's other kinds of blindness too.

Here's the second blindness you can have and that is spiritual blindness. You can't see your way to God, can't see at all. Imagine what it's like to live your whole life knowing somehow there's something out there, but you actually can't see or can't tell. You don't know about God. You don't know him personally at all. You're living in spiritual darkness. Sin brings darkness in our life. Then there's another form of blindness and that is destiny blindness, where maybe you have got your eyes and you can actually see and maybe you've come to Christ, but you can't see at all what you're supposed to be doing with your life. Those are three forms of blindness. There's probably other ones as well, but each one of them presents problems. Each one of them leads you to difficulties in your life, so I want you to see this man who broke his way out of it and want us to learn a couple of things from it.

So here's the guy - in Mark 10, Verse 46. There it is. They came to Jericho and he went out of Jericho with the disciples. There's a great multitude and blind Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus, sat by the roadside begging and when he heard that it was Jesus he began to cry out, saying Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. Then many warned him, be quiet and he cried out even more; Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stopped. This is the story of the man who stopped Jesus. Jesus stood still, commanded him to be called and they called the blind man and saying to him, oh, look, hasn't this turned out good for you? Rise up, he's calling for you - and he threw away his garment and he rose and he came to Jesus and Jesus answered and said what do you want me to do for you?

He said Rabbi, that I might receive my sight. He said go your way, your faith has made you whole. And immediately he received his sight. He followed Jesus and the road. So you notice several things about this man and just typical of a blind

person. The man is blind, can't see. It says that he's the son of - Bartimaeus is his name, which means the son of Timaeus, the son of the unclean man, so obviously his reputation was not very good. He sat by the highway - that means he's quite a passive person - a person who's sitting by the roadside's passive. Many people are passive. You don't go far in life being very passive. God wants you to have a spirit that's energised, eyes that have vision and a heart that can see what you're called to do and to stir your life up to count, not to just be passive.

I find all over New Zealand so many people are passive, spiritually passive, emotionally passive. He was sitting by the roadside and he was begging. He was dependent on other people to help him, dependent on others to come through for him, dependent on others to feed him, dependent on others for directions, dependent on others for guidance, dependence on others for correction and help. Listen, this man was not in good shape. He literally was not fulfilling the potential he's created for. He was not fulfilling his destiny. In fact he's falling far short of it. Instead of being up and having been productive with his life, he's leaning on others.

I wonder in your spiritual life if you are leaning and depending on other people, if you find that you have never built a life with God, a sense of God's presence and purpose around your life, and so you just lean on other's Christian life. You lean on the life of others to make your life sort of come alive a little bit. Sometimes people do that. They come to a meeting. They're relying on someone else to break through for them, someone else to engage God for them, someone else to hear God for them. This is not the life we're called to. We're called to be incredibly active and pro-active and drawing from God for ourselves.

This man was begging, dependent on others. Perhaps some of you are emotionally dependent, dependent on others to support you, come through for you. There's no reason why we can't get the help of others, but you don't want a lifestyle - this was a lifestyle like that. You imagine a lifestyle like that. You get up every day and someone has to help you find your place where you can sit and you can beg and ask people to come through for you. Think about that. It's a

horrendous way to live your life. It's definitely not what God purposed. Then he heard about Jesus. This man heard about Jesus, this man who was blind and in darkness.

There are many ways blindness comes on people. There's a physical blindness of course. It's quite disturbing to look at when people have lost their eyes or their eyes have been damaged and they have no sight, it's quite disturbing to see. But there's other forms of blindness. If you have a look through the Bible there are many people who are blind. Think about them. Think about the people in the Bible described as being blind. I'll describe some blindness for you.

There was a man called Samson, a man of great destiny. He got distracted by compromise and ended up blind, lost his sight, lost his sense of purpose, lost his direction totally. That's what compromise will do for you. You need to know where you're going in life and what God's called you to do. If you stick on that and stay focussed on that and then you maintain your direction, your vision in life. This is what I'm called to do. This is what God wants me to do. He dilly dallied with women, got involved in relationships and he ended up losing his sight.

There's another group of people that Jesus said were blind as well. They were religious leaders. They were people who outwardly, they did everything outwardly to impress people and there was no heart engagement with God. They were more concerned with what people think. When you're more concerned with what people think, you're blind. You can't see real life. If you're looking for the applause of people, then you'll miss the applause of one who really counts. That's where we should be focussed on what God has to say for us - and so the religious leaders were blind. He said they were quite blind.

There are other people in the Bible that the Bible tells were blind too. There was a church in the Book of Revelation that Jesus wrote, I've been there, into that place Laodicea and everyone was lukewarm. They were half hearted, spiritually

passive and shot down and saying well we've got it, we're okay, we don't need anything. And Jesus said you're blind. You can't see your need. You can't actually see that that state of apathy and passivity and lukewarmness leaves you without any vision for what you're called to do. You'd never be in that state if you could see what you're called to be.

And so He describes a whole number of things. In the Book of Peter, Peter describes people who are blind and he says these people have never cultivated their life with God, never built a life that would be productive and fruitful in advancing the kingdom. A person who does not give their life to some purpose in God is blind. You can't see what you're here for. You've missed your way and lost your purpose and God wants to do something about that. He wants to help you. So as we're looking at the story you may be one of those people. There may be physical eye sight problems - we can pray for those later. There may be also that you're in darkness, that actually sin has blinded your eyes. Could be that you're living to impress people and you've got issues of the heart that would leave you blind.

Here's another area that Jesus said makes you blind too - may not have thought of this one. Matthew, Chapter 7, He says - in Matthew, Chapter 7, the first few versus He said don't judge people, because if you judge people, He said then it'll return to you and He said first remove the beam out of your own eye, then you'll see clearly. So judgements in the heart stop you seeing clearly. They make you blind. You can't see what real life is about, what issues are about and you can't be of help to people. When we judge people we can't really help them at all, so there's some of the ways that people can be blind. I wonder if one of those is you tonight? God can help you in this.

So blind Bartimaeus, here he is living a miserable life, a miserable existence, boring thing. People probably kick him and spit on him. He can't do anything about it - doesn't know who they are and there they are, just sitting day by day, just in the dust on the side of the road. One day he heard of Jesus. Someone spoke to him, that you don't have to live this way any longer. Someone spoke to

him and said Jesus Christ can change your life. He can physically heal you. He can break the power of sin. He can set you free from the bondages in your life.

He heard what Jesus could do. People in darkness who are blind, spiritually or any other way, he could hear what Jesus Christ can do for an ordinary person's life. You and I are called to let our community who is blind know about this Jesus Christ. Every one of us is called, because when he heard about it - I was amazed, interesting the story that Danny told; here in a school and they're all laughing and then he began to share the Gospel. Suddenly hearts began to open up and the atmosphere changed and people started to see something they hadn't seen before and then began to respond. Tremendous thing to see it. It's like the darkness began to lift and then they see their need. Quite an extraordinary thing to watch and when the Gospel is preached, to see people who laugh and jeer and then they start to go quiet, and then they began to draw in and began to listen as they begin to see that they have a need in their life and that only Christ can meet it.

He's the only one that can meet it. He's the only one who can open your eyes; said if you follow me you'll walk in light and not in darkness. Person walks in darkness can't see - so, what did this man do? He began to cry out and here's the thing; Jesus has come to do all He's going to do, there needs to be something happen in us. We need to cry out to Him. We need to cry out to Him, to reach out. See this man received something no one else got. This man got a miracle that changed his life, that there was something happened in him that got him the miracle. You know there were hundreds of people no doubt around. They were thronging Jesus, but only one got a miracle. Why is it only one got a miracle? Because one person chose to believe I don't have to stay like this. I believe that Jesus Christ can change my life.

You know, I've been in many meetings where there's heaps of unsaved people and then two people get saved. Faith rose in their heart to believe that God could change them. I've been in meetings where God was moving and just some got healed. You know that there was faith for that miracle took place in their life.

Faith comes when we respond to the word of God. Faith comes when you focus on attentive - and you choose to believe that what God says is true. And so the man began to cry out. Now of course when you start to cry out and extend your faith and reach out for God to help you, don't expect everyone to be happy about that. Don't expect everyone to be happy that you are starting to stretch out and starting to believe your life could be different, that you're going to break away from all the old patterns.

I'll tell you what; everyone around wants to keep you where you were. I can remember when God began to speak to me about the issue of alcohol in my life and I wanted to make a change. I could see for the first time how alcohol in my life had affected me and so I made the decision that I would give it up. The moment I did I found there were reactions from all people around who formerly I thought were my friends. I was quite surprised. I thought they were good friends. I thought they were friends over a long period of time and once I stopped drinking they were friends no more. I thought I wonder what kind of friendship I had? I must have been blind to the true nature of it. You'll be surprised when you start to make decisions and commitments to follow Christ, how certain people who you thought were friends are no longer friends anymore because your decision that you will break out of where you are challenges them.

They're challenged by your decision. I wonder if you've been making decisions that are challenging anyone; decisions in your finance, decisions around the way you run your life and so on. We could do that. You could make decisions and start to take actions and the actions themselves challenge people. The began to cry out and they began to shout it, tried to quiet him down, but he refused to be quiet. He refused to be ignored. He refused to be silenced. He refused to give up. He refused to let go, a strong cry, and a belief that God could come through for him.

I have found many people are very passive. There was something in him when he got faith in his heart. He changed from being passive with his hand out, waiting, to rising up and saying I've got to have this thing that God has for me.

See, God has purpose for your life but you'll have to press into him to get it. God has vision for your life, but you'll have to pursue him to get it. You can't just sit there begging and hoping that some Sunday message will give you the vision you need. You've got to fight for this yourself. You've got to arise inside and say God, open my eyes to what I'm called to be and to do. Show me the possibilities around my life. Show me how you've wired me to be successful in this life.

You need God to help you in that. He's the only one that can open your eyes. He designed you for something. He's the only one that can speak to you and reveal to you, this is what you're called to do. See I was called into teaching and I had a gift around me in the natural arena of teaching. It would never have occurred to me to go into ministry, never, but God had a bigger plan and he spoke to me and when I said yes to him, when I chose to believe and respond, then my eyes were opened. There was more in me than I'd ever thought. I just didn't know. He called me out into teaching in a primary school and in this primary school, Christian school, I had to do lots of things I'd never done before. But as I begun to do these other things I realised there was a whole dimension to me I was blind to, that I'd never seen before. God began to open up a whole area of my life and I began to see what I could do in a way I'd never seen before, because he spoke to me and I said yes. I chose to believe.

You've got to choose to believe what God says. So the man, he was crying out and the crowd get more furious at him. Listen, if you're going to stand out, if you're going to have God working in your life, you'll have to be doing something other people aren't doing and you'll have to be doing something you weren't doing before. And this man did something he hadn't done any other day because he'd sensed that his moment had come! He heard the noise, began to enquire what's going on? Jesus of Nazareth is near. He sensed the movement of the Holy Ghost and in that moment rose up and began to cry out. They tried to silence him. I'll tell you what, it's the only record in the Bible where Jesus was stopped by a man.

Jesus stopped because of a cry. Jesus stopped on odd occasions as well. This one here, this man's cry stopped him. Why? Because it was a cry - I dare to believe my life could be different. I dare to believe I could see and I could have a destiny and fulfil it. And so he cried and this is the interesting thing, He said bring this man to me. The crowd changed. Notice how the crowd changes. There's many examples in the Bible of the crowd changing. You know, there's a time when Paul, he landed on an island, he got bitten by a snake and they said he's a murderer. The crowd said well he must have murdered someone. He deserves to die. He's being punished - and then a little bit later he shakes the snake off and he carries on. They think he must be a God. That's the crowd.

Jesus comes in to town. Today they say how wonderful, He's our hero, hallelujah and three days later they crucify him. That's the crowd for you. The crowd is very fickle so you can't run your life from the crowd. You have to run it by focus on eternal matters, on the Lord himself. So what's your life focussed on? This man rose up. I want you to see something else he did. He wore a garment. His whole identity was wrapped up in being this beggar and so he had an official garment on of the beggar that enabled him to go out to beg. It was a license to beg. Probably had to pay some money for it - and so this is what he did. Here's the thing that's interesting; now he could have kept the beggar's garment on and gone there.

Now remember that's his license to beg. He could have kept the beggar's garment on but let's go up and see what Jesus does. Maybe something will happen. You know what he did? Threw it off! I'll never beg again! Point me in the right direction! I'm going to have a miracle! When he threw that garment off he was throwing off what he'd been attached to in his former way of living. If you're going to get vision for your life, if you're going to have things happen supernaturally, you've got to decide if there's things you're attached to that hold you back. Are there attitudes that hold you back? Are there habits that hold you back? Throw them off. Throw them off.

Are there patterns of compromise that are holding you back? Throw them off! Throw them off! They're not going to be part of your future anymore. Are there things that have kept you in bondage for years? Throw them off! You're going forward. You're not - this is a day to change. It's a day to get vision in your life. Throw it off. Throw it off. Pull off those old things that hold you back.

Is there unforgiveness and bitterness because of what happened to you? Throw it off! Disappointments? Throw them off! Don't let old things keep you locked up and defying who you are... so he came to Jesus and Jesus said what do you want? Ah, well I'll tell you what I want. I want my eyes back - and Jesus said I see you have faith and according to your faith it's done to you. And immediately his eyes were opened and he could see. I want you to notice the distinctive thing that happened after that. He didn't just jump up and down and shout. The Bible says he followed Jesus in The Way. He become a follower of the Lord. See, his whole destiny was altered by that one encounter when he reached out and extended his faith to believe God could give him a miracle. One encounter changed his life.

I remember many years ago and I was just young and give my life to the Lord but wasn't going anywhere really. We went occasionally to a church, about six times that year I think. In Auckland we went to Assembly of God and they had a revival meeting to go to. I don't know what 'revival' was. They had miracles. I didn't really know what they were either and it was this eerie service. It was a Pentecostal service, but just being in that atmosphere, a spiritual hunger began to awaken in my life and I began to realise I needed the Holy Ghost. I needed God to encounter me. I become more and more aware of it.

Someone had spoken to me about this before and wanted me to come to a meeting where they spoke in tongues and so on, Catholic charismatic meeting. I said keep away from me, this is - no way! You know, I wouldn't have a piece to do with it. I just didn't want anything to do with it and so I was quite resistant. But as time went on I started to have a hunger come and a desire for God, desire for the Holy Ghost and so we decided we'd go down to this conference and I

believed that God would touch me that Easter. Now we got in the car and here's the interesting thing; we got in this car, the Mini Cooper. It was a hotted up little Mini Cooper, went like the clappers and it had a remote gearstick in the thing so they'd taken out the original gearstick, put in a remote shift in this thing and boy could you wipe that thing down the road! It was fast, very, very fast. So anyway, we got in the thing, I think Joy was pregnant at that time and we whipped off down to Waikanae and we got on the Desert Road and suddenly there's a shower of sparks and a bang and this thing comes loose in my hand.

So now I've got what used to be a remote shift. It's no longer remotely moving anything anymore. It's just flopping and that's not a very good thing because that means you can't change gears, so I'm stuck in one gear. We can't go anywhere and so anyway I stopped; oh, this is such a pain and so I got out and had a look at it and there's no way we could fix it. We just slept in the car overnight and hitchhiked back to Taupo. There was no one available, it was Good Friday and no one around to help us fix it so we hitchhiked back to the car again and here we are by the car, stuck, no way we we're going to make that conference.

I remember thinking God, I know this is my weekend. I know somehow you will get me to that conference. I know there's something good going to happen to me this weekend, and so I just was thinking about then and I looked down on the ground and I saw that someone had dropped a little crucifix. I thought, where did that come from? I never saw that before and as I looked at it I felt this witness in my heart that God will come through. Now we'd had no traffic come by and then suddenly there's a car comes down the road and it's a Mini and the guy stops. He said what's your trouble? I said look, I got this remote shifter and as you can see it's had it and I'm stuck.

He said well I've got one in my car too and I just live down the road and I've got the original gearstick sitting in my garage. I'll go down and get it for you - so he drove - it was 15 minutes later; I had the remote shift out, the new one in and we were back - it wasn't so quick of course but nevertheless I had gearstick and we were go, go, go! That weekend I got filled with the Holy Ghost and my life

changed. See, one experience with God can start the biggest shift in your life and in that experience I had my eyes were open to the realm of the supernatural and I began to walk in a way that was completely different.

Listen; this man blind Bartimaeus was stuck in life, no vision, no destiny. He was passive, he was shut down, he was dependent. He needed a touch of God in his life and when he heard that Jesus was moving he cried out for Him. I believe there'll be some here tonight that need that touch too and there was a great presence of God, thank you worship leaders and musicians - great presence of God - if you get back up on the stage again and let's just open up again with an alter call for people who would like to come and just cry out to God for vision for their life. There's several levels of it.

If you don't know Jesus Christ, the first level is to just come into relationship with Him. You know when you give your life to Jesus Christ He opens your eyes to spiritual things and you begin a journey walking with him, into your eternal destiny. The second area tonight that some of you may need an eye opening in, it may be there's an issue in your life you need to break free of and it's blinding you to what - here's the thing I found about sin. Sin blinds us to how our life is being stolen. We think we're doing okay and we're not, so maybe there's something that's holding you back you've got to get rid of. I want you to come tonight and say God, I'm putting that thing off. It's a hindrance to my destiny - and there's another level too that God wants to help people and that is in the area of flowing in the prophetic, of being able to see.

One of the great things about Jesus, He could see in the Spirit. He could see things that the Father had prepared for Him. I believe tonight God wants to impart and release prophetically for people as well. So number one, is there anyone here tonight wanting to give their life to Christ? That's number one. Number two, is anyone wanting to break free of bondage in your life and begin to get fresh direction for your life? And number three, is there anyone here tonight who's saying I feel I'm wanting God to open my eyes in the prophetic realm to start to see and to move prophetically about my destiny and future?

Why don't you just come to the front right now? Would you do that? Let's just stand together in this atmosphere, where we're singing about the fire of God coming down. I believe God is here to help you tonight. Why don't you just come, just come, just come. If you don't know Jesus Christ come and stand in front of me. Want to become a Christian tonight, just come and stand in front of me and I'll lead you to Christ. If you know there's things that God is saying to you to throw off and rise up and break free of, why don't you come to the front on the left or right? It's an area of enlargement in seeing in the Spirit, the prophetic realm.

Won't you come and just open your heart and say God tonight I believe for an increase tonight. Why don't you come? Come on. Let's come tonight. Let's come and be business with God. Don't wait for someone to come to you. You come and you lift your hands. You don't have to yell out, but there should be a yell on the inside anyway - Oh I want to see! I want to see direction for my life! I want to break free of the things that have blinded me. I want the prophetic anointing to increase in my life! I want to see the possibilities around me! Come on, let's reach out tonight.

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