Those Who Can See But Do Not; Those Who Cannot See But Do

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[0:00] Well, the human eye is one of the incredible features of God's creation.

! The eye itself, the eyeball, the nervous system, the brain must all work together in concert! in order for your eye to function, for it to work, for you to have vision.
And if it doesn't work altogether, if one little part of that doesn't work, it doesn't work. You can't see.
The eye is made up of incredible millions of parts. Actually, on the far right there, 274 million light-sensitive rods and cones that convert light into chemical impulses that travel through your optic nerve to your brain at a rate of 1 billion messages per second.
None of us can understand the complexity of that or the amazing way in which that works. It's really one of the many problems, but it's one of the big ones, that the idea of evolution has.
[1:23] The idea that these components could have individually, independently evolved on their own to eventually come together and work together all at the very same time.

If one single function is off in any way, there's no vision, there's nothing, it's all or nothing. Matter of fact, Charles Darwin, who was the inventor of evolution, not the discoverer of evolution, but the inventor of evolution, said this concerning the eye.
To this day the eye gives me a cold shudder, and I have asked myself whether I may not have devoted my life to a fantasy. Well, I think he knows that he has devoted his life to a fantasy.
In the early middle part of actually the 20th century in the 1950s and 60s, a British physicist came to another similar conclusion.
This is Henry Lipson, this British physicist, and he said this, Now, Mr. Lipson, Dr. Lipson, brilliant man apparently, but not so brilliant after all.
[3:03] In other words, he believed in the idea that God created, but that he used evolution as a part of his creation process, which if he was a student of scriptures would know that that is also a fantasy and silly at all.

If there is any type of theory of origins that shows that death can happen before there is any kind of sin, then it does away with the message of the gospel, because Jesus came to deal with sin and death, and the cause of death is sin.
That's the reason why any of us die, why any part of creation dies, is because of Adam and Eve's original sin. And there really is no need to shudder or to be confused, because the Bible tells us pretty straightway, Proverbs 20, verse 12, The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them both.
It's pretty simple. If you just simply trust the scriptures, the scriptures will lead you into what is truth.
The marvel, and you have this on your notes, the marvel that is the human eye, it is absolutely one of the marvels of God's creation.
And it is, it remains one of the essential problems for the theory, not the fact, the theory of evolution.
[4:40] Now follow this. When we read of a miracle of restored sight, like we're going to read in our passage today, Jesus' healing of a blind man, or in John chapter 9, another blind man in Jerusalem who is healed, we cannot really at all imagine the staggering number of miraculous things that happen to restore, to restore, to heal, to create, to enable all the different functions of the eye in order to make sight possible to someone who was not able to see before.

Literally millions of parts instantly repaired, instantly formed, instantly enabled. It's interesting that the rabbis of Jesus' day taught that the only way someone's sight could be restored is if God himself directly intervened.

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The rabbis believed, and rightly so, taught that for someone to be healed of blindness, God had to do it. And it's interesting also to note that throughout the whole Old Testament, there is not one illustration of someone's sight being restored.
It's as if God was saving that particular miracle as a verification for his son, the Messiah, who was to come.
Isaiah 42 says it this way, prophesying about the coming Messiah. Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it.
[6:37] I am the Lord. Now this is the Lord God, God the Father, actually speaking to his son, the coming Messiah. It's an interesting passage of scripture here.

I have called you in righteousness. I will take you by the hand and keep you. I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison, those who sit in darkness.
I am the Lord. That is my name, my glory. I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. Behold, the former things have come to pass and new things.
I now declare before they spring forth. I tell you of them. He's talking about the coming of the Messiah and how the Messiah was going to bring something new, a new covenant that he himself, that the Messiah himself was going to be this new covenant.
And Jesus is, of course, the fulfillment of all of this. And then back in Luke chapter four, we saw this, I don't know, a couple of decades ago when we were starting Luke.
[7:58] Luke chapter four, Jesus himself is standing up to preach, to read the scriptures before he sits down to teach, to preach in the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth.

And the passage of scripture that he unrolls the scroll to find is found in Isaiah 61. And this is Jesus now in Luke chapter four, reading from that.
The spirit of the Lord is upon me. So this is the Messiah, Jesus himself, reading a passage of scripture that is prophesying about him.
He says, the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim, proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty, those who are oppressed to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.
And then he would go on to say that this scripture has now been fulfilled in your sight, that I am. Jesus is the fulfillment of this scripture.
[9:12] Jesus is, he's proclaiming himself to be the Messiah. And he definitely is. And so we see that this idea of restoring sight to the blind is something that uniquely is God's alone.

And Jesus is verifying who he is by performing this miracle. Now, our passage today doesn't start with that, but it starts with the flip side of this kind of vision.
And it's foretold in the, in the title of the message this morning, those who can see, and that's the first part of our story, those who can see physically, but cannot see really spiritually.
And then later on, those who cannot see physically, but do spiritually. So here's our text beginning in verse 31 of Luke chapter 18. Now remember, Jesus has, has just talked about come, let the little children come to me.
Don't hinder them from coming. And, and other miracles that he is performing. And he, he turns aside to the 12. And he says to them, see, we are going up to Jerusalem.
[10:26] And everything that is written about the son of man by the prophets will be accomplished.
And so Jesus is, as we said back in Luke chapter nine, verse 51, that he's on his way now to Jerusalem.

He knows that he's going there to be crucified. He's announcing that the kingdom of God is at hand, that, that the people were actually standing right in front of the kingdom of God.
He himself is the kingdom of God. He is what makes the kingdom, the kingdom. And he is proclaiming this message. And as he gets ever closer to Jerusalem and where he is at right now, he is only days away from going into Jerusalem.
He knows he will be crucified. And he's about to once again, announce that to the disciples. And so the drumbeat of this message, the kingdom of God is at hand.
It's getting ever louder and ever more quick. And it's just building to a crescendo to the point where Jesus walks into Jerusalem under this incredible fanfare.

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[11:38] Multitudes of crowds are there. We're just days away from that. And he says, everything that's written about the son of man by the prophets is going to be accomplished by him.

And, and then he tells them basically what it is that's going to be accomplished for. He will be delivered over to the Gentiles and he will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon.
And after flogging him, they will kill him. And on the third day he will rise. And so Jesus is actually going back into Old Testament scriptures, scriptures that had been prophesied hundreds and hundreds of years before.
And now he's saying he is the fulfillment of that. And that it's about to come to pass. And they're going to do all these terrible things to me. They will, they will kill me, but I will rise again on the third day.
Now, here's the sad thing that happens in verse 34. But they understood none of these things. So he's speaking to the 12, to his 12 apostles, 12 chosen.
[12:48] And they don't understand any of it. This saying was hidden from them and they did not grasp what was said. They just didn't get it.

Now, let's be fair to these disciples now in terms of the several things that are at work here in terms of why they didn't understand.
The reason why the disciples had a lack of insight into what was happening. The first was that there was a spiritual component to their lack of insight.
I want you to notice in the text in verse 34, it says that this saying was hidden from them. So even though Jesus is speaking, what is going to happen, the spirit of God is actually moving in the hearts of disciples of the disciples to hide this from them so that they didn't see it, so that they didn't understand it.
And of course, nobody wanted, Jesus didn't want anyone to try to rescue him or he knew that he was going to, to Jerusalem to be crucified.
[14:00] And that was the reason that he came. He's fulfilling his purpose and coming was to go to the cross, to be crucified, to pay for the sins of mankind.

And so even though he's announcing this at the time, they didn't understand it. But after the fact, after the events of the crucifixion and the burial and the resurrection of Christ, the disciples, the Holy Spirit will remind them that, oh yeah, Jesus announced this.
He told us that this was, is what was going to happen. And it actually did. And they will remember this moment at that time because the Holy Spirit will remind them.
And then the second thing that's at work here is there is a knowledge component here. And it just doesn't register for them that there were actually passages of scripture that talked about how Jesus was going to experience these things.
That there were prophecies in the Old Testament that talked about Jesus as a suffering servant, that Jesus would be crucified, that Jesus would be spit upon, and all of these things.
[15:16] They were only looking for the prophecy dealt with the king. The king is coming. The king is going to rescue us. That's all that they focused on. And those prophecies were true.

They still are true. Jesus, our king, is coming again. But they didn't recognize the difference between first coming of Jesus and second coming of Jesus.
In fact, none of the Old Testament prophets did understand that. And so, they were looking for the coming king. They were, if you will, warming up their hosannas for a few days later when Jesus was marching into Jerusalem and they were going to be shouting, Hosanna!
Save us, Lord! And then a few days after that, they would be shouting, Crucify him! Crucify him!
And so, they just didn't, they didn't see passages like this in Isaiah 50.
I gave my back to those who strike and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard. I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. Finally, there was an emotional component to why they didn't see it, why they didn't understand what Jesus was saying to them.
[16:38] They just simply didn't want to hear it. Sometimes, because of where our emotions are at and where we're at in terms of how we feel about a particular subject, we only hear what we want to hear.

And if someone is telling us bad news, it doesn't register because we don't want to hear it. And that's certainly where the disciples were at in this moment.
So that's the first part, the first half of the story. The second half now begins in verse 35 with Jesus. As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.

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Now I have to pause here for a moment and talk about the discrepancy that exists between Matthew's account and then Mark and Luke's account of this story.
And there will be skeptics who would say, well, it's this story that tells us that the Bible truly does have contradictions. Have you ever heard that from a Bible student that would say, well, there are no contradictions in scripture.
[17:53] Well, skeptics will say, well, wait a minute. What are you going to do with this particular verse, this particular passage between Matthew and then Mark and Luke's account of this? Because Matthew talks about how Jesus was not drawing near to Jericho or entering Jericho, but how Jesus was, as he was leaving Jericho, he encountered two blind men.

And what's the discrepancy? Why does Jesus, or why does Matthew's account record Jesus exiting the city, whereas Mark and Luke record Jesus entering the city?
And why does Matthew's account record two blind men and Mark and Luke only record one blind man? Understand, don't be confused and don't buy into it because the skeptics will only tell you, see, that's the reason why we can question and we can be skeptical of the Bible because it has these kinds of contradictions, but it's not.
What the skeptics don't understand is that there were two Jerichos. Do you remember the Old Testament story of Jericho? Right? Remember in the book of Joshua, they surrounded the city and the walls came tumbling down and I think there's a song about that and the whole thing.
Well, Jericho was completely destroyed and for so long, it was never rebuilt, but over time, that old city of Jericho that was left in rubble eventually began to be built up and there were some local people there who began to inhabit that part of the city.
[19:39] But then Herod the Great came by and about a mile south of that part of Jericho that was being rebuilt, he decided to build a new city of Jericho.

So that by the time of Jesus, in his preaching ministry and Jesus' earthly ministry, New Jericho was already built and thriving and as a matter of fact, it was kind of a resort city, what we would call a resort city.
It had bathhouses and pools and gardens and there was a theater there that they would put on plays and productions and so forth and Herod and royalty would go there for vacations and people of means would go there and so it was also a popular spot for beggars to sit outside the city and beg as people were going in and out of the city of Jericho because hey, these people are getting ready to go on vacation so they're flush with cash.
So let's go there and see if we can make a living begging outside of the city and so this blind man that we're going to meet today is one of them.
But it's why you could have Matthew talking about Jesus leaving the old city and Mark and Luke talking about Jesus as he draw near to the city or the new city of Jericho.
[21:13] Not a discrepancy at all. And the other part of it is Matthew is just telling the story as it happened and giving you the details where Mark and Luke are highlighting one blind man of the two and there's a reason why.

Mark tells us his name. His name is Bartimaeus. And Bartimaeus became quite well known during this last part of Jesus' ministry and during the early church as a follower of Christ.
And we'll hear more about Bartimaeus and what happened to him after the fact. But let's not get ahead of the story here. But I said to say that the skeptic's supposed discrepancy or contradiction really doesn't exist at all.
So here is Jesus as he's drawing near to Jericho. A blind man sitting by the roadside begging. And so that was a common sight. A common thing that would happen.
And there's crowds there. Hearing a crowd going by. Of course he can't see the crowd but he can hear it. And the word for crowd here is similar to the one that we've seen earlier in Luke.
[22:28] It's the word for multitudes. So we're talking thousands of people. It's a throng of people. You can imagine as this many people are passing by that they're having to step around these beggars.

And blind Bartimaeus is there. And people stepping around him and trying to avoid stepping on him as he's there holding out his hands and holding out his cup hoping to receive some sort of donation hoping to receive some sort of alms.
And he hears this crowd going by and so he inquired as to what this meant. And that's basically Bartimaeus saying hey what's going on here? That's all he's saying.

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And they told him the crowd told him Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. Notice the title. It's just Jesus. That's his name.
From Nazareth. That's his geography if you will. Where he's from. Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. And that stirs something into Bartimaeus.
[23:44] So look what happens. And he cried out. Notice the change in title. He heard Jesus of Nazareth.

But what is it that he calls out? Jesus son of David have mercy on me. Bartimaeus here gives Jesus the title of the Messiah himself.
This is probably the most clear and most bold declaration or addressing of who Jesus is by anyone in all the gospel of Luke.
He very clearly says of Jesus as he's shouting his name Jesus I believe you are the son of God the Messiah the son of David that title son of David was was the chosen title of the rabbis given to who the Messiah would be.
He would come after the lineage of King David himself the second David as it were and so he is very clearly recognizing Jesus as the Messiah and he's not begging for money he's saying something completely different Jesus son of David and he's you can imagine him screaming this to get to get heard over this crowd this multitude this throng of people and he's shouting Jesus son of David have mercy on me notice the crowd those who were in front rebuked him why well after all if Jesus is the Messiah he ain't got no time for you he's got much more important things going on [25:57] I mean after all we're just a few days from Jerusalem we're we're we're gonna enter the city we're gonna take things over we're gonna kick Rome out we're gonna be large and in charge here and he doesn't have time for some poor blind beggar so shut up keep quiet but he cried out all the more because if you really believe that Jesus is the son of God son of David it's what you do you see Bartimaeus believed what the rabbis taught that only God could heal him because he believed that Jesus is God he's crying out all the more because this is his one chance in his lifetime to have his sight restored and even something more important because he's saying have mercy on me there's something more at work here for

Bartimaeus than just his eyesight so he's crying out all the more Jesus son of David have mercy him and Jesus stopped imagine that and then commanded for Bartimaeus to be brought to him and when he came near Jesus asked him what do you want me to do for you and and it seems like a like a silly question because I would imagine by looking at Bartimaeus you could tell by looking at him that he's blind right when you see someone who's blind it's somewhat obvious in that sense that that they are blind especially in that that setting in that time frame but Jesus here is making sure that no one in the crowd misses this that if it's God who does the healing that he is about to do this for
Bartimaeus what Bartimaeus what what do you want me to do you want me to restore your sight really because only God can do that now you you you said I'm God so here we go right this this is what's this is what's going on and so he said Lord let me recover my sight let me recover my sight and notice this Jesus said to him recover your sight your face has made you well your faith has made you well and so this too is is a loaded phrase this your faith has made you well it's the word for saved it's the same word for saved matter of fact the vast majority of the times you see this word translated it's it's it's the word for saved it can mean physical healing but certainly it also means spiritual healing we'll talk about that in a moment but but
Bartimaeus your faith your faith has done this and verse 43 and immediately immediately Bartimaeus went to an eye doctor to get treatment immediately Bartimaeus scheduled an appointment with an eye surgeon to get this radically new treatment no immediately 274 million rods and cones started to pass light through and immediately billions of messages a billion per second began passing through the optic nerve Bartimaeus immediately as soon as these words are uttered by Jesus Bartimaeus is able to see
Jesus standing in front of him and immediately Bartimaeus life is completely changed immediately Bartimaeus begins to follow Jesus after all the kingdom of God is standing right in front of him so wherever the kingdom of God goes I'm going with him because that's what's going on here you don't take time to bury a dead relative you don't take time to go home and sell a cow you don't take time to go home and buy a piece of property no no no the kingdom of God is standing right in front of you and he's on his way to Jerusalem I'm with him that's what was at stake as Jesus is announcing the kingdom of God is at hand and that drum beat gets louder and louder and quicker

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and quicker and the pace quickens nothing else matters
[31:55] I'm with Jesus in this moment I am with Jesus so immediately he recovers his sight and he followed him glorifying God and all the people when they saw it they gave God praise what a testimony if they believed what the rabbis taught that only God could do this then it was confirmation certain that right in front of their eyes was standing Jesus the son of God and sure enough a few days later they would be shouting Hosanna save us and then a few days after that they'd be shouting crucify him crucify him Bartimaeus is the illustration of the cure for spiritual blindness number one we need to understand that without

Christ we are spiritually blind you might have 20 20 vision physically but if you don't have Christ you are spiritually blind spiritually dead Paul writes about this in 2nd Corinthians 4 verse 4 he said in their case the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers can we can we not see this today in our world today unbelievers who cannot even comprehend the most basic of spiritual truth and it's because their minds are blinded blinded not the eyes but blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God they choose not to recognize God for who he is they choose not to recognize his son the Lord Jesus Christ and because of that they are blinded and they cannot see secondly we need to understand that there is only one saving cure of course that is
Jesus himself Jesus is the only way he himself made that very clear I will never understand those who wear the Christian label stand at pulpits and preach to congregations who wear a Christian label and will say things like well Jesus is a way but there are other valid religions that message is from the pit of hell even Jesus himself said nothing of the kind and it would not be loving to say anything of the kind it's an attempt it is a false attempt it is a incredibly short sighted attempt to try to be loving to another person who is of a different religion of a different belief and to say well your faith is fine your religion is fine
I've got my religion you've got your religion and it's the same we all worship the same God that is from the pit of hell there's only one way to be saved and it's through Jesus Christ alone and then again from Bartimaeus we learned that we have nothing to offer God just like children have nothing to offer God just like the rich man even though he's got all of his wealth and all of his supposed goodness right earlier in the same chapter blessed are those who are poor for they shall see the kingdom of
God blessed are those who are spiritually bankrupt that's the best place that you could be Lord I've got nothing some of you may be familiar with the story of Helen Keller Helen Keller was not born blind and deaf and mute but she had a childhood illness that made her that way so she couldn't see she couldn't hear she couldn't speak at the age of seven her Christian teacher Ann Sullivan taught her to communicate by spelling words into her hand by using the motion and the shape of her hand to communicate to her the first word was water and the famous scene of them at the pump outside and the water and she would spell in her hand and at eight years old she learned of the
[37:32] Lord Jesus Christ and trusted Christ as her savior she would eventually graduate from college she had several honorary doctorate degrees bestowed upon her she received the presidential medal of freedom in 1937 she was named Time Magazine 1937 she was named Time Magazine woman of the year I think it's back when they knew what a woman was they don't do that anymore because they're confused oh thank you Richard she reminds me of Bartimaeus

Bartimaeus who got saved on this day there on a dusty road outside of Jericho but now he can see now he knows Jesus he followed him that day that's what the text says he followed Jesus and the historians as they've tried to piece together this story of Bartimaeus that he probably entered Jerusalem on the same day as he came and they were shouting Hosanna he would have been there when they shouted crucify him and he would have been huddled with the other believers as they mourned the death of Jesus the crucifixion of Jesus that he was one of the followers that was there to celebrate the resurrection of
Jesus that he was there 50 days later the day of Pentecost the birth of the church probably baptized one of the 3,000 that was baptized that day the early church it's quite the legacy for some guys sitting on a dirt road outside of Jericho just looking for spare change I want to highlight the double meaning of this your faith has made you well in verse 42 quote from Helen Keller I always knew there was a God but now I know his name yeah she has even though she's unable to see she was unable to see she had more vision more sight than the vast majority of people in verse 42 from the

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English Standard Version which we read earlier recover your sight your faith has made you well the King James Version says it this way thy faith has saved thee it's it's only one of the translations that that says has saved you your faith has saved you but but the word that's translated there is the word for salvation we get our word salvation from it and it can mean physical healing and it can mean spiritual healing and in this case for Bartimaeus it was both on the one level the blind beggar Bartimaeus was saved physically so that now he could see on a deeper level his faith had saved him spiritually but what I want to tell you is this that the greater of the two miracles was his salvation his salvation was the greater miracle who is
Jesus to you is he just some guy Jesus of Nazareth location a time or is he Jesus son of David is he Jesus the son of God the Messiah for you that's the choice that each one of us has to make and I pray that today if you've not made that decision to trust him with your life that you would do that that you would do that very thing that you would recognize that you need a savior there is no hope without him it is only through Christ that we are saved that you and I we have a sin problem we can't help but sin and the only solution to that is is Jesus have you trusted him have you made him your savior!
[43:31] Lord thank you for his recognition of who you are that you are the son of God that you are a Messiah the savior of the world thank you for his testimony I pray that Lord that each of us would have a similar testimony not that any of us are blind physically like Bartimaeus was but certainly there is a time for all of us that we were blind spiritually and we did not know you and Lord I thank you for the many in this room and the many who are watching Lord that that have recognized their spiritual blindness and have turned to you and trusted you as savior and

I pray for those who have yet to make that decision that even on this day on this very day that they too would recognize their need of a savior and that they would trust you trust you with their lives Lord my life is yours I trust you with it thank you for giving me the forgiveness of my sins for paying the penalty for my sins taking my place what I deserved on the cross and dying for me today I trust you with my life I pray Lord that those who have not yet made that decision today would pray that prayer very simple message very simple prayer it's not the prayer that saves us it is our faith in Jesus Christ that does so thank you thank you Lord we love you we trust you in Jesus name amen

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