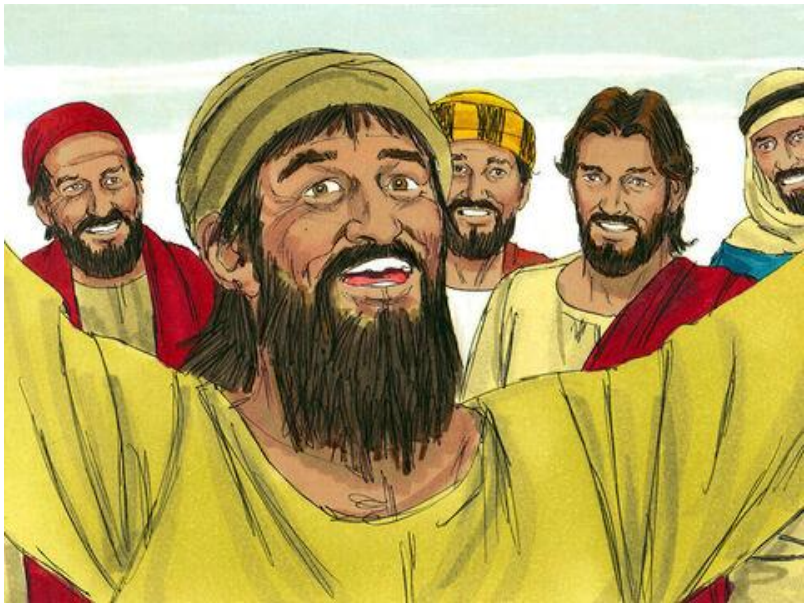
A BLIND MAN SEES! **Luke 18:35-43**



My blindness has robbed me of my living.

I sit by the way side, a poor beggar reaching out for the sporadic generosity of passers-by.

I never see their faces, but hear the shuffle of feet, the sound of token coins bouncing into my upturned hat. I feel people thinking "There but for the grace of God" as they pass by. I have no life, but just exist to beg and beg again, buy what I can to eat to survive. The dust blows into my empty eyes. All I do is listen, imagine, dream...

Yes, there are days when a new sound, a different bird call, will stir my imagination, - the amusement of listening into conversations I'm not meant to hear. Different voices conjure up different appearances, and I often wonder how my imaged thoughts might compare to the looks of those passing by.

It is quiet and hot. I sense the sound of far-off movement, - gathering footsteps and voices, getting nearer. I wait until they reach me, then holding out my hat, do as I have need to do, - beg and beseech, again and again. The first footsteps go by. There are others, lots of others approaching. I feel the passage of a coming crowd. I ask into the air, - "What's happening, what's going on!" . No-one notices. Their thoughts are elsewhere. I try to pick out conversations. The crowd is nearing. Someone trips over me. I shout out in exasperation: "What's happening!"

"It's Jesus of Nazareth. He's here, he's here!"

My heart jumps. I have heard people talking about him, - the son of David, attracting crowds throughout Galilee, Samaria and now here in Judea.. He's been healing people! The lame, deaf, and yes, the blind! Why not me! The footfalls and chatter get louder, I feel this is my moment. With my stick I stand up. Shout out: "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me!" Those nearby tell me to shut up, be quiet, I feel someone push at me. No way! Even more determined, I shout out again, from deep within my heart, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me!" How can he possibly hear me!

The crowd has stopped. I listen intently. A wave of silence and expectancy washes all around me. What's going on? I sense I am a new focus of attention. I drop my stick in full and excited expectation. Someone says to go with him and takes me gently by the hand, directing me to approach Jesus. It's like a waking dream. A few more guided steps.

"What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?"

A voice spoken with such authority, right in front of me. So many thoughts suddenly rush through me! I could not picture Jesus, just knew it was him, felt the presence of love, what love! That he had somehow heard me above the crowd because he was so alert to my call and had instinctively responded. What trust I felt, what love wrapped round me! I was face to face with Jesus, the son of David! He has asked, and I shall share my heart!

"Lord, that I may receive my sight."

His response was so natural and assured:

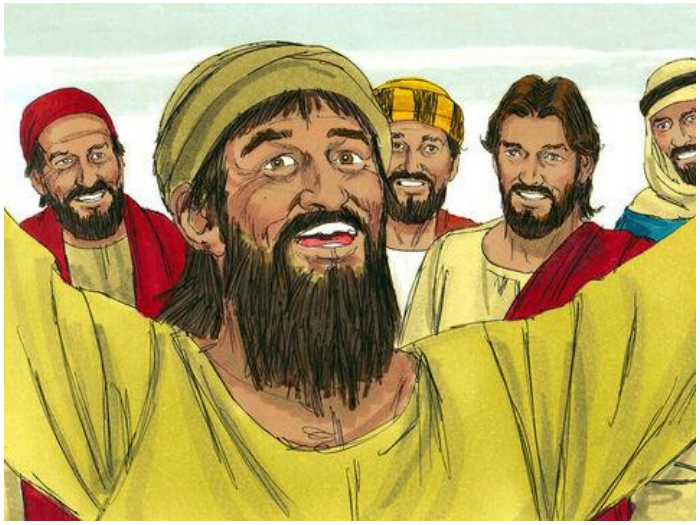
"Receive thy sight:"

I could see him! I could see!

..thy faith hath saved thee."

His eyes were shining, his white robe a symbol of the pure love with which he had spoken. I looked round at everybody there, - their smiling faces, - linking in to the joy I was now feeling, - I had asked and *immediately* received. There was no interrogation, questioning, no searching for a background that was irrelevant in the eyes of this man. I could see, both literally and with sudden understanding, what Jesus could see, why he spoke with such authority. Nothing to do with matter, but with faith, with trust. He was at one with God, and I was now free to be at one with both him and his God, the God of *all* mankind!

With such joy I could see to grab his open hands, see in his eyes his gratitude for Love expressed, to shout to others "I see, I see!" A cheer went up, and I was caught up with the crowd. I was free to follow him, there was nothing to stop me, everything to encourage me.



It is said that seeing is believing! Understanding is knowing! His words "Receive thy sight" still resonate within me, for what I can see is what he saw in me, what I can now see in others. *To receive is to have what is already there!*

I am now a follower of Jesus. I have learnt so much! That true gratitude is action, - in listening then responding; in seeing, then "looking after"! In seeing ourselves as God sees us, loving ourselves, and our neighbour as ourselves. This is loving God. In rejoicing we share our joy! That brings happiness!

Oh, thank you Jesus! You have changed my life, from a dream to reality. How happy I am in now helping others, as they had helped me!

Thank you God!

I now can see: You are my life!

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