

Jesus cures the blind in fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy that in the day of the Messiah the blind would once more see. The point is not what Jesus did for Bartimaeus, but what He can do for us because there are many kinds of blindness such as physical blindness which is the absence of vision; moral blindness which is our moral sight or vision and it is called conscience. We are all born with it. It develops as we grow, is fine-tuned by experience, and is enlightened by the Gospel. It helps us see right and wrong.

The gift of conscience, a kind of moral eyesight, is a magnificent gift that helps us know right from wrong. Following it is another step. It is a gift to know when we have failed, betrayed another, when we have rebelled, when our life is on the wrong track, when we are headed for destruction. It is healthy to feel shame, regret, and guilt because those are the warning signs of a working conscience, our moral radar that helps us get back on track.

Our dignity as human beings is being able to see not just trees, plants, mountains and sunsets but to see right and wrong. Conscience is that very personal space where our Creator calls us from within to follow the light. Physical blindness endangers the body, but moral blindness endangers the soul. The gift of moral sight or conscience is what makes us human beings different from the rest of creation.

There is a third kind of blindness beside the physical kind and the moral kind, and that is the blindness of unbelief. Faith gives us vision to see beyond the senses, beyond the world around us to its deeper truth that it has come from God and is the place of our journey back to God.

Faith enables us to see that we are more than cell and bone; more than our biological constitution. We are more than our emotions and feelings. We have a soul, a purpose and a destiny. Through the glasses of faith we can see that however others may see us, God sees in us a person with an immortal soul who has a destiny to live with God forever. Faith enables us to see more in ourselves than others see.

Physical sight comes through our eyes; moral sight comes through our conscience; spiritual sight comes through our faith. We can appreciate the gift of sight by looking at the struggle of the blind. We can appreciate the gift of moral sight, conscience, by looking at those who are amoral with no loyalty, no fidelity, no care, only the isolated, self-absorbed self with no responsibility to anyone and no respect for anything. They live in a very small and boring world. We can appreciate the gift of spiritual sight, faith, by looking at those whose whole life is defined only by what happens in this world and by what other people think.

The story of Bartimaeus gives assurance that the disciples and us can be healed of our inner blindness and thus be enabled to follow Jesus on the way.