

# Good Words – Sermon Series

## 7 STEPS OF FAITH

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Special thanks – this message is based on a sermon from Ian Bilby.

*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.*

*Mark 10:46-52. NKJV.*

Possible titles for this message:

- ***Barty's Brilliant Bastion***, or
- ***Faith that moves God***, or
- ***How To Increase Our Faith***, or
- ***Seven Keys To Personal Growth***, or
- ***Seven Steps of Faith from Bartimaeus***.

It was Bartimaeus' Faith that made him well.

### **A lot has been said about Faith:**

- Christians of course talk about Faith.
- Preachers talk about Faith, some of it great, some of it not so great.
- Almost every religion has a doctrine of Faith.
- The business world understands Faith, in their own way.
- People at large often talk about Faith.

### **Faith must be important:**

- Woman with the flow of blood.  
*But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour.*  
Matthew 9:22. NKJV.

- The woman's demon possessed daughter was healed:  
*Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.*  
Matthew 15:28. NKJV.
- Bartimaeus.  
*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.*  
Mark 10:52. NKJV.
- One of 10 lepers healed.  
*And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."*  
Luke 17:19. NKJV.

*"Who walks with God must make his way across far distances and grey, to goals that others do not see, where others do not care to be. Who walks with God must have no fear when danger and defeat appear, nor stop when every hope seems gone, for God, our God, moves ever on".*  
- Unknown.

*"Faith is taking God seriously". – Derek Prince.*

*Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. NKJV.*  
*Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. NKJV.*

This story in *Mark 10:46-52*, brilliantly presents us with a clear teaching on what Faith really is.

**Faith** – Greek *pistis*, (Strong's 4102), conviction of the truth of anything, belief, persuasion, credence.

But faith, really, is a relationship with God. It is a living connection with Him. It's a simplistic definition, but, it's true. When we say we want more faith, what we're really asking for is a better relationship with the Lord.

**Jericho** – The place of Herod the Great, a winter palace, a residence of the rich and wealthy, a fashionable district. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was narrow and bandit infested. It was also the setting for the Good Samaritan story (*Luke 10:30-37*).

**Bartimaeus** – was sitting on the side of the road. Sidelined. Sitting on the side of the road of life. Life, and people and opportunities were passing him by. He was sitting there crippled.

Was he born that way, was it the result of an accident, or an addiction, or a disease, was it circumstances or people that had made him this way?

We can become like this; crippled, unable to see, unable to do anything, unable to move physically, spiritually, emotionally, financially, relationally or in our leadership.

Whatever had brought him to this place, its not where he should stay. Whatever it is that has brought you and sidelined you to your place of need, you can be healed and following Jesus, in the middle of the action.

Bartimaeus was healed because of his faith! Here's **Seven Steps of Faith from Bartimaeus**. Whenever we read the word faith in a heading, think of it for example like this: when we say *Faith Cries out To God*, think of it as, *Our Relationship With The Lord Cries Out To God*.

## **1. Faith Cries Out To God.**

*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!" Mark 10:47. NKJV.*

He didn't lay the blame on himself, he didn't bemoan his crippled situation, he didn't blame other people, he didn't call out to man for help. He just cried out the God.

He was not too proud to cry out to God.

*This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him, And saved him out of all his troubles. Psalm 34:6. NKJV.*

God knows our condition.

*<sup>23</sup> Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and **their cry came up to God** because of the bondage. <sup>24</sup> So **God heard their groaning**, and **God remembered** His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. <sup>25</sup> And **God looked upon** the children of Israel, and **God acknowledged them**.*

*<sup>7</sup> And the LORD said: "**I have surely seen the oppression** of My people who are in Egypt, **and have heard their cry** because of their taskmasters, for **I know their sorrows**." Exodus 2:23-25, 3:7. NKJV.*

*<sup>6</sup> So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.*

*<sup>7</sup> And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites, <sup>8</sup> that the LORD sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; Judges 6:6-8. NKJV.*

Like the cry of a young son to his father; "*Daddy, help me!*", we can cry out to the Lord and He will hear us, and help us.

Faith (our relationship with the Lord) looks to the Lord, it cries out to Him.

Faith realises its need; "*Yes things are serious but ...*".

Life is tough, but God is good. Bartimaeus was desperate. Perhaps sometimes we're not desperate enough.

*When we hit rock bottom, we realise that He is the Rock at the bottom.*  
- Unknown.

## **2. Faith Overcomes Opposition.**

*Then many warned him to be quiet; Mark 10:48a. NKJV.*

Bartimaeus knew Jesus was his answer and he cried out, but people tried to silence him.

### **i. There will be opposition.**

Whenever we do something for God, whenever we obey His Word, whenever we do the righteous thing, whenever we surrender to His will, whenever we follow His call upon our life, we go against the current of this world.

There are obstacles in going on for God and growing into Christlike maturity. But they only serve the process of making us stronger, more resilient and they bring us closer to Christ.

*Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all. Psalm 34:19. NKJV.*

### **ii. People will oppose us.**

Not everyone will share our faith. Not everyone will see things the same as we do. Not everyone will be thrilled with what we're believing for. There will be people who would like to stop us from being healed, becoming saved, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and from following Jesus. They don't understand. They have a different calling. They have different giftings.

*Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. Matthew 13:58. NKJV.*

### **iii. The Devil will oppose us.**

We also have an enemy who is out to oppose us at every turn, thwart our plans, disrupt our lives and cause chaos and heartache. But faith overcomes! Don't be scared.

*<sup>10</sup> Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Ephesians 6:10-13. NKJV.*

Don't listen to the rebuke and the nag of unbelief, and of the devil. Bartimaeus had a desperate need, he had a clear *faith target*. He wanted to be healed and get back onto the road of life and follow Christ. This must be our desire too.

Faith overcomes opposition. When our *faith target* is right, then we too can get back on the road of life. Faith locks on and holds on. Like a heat-seeking missile, it finds its target, locks on, and doesn't let go.

### **3. Faith Perseveres.**

*but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Mark 10:48b. NKJV.*

Even though Bartimaeus had a desperate cry for help, what happened? Well, it's not good. Things got worse. People were moving down the road. There was opposition. There was no answer from the Saviour.

Jesus heard him the first time though and waited perhaps until his cry was heartfelt.

Sometimes in following Christ, we cry out to the Lord, but things get worse. Don't give up trusting, don't give up believing, don't give up hoping in His promises. Remember;

*And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. Exodus 3:7. NKJV.*

God sees, God hears, God knows. Give Him the control, and surrender to His will, His ways and His timing.

*<sup>19</sup> And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. <sup>20</sup> He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was*

*strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, <sup>21</sup> and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. Romans 4:19-21. NKJV.*

**Abraham**

- Considered the problem.
- He got stronger in faith.
- He glorified God.
- He held on to the promise.

He looked impossibility in the eye, then he looked to the Lord.

*<sup>5</sup> And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; <sup>6</sup> for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; <sup>7</sup> and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? <sup>8</sup> I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.*

*<sup>9</sup> "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. <sup>11</sup> If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? <sup>12</sup> Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup> If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" Luke 11:5-13. NKJV.*

The persistent asking (for the right *faith target*) resulted in the answer.

Don't give up. Remember Winston Churchill's famous speech; "*Never, never, never, never give up*".

If we are asking wrongly for something (our *faith target* is wrong, out of God's will, or not the right time), then God may well need to bless us with a brick, to make us understand what He is doing and why He is withholding. Let's be; "*Hard enough to preserve and soft enough to hear*". – Unknown.

*<sup>41</sup> Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain." <sup>42</sup> So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, <sup>43</sup> and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea."*

*So he went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing." And seven times he said, "Go again."*

*<sup>44</sup> Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.'" 1 Kings 18:41-44. NKJV.*

*<sup>10</sup> And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean."  
<sup>14</sup> So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. 2 Kings 5:10, 14. NKJV*

Elijah was persistent in sending his servant back seven times to look for rain. Elisha was persistent in sending Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan.

Faith preservers. Bartimaeus didn't give up.

#### **4. Faith Takes The Divine Opportunity.**

*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." Mark 10:49. NKJV.*

There was a *time* in his life when the healing he'd dreamt of for years could finally happen. A Divine opportunity! A God-moment. A window of opportunity. Opportunities come and opportunities go.

**Opportunity** – (a) an appropriate or favourable time or occasion: (b) a situation or condition favourable for attainment of a goal: (c) a good position, chance, or prospect, as for advancement or success. ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)).

When the vision, the dream we've carried for so long, and Jesus is about to release it to us; do we shudder in unbelief, fearful to move, believing for the goal though safe and secure in the known, enjoying where we're at?

There is some security in the old, in what we know. But the opportunity gives us a moment when we can leave the known, the secure, and step into the unknown and safety of God's will and purpose.

Bartimaeus is sitting on the side of the road, and Jesus passes by, and stops. A divine opportunity.

One moment in history that can change our lives, our destiny and direction! The Holy Spirit prepares us for these moments.

One day changed my life forever. The Holy Spirit had been preparing us, and one day, my wife and I were invited to take over a small church, our first pastorate. It was a huge decision. A massive upheaval to shift our family to another city. But it was a Divine opportunity and I am so thankful to the Lord we said yes. We knew and God confirmed we were in the will of God.

*<sup>13</sup> And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. <sup>14</sup> Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord*

*opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. <sup>15</sup> And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us. Acts 16:11-15. NKJV.*

Lydia happened to hear the Apostles preaching. The Holy Spirit had prepared her. She took the Divine opportunity and responded.

Bartimaeus took his Divine opportunity and was healed. When the Holy Spirit is moving, and when Jesus is calling, take action! Take the Divine opportunity and move, obey, respond, say yes.

## **5. Faith Leaves The Old Life Behind.**

*And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. Mark 10:50. NKJV.*

Bartimaeus left his beggar's clothes behind. He won't need them anymore.

**Mantle** – Cloak, covering, authority, ministry, gifting, system of things.

Bartimaeus left much more than just a piece of clothing. He left there his old identity, his old ways, his old system of doing life, his old *place*.

What did Bartimaeus do?

- i.*     **He jumped up.** He knew exactly what he wanted, and he did what he could, he used what energy he had.
- ii.*    **He threw it off.** He was decisive. He left it behind.
- iii.*   **He came to Jesus!** When Jesus calls, you come! He knew Jesus was the source of life, so he was quick to obey.

*Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead. Philippians 3:13. NKJV.*

There are times when a big, bold, scary, faith-driven decision is required. We're faced with a decision which requires us to *take the next step*. To leave the old life behind. (See **Brief Word #92 Next Step**, available at [www.goodwords.nz](http://www.goodwords.nz)).

When we said yes to His call, it meant leaving everything. We left family, a job, schools, friends, a great church, and our own house we'd just bought. But it was right! God blessed and rewarded us for that faith step.

Bartimaeus broke ties with his past. He left his mantle, the symbol of his former life. He won't need those things anymore.



But notice He'd thrown off his mantle *before* he spoke to Jesus of his need. Wow! That is faith!

Are there any symbols or systems, schemes or structures we need to throw off and leave behind as we follow Jesus? If we hang on to them, they'll only hinder us in our walk. Let them go! Let faith rise, to trust Jesus and let them go.

## **6. Faith Is Specific.**

*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." Mark 10:51. NKJV.*

Bartimaeus knew exactly what he wanted and needed. He had a clear vision of it. He'd no doubt tasted it, lived it, and had already lived in it, many times in his mind. He'd seen it, handled it, used it and experienced it and enjoyed it. Before he had it.

Vision is specific. People have no faith perhaps because they have no vision. Vision *breeds* faith!

So when Jesus says, "*What do you want me to do for you?*", he knew what to say.

He knew exactly when he was without it, and he knew exactly when he had it. He was blind, but now he could see!

Jesus healed him!

What would you say to Jesus, if He were to ask you that question? "*What do you want me to do for you?*". Some would say, it's obvious, it's already clear, I know exactly what I'd ask for. But for others it's not so clear.

*Hebrews 11*, that amazing *faith chapter*, is a great encouragement. The things God did and the things they received *by faith*, are measurable. They knew when they didn't have it and when they did.

<sup>23</sup> "*And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.* <sup>24</sup> *Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.* John 16:23-24. NKJV.

This is not saying that faith and prayer is simply a blank cheque. Not at all. When we pray according to His will, and according to the *faith target* He has revealed, that's when God loves to hear and answer prayer.

However, a good question arises; "*What are you asking God for?*" What are the measurable specifics of your and my prayers? General prayers are good;

*“Lord bless this person”. But specific prayers are great; “Lord I pray, meet this person’s financial need this month, with leftovers, in Jesus Name”.*

Let’s ask God for His specifics so that we can pray for the right *faith target*, and know we are praying according to His will.

*<sup>14</sup> Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. 1 John 5:14-15. NKJV.*

So these two things are important in prayer;

- (a) Know God’s will.
- (b) Pray specifically.

**A personal lesson.** The Lord graciously taught me a lesson in asking specifically. I was needing to replace my car and was learning about being specific in prayer. So, (and this is years ago) I asked for a Ford Cortina MK 1, four door, floor change, bucket seats, with a body in good condition. That was my prayer. Very specific.

This was a bit of a test, as Ford Cortina’s usually came out in the column change and bench front seats. Floor change and bucket seat models were rare.

Well, one came available to me, and it was a Government Edition, which meant it was a Ford Cortina MK 1, four door, floor change, bucket seats, and the body was in good condition. Thank You Lord! Specific prayers answered!

However, I soon realised the engine was worn out. I had to totally rebuild it. As I was doing that work (I was a mechanic in those days) I was chuckling to myself at the lesson I was learning. God had graciously answered my specific prayers, but I’d forgotten to ask for the engine and running gear to be in good condition!

*“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” Luke 11:13. NKJV.*

Sons ask specifically.

Faith knows exactly what it wants (as a revelation from God), faith knows when it does not have the answer, and faith knows when it has received the answer, it knows when it has hit the target.

Bartimaeus’ faith was specific.

## **7. Faith Is On The Move.**

*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.*  
*Mark 10:52. NKJV.*

**... your faith has made you well ...**

Bartimaeus received his specific *faith target* and then followed Jesus on the way. Jesus said to him; *go your way*. But he didn't go his way, he went His way, Jesus' way! He immediately, *followed Jesus on the road*.

He was no longer sitting on the side of the road of life, sidelined and unable to fulfil his purpose in life, he was now following Jesus. Surely this is the best possible outcome; yes, that he was now healed, but he was following Jesus! He was a changed man living a changed life following Jesus the life-changer.

The best response we can have to the changes in our lives, and to the miracles, and to the answers to our prayers, is to follow Jesus. The greatest honour we can give to the Lord for releasing the answers to our prayers, is to follow Him.

*Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."*  
*Matthew 4:19. NKJV.*

When we follow Jesus, He than *makes* us into something. We don't stay the same, we're different, better. The answer to his prayer, caused him to follow Jesus even more.

Faith is not static. Relationship with Jesus is moving, alive, and active.

## **Summary.**

### **1. Faith Cries Out To God.**

*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!" Mark 10:47. NKJV.*

### **2. Faith Overcomes Opposition.**

*Then many warned him to be quiet; Mark 10:48a. NKJV.*

### **3. Faith Perseveres.**

*but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Mark 10:48b. NKJV.*

#### 4. Faith Takes The Divine Opportunity.

*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." Mark 10:49. NKJV.*

#### 5. Faith Leaves The Old Life Behind.

*And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. Mark 10:50. NKJV.*

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