

**2024-10-27 ... 10am Morning Service Sermon ... Freda Carey  
(our CMS Link Missionary)**

Morning service readings: Job 42:1-6, 10-end, Psalm 34:1-8, Hebrews 7:23-end, Mark 10:46-end

Blind Bartimaeus receives his sight – on outskirts of Jericho, on Jesus’ final journey to Jerusalem

Bartimaeus knew about Jesus – he calls him ‘Son of David’, title of the promised Messiah/Christ

Bartimaeus believed in Jesus – he was sure that He was merciful, and that he had power to heal

Bartimaeus followed Jesus – after miraculously receiving his sight, he left everything and followed Jesus. These are 3 essential steps in Christian discipleship – knowing, believing, following. Many Pakistani Christians are good at the first two steps – they know a lot about Jesus and they believe in Him – but are not so good at the third step, following Him, obeying Him and living for him in everyday life, seeking to do His will and live life as He wants them to live.

Blind Bartimaeus received his sight – a physically blind man received physical sight. In John chapter 9, after Jesus has healed another blind man, He talks about those who can see physically but are spiritually blind. Spiritually blind people receive spiritual sight as they read and understand the Bible for themselves (like Job came to see and understand who God really is (Job 42:5) “My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.” That is our aim in the Open Theological Seminary, where I have worked for the past 24 years, and in the United Bible Training Centre (UBTC) for women in Gujranwala, where I worked before that for 14 years. Many Pakistani Christians are very faithful about reading the Bible daily, but often they don’t understand what they read, because the Urdu Bible most of them use has very old-fashioned language, because it is based on Henry Martyn’s translation of 1806 (over 200 years ago), and the Urdu language has changed a lot, even in the last 38 years while I have worked there. Also the surrounding Islamic culture emphasizes reading without understanding, because Muslims read their holy book, the Quran, in Arabic, which very few understand, but they believe they earn merit with God just through the act of reading. Many Christians have unconsciously absorbed that attitude. As a Bible teacher it is a great joy when, after studying one of our Bible courses, students say, “Oh, now I understand what that means!” But this can happen anywhere, not just in Pakistan and Christians really engage with the Bible, even in Whitchurch, where you have a Bible study group meeting twice a month. You can study the Bible as individuals or in a group and there are many resources available to help you understand. And may I encourage you to go on learning no matter what your age. We recently held the first graduation of our Master of Arts in Christian Studies (MACS) programme among the graduates was an 88 year old pastor who enrolled in this new course of study at the age of 84. You are never too old to study and learn something new. May God bless you as you do this.

Amen