**Thesis:** Never put godly counsel above the counsel of God. Even our most trusted friends or people who seem to know better than us can give us bad advice. It’s good to have people you can hear from, but never listen to the words of those that are in contradiction to God’s word. *Psalm 119:105* reads *“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.”* Let God’s word shine above all others and be the guiding principle in your life.

**Introduction:** Welcome to The Jesus Podcast, a year of stories showcasing the depth of Christ’s love and the glory of God’s truth. I’m \_\_\_\_\_\_, your host from Pray.com. I’m so excited you’re joining us for another story today. Get updates for new episodes by hitting the follow button as we continue to hear stories of how Jesus meets the outcast.

**Context:** In the gospel of Matthew we read a compelling story of Jesus healing a blind man named Bartimaeus. In Mark and Luke, we learn that Bartimaeus had a companion who was also blind and healed at the feet of Jesus. As these two men spent their days in darkness around the gates of Jericho, there didn’t seem to be much in life for them save for begging and idly letting the days slip by. What else could you do? That is, until one day, they hear word that the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, was leaving their very city. With Jesus’ fame and renown at its peak, these two men knew that this would be their chance to receive healing from the one who had given sight to the blind of many others. Today was the day of salvation. It was now or never. This is Jesus’ final miracle recorded in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke before He triumphantly enters the city of Jerusalem, welcomed as a king. In the final moments of Jesus’ ministry of healing, He deliberately gives sight to the blind. But this sight is much more than the ability to see the physical world. This miracle was a shadow of Jesus preparing to give sight to the world to see the truth of God’s plan percolating over the last three and a half years.

**Message:** We all have voices that we regularly turn to. The teachers who offer us wisdom and insight as we traverse through life. Friends with words of encouragement and affirmation to keep us moving forward. Loved ones who offer consolation and comfort in dark moments. These voices can be a wonderful blessing in life. But we have to know that nobody’s perfect, and their words won’t be either. Sometimes we get bad advice or find ourselves surrounded by pessimism to give up. It’s good to have voices of reason…until a point.

Today’s story shows us two men who have the chance for change. The moment they’ve waited for to have their whole lives turned around. Jesus was finally near enough for them to meet Him. And if God’s favor was upon them, they were near enough for a miraculous healing. Though they had been through to the margins of societies as outcasts trapped in a cloak of darkness, Bartimaeus wasn’t going to let the negativity rob him of his hope. As the crowds pressed towards Jesus and pushed the two blind men to the sidelines of life, Bartimaeus found a boldness to fight. A boldness to not give up any ground in his endeavor to reach the Lord Jesus, the Son of David.

Two blind men pushing through a sea of people desperate to see Jesus themselves were to put themselves at risk. They were at the mercy of what they could not see as those around them pushed and shoved with a veracity that would have stopped many in their tracks. The jabs, pushing, and shoving could have left these two men broken on the floor to be trampled. But despite this risk, Bartimaeus knew that getting to Jesus was worth the risk. Following Jesus requires we take risks. It’s a call to leave behind our old lives. It compels us to combat the things of this world that would try to bring us down. It leads us to places of discomfort, and sometimes even danger. But when we choose to follow Jesus, the odds are always in our favor. Whatever path we must take to get to Jesus and follow Him, we can be sure of two things. The first is knowing that He will bless us.

In *Ephesians 1:3*, the apostle Paul writes, *“ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”*

Despite whatever we face losing in boldly making our way to Jesus, the blessings on the other side are worth it.

The second thing we can be sure of is knowing that He will empower us for any obstacles that stand in our way of following Him.

Paul writes to the Philippian church in *Philippians 4:11b I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*

We love Philippians 4:13. We use it on our coffee mugs, our bumper stickers, and frame it on our wall as a mantra that we can do anything. But in context, we see that this verse is packed with much more of a promise. What Paul has learned in his experience of faith isn’t that Jesus is a spiritual vending machine or wish granter, allowing him to attain anything his heart desires. Instead, he’s learned that the road to following Jesus is narrow, full of twists and turns; but through the strength afforded to him through Christ, he was able to endure it all with a boldness that boasted in the greatness of God.

As Bartimaeus and his friend weave their way through the crowds, Bartimaeus begins to lift up his voice and shout out for Jesus, crying, *“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”* His cry blended in with the hundreds of other voices that were likely calling out to get Jesus’ attention. And even though there were some around him who tried to quiet him in his roar for help, like a lion on the hunt, he couldn’t be stopped. So he cries out again, *“Son of David, have mercy on me!”* It was at this that the Lord stopped. There must have been something different in Bartimaeus' call. Perhaps not something perceptible to the ears, but something different that Jesus perceived in Bartimaeus’ heart. A shimmering well of faith. It was this that caused Jesus to command the people to call the blind man to Him. It takes great boldness to Jesus when surrounded by voices that tell us to keep to ourselves or that we should just give up on trying. We should never let those voices stop us. When we call out to Jesus, whether it’s the most meager and humble whisper for help, or the strongest impassioned shout, Jesus hears us when we call. There’s something truly moving when we have the boldness to cry out to Jesus. To press through the lies to abandon all hope. Don’t feed into those lies. Jesus wants to hear from you.

And we never have to wonder if we’ll be put to shame for our boldness to call out to Him. Nobody likes the idea of looking ridiculous by putting ourselves out there only to fall flat on our faces. But we don’t have to worry about that happening in our search for God.

*Hebrews 11:6* reads *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”*

Our boldness for God will never have us put to shame. God rewards our faithful seeking by not hiding Himself, but revealing Himself to us. And one of the greatest prizes granted to us when that happens is getting to witness the work of God firsthand. Being bold before the Lord gives us a front row seat to seeing Him at work. Bartimaeus and his friend didn’t simply have their sight restored; they got to play a part in one of Jesus’ final miracles that affirmed all of His claims to be the Son of God.

Where can we find such boldness? Well it definitely won’t come from within ourselves. If our boldness comes from within, it rises and falls along with us. Lasting boldness is birthed from faith, knowing who Jesus is, and is sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit. Bartimaeus wasn’t bold for a stranger. Bartimaeus was bold because He knew who Jesus truly was. He knew He was God’s anointed One. If you can’t find the strength to muster up the courage to be bold in your faith, take some time to remind yourself who Jesus is. He is the Messiah. The Son of David. The Lamb who comes to take away the sin of the world! When we see Jesus for who He really is, God will give us the boldness to reach out to Him.

And our boldness isn’t just for our benefit. Our display of being sold out for Jesus can be a tremendous encouragement for others who may not be feeling the same sense of courage we are. You have the chance to be the ember that God fans to spread boldness like a wildfire. Let the voices of doubt and negativity end with you. Let fear and shame stop at your door. Raise a shout of praise that drowns out all other noises. Be bold in your faith as you reach out for Jesus and choose to follow Him.