

Another powerful service with many, at the close of the service, affirming the words of the song, "I Believe I Can Fly!"

Love and blessings,

Pastor Heard

## **Part 31: Feel the Passion!**

### **Texts:**

**Ecclesiastes 9:7 (The Message)** - "Seize life!"

**Hebrews 4:14-16 (KJV)** - "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. [15] For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

**Luke 18:35-39 (NKJV)** - "Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. [36] And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. [37] So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. [38] And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" [39] Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

**How to Go Beyond *Sight* to Vision!**

A. I want to speak about pursuing vision—not just sight. Bartimaeus moved Jesus to act on his behalf with **extraordinary determination!** He wouldn't give up.

1. This story is phenomenal since it deals with what is known as “group mind.” In a room of 100 people, there are actually 101 minds. Whatever the predominant thought or emotion of a particular group may be, it will automatically begin to affect you. This is why you can walk into a funeral home and suddenly begin to feel sad. It also explains why people in a mob will become involved in actions they will later regret.
2. One of the great, inspiring stories of the Bible is recorded in three of the synoptic Gospels. Only the Gospel of John fails to include this story. Matthew adds that there were actually two blind men healed. The Gospel of Mark mentions that one of their names was Bartimaeus.
3. The man's name further emphasizes his helpless situation. The prefix “Bar” meant *son of* and “Timaeus” meant *blind man*. Together, the name revealed that he was the son of a blind man. Since the man was also blind, he was the “blind son of a blind man” indicating that his condition could have been genetic or hereditary.
4. Whatever the problem was concerning the dad's vision, apparently it had cost Bartimaeus as well.
5. The fact that his father had never recovered underscores Bartimaeus' hopeless feelings of recovering his own sight. Even the road where he sat begging seems to infer that everyone was being moved and directed—but him. He felt destined to sit there outside Jericho for the rest of his life, asking for just a small handout from travelers who were on their way *somewhere*. While others had direction and a place to go, he was stuck.
6. However, Bartimaeus wasn't content to spend the rest of his life begging. He may not have had sight, but he **did** have vision. He knew what he wanted. He dreamed of the day when things would be different and he would be able to see.

B. The first step of taking control of your life is to **want your dream more than you want anything else!**

1. **Mark 11:24 (KJV)** - "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."
2. Some translations say, "whatever you ask," but the Greek involves more than just asking: it is *to ask with great desire or passion; even to beg*.
3. Why is desire or passion so important? This incredible story explains the reason: the longer we live with dysfunction, a problem, or abnormality, the more we tend to accept it. Blindness had become a way of life for the Timaeus household. While most people learned to accept the extended length of their problem, Bartimaeus never did.
4. Eventually, people even begin **owning** their problem by saying, "Well, I would go to the gym, but **my** arthritis . . ." or "**my** asthma." Taking ownership becomes a deadly force against building a dream because vision cannot exist without passion and hunger. You can't accept the problem or just learn to live with it.
5. Desire helps vision grow in two ways:
  - a. The passion to become more than the guy everyone knows as 'the blind man going nowhere,' or 'the one who sits beside the road' will actually birth vision within you. You may be physically blind, but your vision helps you see opportunities that are unseen by others.
  - b. Second, passion keeps you pursuing your vision long after others have given up. When your opportunity approaches, it will not allow you to remain silent.
  - c. After Jesus' disciples—who should have encouraged him—asked Bartimaeus to be quiet, this is why he cried all the more, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me!"

6. Tyler Perry, after being homeless and sleeping in his car to having a net worth of over \$450 million, should know something about this passionate desire (see video: <http://youtu.be/URWw-DdbewA>).

C. One of life's most important lessons is to **seize opportunities while you can!**

1. This was the last time Jesus would pass through Jericho. Had Bartimaeus not asked for help on that particular day, he would never have received his sight. It was his last opportunity!
2. **Ecclesiastes 9:11-12a (NKJV)** - "The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all. [12] For man also does not know his time."
3. It is not the most gifted who succeed. Time and chance happen to both the gifted—and those not so gifted; to the wise—and those not so wise; to the strong—and to the weak. Those who persevere, succeed! That's the whole meaning of the story of the tortoise and the hare.
4. Leonard Ravenhill wrote these words: "The opportunity of a lifetime must be seized within the lifetime of the opportunity."
  - a. What does that say to us? We must seize and make the most of our opportunities - **carpe diem!**
  - b. Don't complain about a lack of talents or opportunities. Use what you have and you'll go further than those who seem to have everything going for them!

D. Another lesson to be learned: **vision is more valuable than sight!**

1. Sight is the ability to see what exists in the natural realm. Vision is a vivid mental image of a desired future state that is not yet available to the physical senses.
2. Vision keeps you moving forward, rather than accepting the present status quo. It will cause your tomorrows to be different from today!

3. One of the most incredible stories of success is that of Anne Sullivan, a teacher from the nineteenth century. At the age of seven, Anne developed trachoma, a bacterial infection of the eyes that severely damaged her vision. She had almost no usable sight for ten years until she entered Perkins School for the Blind. Two operations greatly improved her vision—and changed her life. Continuing to pursue her education, she graduated in 1866 as class valedictorian at Perkins School for the Blind.

Upon receiving her degree, she was recommended by the school director to help a family with a daughter who had lost both her sight and hearing, probably from meningitis, at the age of 18 months. Helen Keller, the six-year old child with no memory of being able to see, speak or hear, had grown into a wild and increasingly uncontrollable child. Can you imagine having never heard or seen anything around you? Of the five senses, the ones most involved in the learning process are sight and hearing. Helen would never have either of those senses.

Later, after being taught by Anne Sullivan to speak and read, she described her intense anger and frustration of having no understanding of what existed in the world around her.

First, Anne gave Helen things to hold, such as a doll and then a mug. She would then sign the name of each item on the palm of Helen's hand with her fingertip. But nothing registered in Helen's mind until Anne poured water into her hand and then signed upon the child's palm the letters for w-a-t-e-r.

That was Helen's breakthrough! In that startling revelation, she realized that words could describe everything in her world. From that moment , she allowed no one to rest. Helen exhausted everyone with her constant demands to sign the name of every object in the palm of her hand.

Helen then learned to read Braille and even to speak by putting her fingers on Anne's lips as she pronounced a word. Helen became the first blind and deaf person to receive a bachelor's degree and then to become

a noted lecturer, author and foremost inspirational figure in America and the rest of the world.

5. It was Helen Keller who said, "The only thing worse than being blind is having sight, but no vision."

E. The vision for your life is seldom easy to define and even harder to achieve.

1. In the process, expect to fail. But failure does not determine whether or not you will succeed. The important thing is what you do **after** you fail.
2. I'm reminded of numerous 'famous failures' who refused to give up. Their determination helped them see—and then seize an opportunity that would have been missed had they listened to others. Determine right now to **never give up!**
  - a. Albert Einstein wasn't able to speak until the age of four. From several accounts, he did not learn to read until he was nine. His teachers said he would never amount to much. As it happened, only six to seven people alive are intelligent enough to understand and explore the theories that Einstein invented! Almost single-handedly, he launched mankind into both the nuclear and space eras. By awarding him the Nobel Prize in physics, his research and genius were internationally acknowledged.
  - b. Walt Disney, founder and head of the Disney empire and creator of Disney Land and Disney World attractions, was fired from a newspaper for "lacking imagination" and "not having any new ideas!" This is the guy who gave us Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck and Pluto! Without Walt Disney's creativity, there would probably have been no Warner Brothers, Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, or Foghorn Leghorn. Though Walt Disney died almost 50 years ago in 1966, the company he founded still collects billions of dollars annually, with receipts in 2013 of \$45 billion!

- c. Oprah Winfrey was demoted from her job as a news anchor because she "wasn't fit for television!" Yet, she is the world's first woman billionaire in the very industry for which she was supposedly "unfit." Don't let people limit you!
- d. Michael Jordan, after being cut from his high school basketball team, went home, locked himself in his room and cried! Yet, he became such a successful basketball star, ten years after retiring from the NBA, he still earned \$93 million in 2013. Don't let people tell you what you cannot do!
- e. Steven Jobs was one of the most creative geniuses America has ever birthed. He enjoyed telling about his attempt to persuade Atari and Hewlett-Packard to examine the personal computer that he and Steve Wozniak had developed. Both companies turned them down flat! He told Atari, "Hey, we've got this amazing thing, even built with some of your parts. What do you think about funding us? Or we'll just give it to you. We just want to do it. Pay our salary, and we'll come work for you." And Atari said no. When the pair approached Hewlett-Packard, they said, "Hey, we don't need you. You haven't finished college yet."  
Instead of giving up, Jobs and Wozniak founded Apple in their garage. As the company grew, Steve had to deal with office politics. In a power move against him, at the age of 30, he was fired by the board of the company he had helped to found. This caused a good deal of discouragement and depression, but Apple realized their mistake, brought him back—and the rest is history. How successful was Steven Jobs? Apple routinely has more cash in their reserves than the U.S. Federal Government!
- f. And the Beatles. After an hour long audition by recording giant Decca Records, the group was rejected because of their unusual sounds and told that they didn't have a future in show business.

Yet, they have sold over 2 billion albums (twice as many as anyone in history) and remain the most successful singing group of all time! How would you like to be the executive who turned them down?

F. What did all of these success icons have in common? They saw their opportunity and never quit—even when they failed.

1. They continued to get up and try again! Each of them stumbled along the way while fulfilling their dreams. And you will, too! When that happens, ***take the time to reset! Keep going back to true north!***
2. There is much to be said about failure. Samuel Smiles said, "It is a mistake to believe that men succeed through success. Much more often, they succeed through failures. Precept, study, advice and example could never have taught them so well as failure has done."
3. If you want to succeed, you mustn't give up either—even when you fail.
4. Scott Fitzgerald said, "Never confuse a single defeat with a final defeat."
5. Some of you will recognize the name Pat Croce. As a young man, Pat dreamed of becoming a professional football player. Unfortunately, his physical frame never grew large enough. So, if he couldn't play professionally, he decided to become a physical therapist and conditioning coach for the Philadelphia Eagles. After attending school and receiving his degrees, he was ready—or so he thought!

Knocking on the door of the Philadelphia Eagles, he explained that he had come to apply for a job as physical therapist. Rudely, the guy said they didn't need anyone and slammed the door. Again, he knocked on the door and the guy said, "Look, I told you we don't need anyone!" and slammed the door a second time.

Instead of giving up in despair, Croce founded the first U.S. Sports Medicine Center to be located in a hospital. Then in 1984, he opened Sports Physical Therapists, the first privately owned sports medicine

center. Eventually, his business expanded to forty centers in eleven states.

The Philadelphia Flyers Hockey Team became his first client, followed by the Philadelphia Phillies, Philadelphia 76'ers, Atlanta Braves, Hawks, Orlando Magic, Green Bay Packers and Cincinnati Reds. Finally, he became the owner of the Philadelphia 76'ers.

Since leaving the 76'ers, he has been a NBA television commentator on NBC and a taekwondo commentator for the 2004 Summer Olympic Games. In his career, he has written thirteen books and was one of the four judges on American Inventor, ABC's reality television series in 2007. His net worth is in the hundreds of millions.

Pat Croce was determined to keep his dream. Once he realized that he would never grow tall or large enough to become a professional athlete, he chose to make a mid-course correction. By becoming a physical therapist, he has opened enough centers to become the **owner** of a professional team.

#### G. Never give up!

1. Be determined. And when your opportunity comes, seize it!
2. Because Bartimaeus was so determined, his vision moved Christ—and he was given his sight!
3. Since you already have your sight, pursue vision!