



Bartimaeus: The Man Who Saw Everything!

A Play by Deborah Wassenberg

Introduction:

This play draws from the three Gospel accounts in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, with particular inspiration from Matthew 20:34: *"Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him."*

That single verse sparked a thought: **What did Bartimaeus see next?** Once his eyes were opened, he followed Jesus on the road to Jerusalem. He would have witnessed the Triumphal Entry, the cleansing of the Temple, the confrontations with the Pharisees. He may have witnessed the betrayal, the arrest, and the trial. He would have seen Jesus crucified on the Cross, perhaps the empty tomb, and then heard about the risen Lord commissioning His followers.

Imagine experiencing all of that with brand-new eyes. Imagine the wonder, the shock, and the joy. Imagine Bartimaeus telling everyone what he saw. How amazing!

This play is fully interactive, with the congregation walking through the events Bartimaeus describes while a cast of characters brings each scene to life around them.

Cast & Costumes:

Bartimaeus:	long tunic, rope belt, sandals
Crowd:	men, woman and children wearing a mix of tunics, cloaks, shawls and scarves, sandals, carrying baskets and belongings.
Jesus:	white or cream tunic, red, blue or burgundy sash, sandals
Disciples:	tunics in muted colours, rope belts, sandals
Pharisees:	darker robes (black, navy, deep red) sashes or decorative trim, head coverings, sandals
Judas:	same as the disciples but with a darker cloak

Soldiers:	tunics (grey, brown, red) belt, shields and swords, helmets
Pilate:	tunic or toga, red or purple sash, chair or platform
Angel:	white robe (shiny or reflective fabric), gold sash
Women at the Tomb:	tunics with shawls carrying baskets

Props:

Scene 1:	Bartimaeus Receives His Sight • large 'begging' cloak to sit on
Scene 2:	Triumphal Entry • palm branches • cloaks/clothing to lay on the ground • donkey (hobby horse, or fabric draped over two kids)
Scene 3:	Cleansing the Temple • lightweight tables/boxes to turn over • plastic coins • small baskets • birdcages (optional) • scrolls and money bags
Scene 4:	The Blind Guides • scrolls to carry • staffs to carry (optional)
Scene 5:	Betrayal and Arrest • torches (firebrand: the wooden stave wrapped with cloth type) • rope for arresting Jesus
Scene 6:	The Trial before Pilate • chair or platform for Pilate • bowl for washing hands • crown of thorns • red cloak • long reed (lightweight cane)

Scene 7: The Crucifixion

- Cross (large cardboard or wooden Cross)
- sound effects: drum or metal sheet for earthquake sound
- black cloth representing darkness

Scene 8: The Resurrection

- stone for Angel to sit on
- garden using flowers and greenery (optional)

Scene 9: The Great Commission

- No specific props needed

SCENE 1 — BARTIMAEUS RECEIVES HIS SIGHT

Matthew 20:29-34, Mark 10:46-52, Luke 18:35-43

Setting: Jericho road.

(Bartimaeus enters and speaks to audience.)

Hello.

I'm so happy to see you.

I mean that with all my heart.

I am HAPPY to SEE you!

There was a time when I was blind.

My name is Bartimaeus.

I used to sit right here outside Jericho every day.

It was good for business.

The business of begging for coins.

You see, as a blind man, begging was the only way I could support myself.

And the road from Jericho to Jerusalem was busy with trade and pilgrims, especially at Passover.

Also, I had heard about Jesus.

He would have to come this way sometime.

I knew He could heal me.

So here I sat.

Well, let me show you what happened.

(Bartimaeus moves to his old cloak on the ground, gathers it around himself and sits down on it and closes his eyes. Crowd approaches. Noise grows. He opens one eye as he continues the story.)

Bartimaeus:

There was nothing wrong with my ears.

I heard the crowd.

(Closes eye again and pretends to be blind)

What's happening? Who's coming?

Crowd Member:

Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.

(Bartimaeus' face lights up. Jesus and disciples enter.)

Bartimaeus (shouting):

Jesus! Son of David! Have mercy on me!

Crowd (sharply):

Be quiet! Stop shouting!

Bartimaeus (even louder):

SON OF DAVID! HAVE MERCY ON ME!

(Jesus stops.)

Jesus:

Call him.

Crowd Member (softening):

Cheer up! He's calling you.

*(Bartimaeus leaps up, **throws off his cloak** dramatically.)*

Bartimaeus:

I won't need this anymore!

(He approaches Jesus arms outstretched to find Him and also guided by the crowd.)

Jesus:

What do you want Me to do for you?

Bartimaeus:

Lord...I want to see.

(Jesus touches his eyes.)

Jesus:

Receive your sight. Your faith has healed you.

(Bartimaeus opens his eyes wide, gasps, laughs, spins.)

Bartimaeus:

I can see! I can see!

(The crowd begins praising God.)

Crowd:

Praise God! Look what the Lord has done!

Bartimaeus:

(To the audience.)

And the first thing I ever saw... was the face of Jesus.

(Pause)

So of course — I followed Him.

(He joins Jesus and the disciples.)

SCENE 2 — THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Matthew 21:1-11

Setting: Entry into Jerusalem

Bartimaeus:

Jesus had sent two disciples to a village, telling them to find a donkey, untie it and bring it to Him. If anyone was to question them, all they had to say was, 'The Lord needs them,' and they'd send them on immediately. That's exactly what happened.

(The crowd spread their cloaks and cut branches down on the road.)

Bartimaeus:

The crowd spread their cloaks and palm branches on the road, and Jesus entered on a donkey. Some people went in front and others followed.

(Jesus enters on a donkey.)

Crowd:

Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the LORD!
Hosanna in the highest!

Bartimaeus:

What a spectacle!
I wish you could have seen it.

SCENE 3 – JESUS CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

Matthew 21:12-17

Setting: The Temple

Bartimaeus:

The streets of Jerusalem were alive with movement. For the first time in my life, I could weave through a crowd without stumbling. I didn't bump into anyone, and no one shoved me aside anymore. Pilgrims from every direction poured into the city for Passover.

I stayed close behind Jesus, my newly opened eyes trying to take in everything at once. When we reached the Temple courts, the familiar noise of business hit me immediately—coins clinking, merchants shouting the prices of their doves, pigeons, sheep, and cattle. God's holy house... turned into a marketplace.

(Jesus overturns tables.)

Jesus overturned the money changers tables and coins scattered across the stone floor. He drove the animals and merchants out of the Temple courts.

Jesus:

My Father's house is meant to be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers!

Bartimaeus:

I'd never seen anything like it! Then a new sound filled the Temple. Soft footsteps. Shuffling. Whispers of hope.

(Blind and lame enter and approach Jesus.)

The blind came to Jesus, just like I once did. And the lame, too.

(Bartimaeus watches, deeply moved.)

And He healed them.

(Bartimaeus embraces the newly healed, celebrating with them as one who knows exactly what this moment feels like.)

This...this is what God's Temple was meant to be.

(Children enter and run around together.)

Then the children began to sing, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!'

Children:

Hosanna to the Son of David!

Bartimaeus:

Out of the mouths of children and infants You have called forth praise.

SCENE 4 – BLIND GUIDES

Matthew 23

Setting: The Temple

(Pharisees enter and stand together and scowl at Jesus. Jesus is talking to the crowd.)

Bartimaeus:

I noticed the Pharisees watching Jesus all the time. They didn't like how the crowd pressed around Him or how the people cheered Him, or listened as He taught. They were jealous of Him. These were leaders who enjoyed being noticed, who liked the important seats and the loud greetings. They were supposed to help people follow God, but instead they made life harder. Worst of all, when Jesus came showing God's heart – full of mercy and truth – they refused to see it and tried to stop others from seeing it too.

Jesus:

Woe to you, blind guides!

Bartimaeus:

The Pharisees had lost sight of what God truly wanted. They plotted in secret trying to find a way to arrest Jesus by trickery and kill Him.

(Bartimaeus squinting comically)

I used to be blind. But these men? They still couldn't see!

(Judas enters and approaches the Pharisees.)

Judas:

What will you give me to betray Jesus to you?

Pharisee:

Thirty pieces of silver.

Judas:

I will look for a good opportunity to betray Jesus.

SCENE 5 – BETRAYAL AND ARREST

Matthew 26

Setting: The Garden of Gethsemane

(Jesus enters the Garden with His disciples)

Jesus:

My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death, remain here and keep watch with Me.

Bartimaeus:

But the disciples fell asleep, for their eyes were heavy.

Jesus:

Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let's go; behold, the one who is betraying Me is near!

(Judas, accompanied by the crowd and soldiers enters. He kisses Jesus.)

Judas:

Greetings, Rabbi!

(Soldiers approach and arrest Jesus.)

Bartimaeus:

I couldn't believe my eyes! Jesus betrayed by Judas, one of His disciples. How could he be so short sighted? And then Jesus was arrested.

SCENE 6 – THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

Matthew 27:11-26

Setting: The Steps of King Herod's Palace

(Pilate sits on a chair on a platform, Jesus, now beaten and bloodied, stands before him.)

Bartimaeus:

I had to see what was happening. After Jesus was taken to the High Priest – where false witnesses stood up and lied about Him – I watched as He was led out again, bound and beaten. They brought Him before the Governor, Pontius Pilate. My heart sank. Jesus, the One who had opened my eyes, was now standing accused like a criminal.

Pilate:

So, you are the King of the Jews?

Jesus:

It is as you say.

(Pilate washes his hands in a bowl of water.)

Pilate:

I am innocent of this Man's blood; you yourselves shall see.

(The soldiers do the actions as Bartimaeus speaks.)

Bartimaeus:

It was evident to Pilate that the Jewish leaders were motivated by envy of Jesus. But Jesus was handed over to be crucified. He was stripped and a red cloak was put on Him. They twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head. They put a reed in His hand, and knelt before Him, mocking Him. They spit on Him. They took the reed off Him used it to beat Him over the head.

(Bartimaeus calls to the soldiers.)

Can't you see what you are doing?

(Bartimaeus buries his head in his hands.)

SCENE 7 – THE CRUCIFIXION

Matthew 27:32-54

Setting: Golgotha (Calvary)

(Jesus is 'on the Cross'. The crowd is watching quietly while the soldiers stand nearby.)

Bartimaeus:

Is this what my healed eyes must see? Jesus, the Son of God and my healer, crucified like a criminal? My heart can't bear it. I can't watch.

Jesus:

My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?

(Jesus hangs His head...He is dead.)

Bartimaeus:

Darkness descended.

(The black cloth descends over Bartimaeus and the Crowd. Sound effects of the earthquake. Bartimaeus is unsteady on his feet.)

The earth shook and the rocks split.

Soldier:

Truly this was the Son of God!

SCENE 8 — THE RESURRECTION

Matthew 28:1-10

Setting: The Garden Tomb

Bartimaeus:

Morning dawned and I heard...rejoicing? The women later told me what had happened!

(Angel appears and sits on the stone. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the tomb.)

Angel:

Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He is risen just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.

(The two women take a peek past the Angel.)

Angel:

And go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see Him; behold, I have told you.

Bartimaeus:

Jesus is risen! What a sight to behold!

(The two women meet Bartimaeus, and they celebrate together.)

SCENE 9 — THE GREAT COMMISSION

Matthew 28:16-20

Setting: Mount of Olives

Bartimaeus:

The disciples met with Jesus at the mountain which He had chosen.

Jesus:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy

Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Bartimaeus (to audience):

Did you see that? I once sat in darkness. Now I walk in His light. And I will tell everyone what I have seen. And you... you can tell others too. And remember...Jesus is coming back...in the twinkling of an eye!

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