

Basic Eye Care / Jesus Heals Bartimaeus

Carol: I wonder when you last enjoyed the sight of a beautiful rainbow making an arch across the sky. I love the way the colors blend into each other – red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet, don't you? What other sights do you enjoy? The sweet face of a loved one? A family photograph? Our eyes allow us to see all of these things. Let's consider them today on Women of Hope!

Tammy: Hello and welcome to *Women of Hope*, I'm Tammy. Thanks Carol for those lovely thoughts about what we see with our eyes. I'm so glad I can see the beautiful flowers in my garden, and the brightly colored birds that swoop down from the trees. Today we're going to talk about how important our eyes are and how to keep them healthy.

Carol: My heart goes out to those who cannot see well – or who are not able to see at all. So we would like to share with you ways that you can take good care of your eyes so that you will be able to keep seeing our beautiful world.

Tammy: Carol, this reminds me of a little boy I saw yesterday. One eye was all red and he kept rubbing it. I had to wonder what was wrong.

Carol: Maybe some dust had blown into his eye. But a red eye can mean that it's infected, too. This can happen when germs get into your eyes. Germs are bacteria that come in dust, or dirt or from someone who already has an infection.

Tammy: Yes, That's what I thought. The redness was on the white part of his eye. It looked so painful.

Carol: An infection *can* make the eyes very sore or very itchy. And sometimes you can see that it's infected because there's also some sticky fluid, or pus coming out of the eye. So it's important that we know these four signs of an eye infection: *redness... soreness...itching...or any sticky fluid or pus* coming out of the eye.

Tammy: Doctors say that the first and most important thing is to keep our eyes clean.

Carol: Yes, it's important to wash your face and the area around your eyes every day with clean water. This will remove any dirt and dust that could get into your eyes, especially if you spend a lot of time outdoors or working in a place where the dust is blowing in your face.

Tammy: That fairly simple to do each day.

Carol: It is, but one more thing, after you wash your face, it's better if you don't use a towel to dry it, especially if you've been wiping your hands on the same towel. Drying your face with this may put dust or germs back into your eyes.

Tammy: So if you *do* use a cloth or towel to wash your face, or to dry it, it needs to be clean. This makes sense!

Carol: That's right, now another thing, think about how often we *touch* our eyes...we all do it, don't we? If we're tired, or if something blows into our eyes we rub them.

Tammy: Yes – and we do this without thinking about what might be *on* our hands. We might have been patting the dog, or digging in the garden. Or even touching door handles or handrails that other people have touched with their dirty hands.

Carol: So, it's really important to wash our hands as often as possible, especially after using the toilet. This will keep our hands fairly free from the germs that might infect our eyes when we touch them.

Oh, and here's something else. We need to be careful especially when we have a cold. If you have a cold and you've been touching your nose, the mucous from your nose can get into your eyes and cause an infection too.

Tammy: So, our hands, dirty towels, what else can cause eye infection?

Carol: Flies!

Tammy: Nobody likes flies. How many times do we see flies crawling on the faces of small children, around their noses, eyes and mouth? Flies will spread germs into their eyes.

Carol: Oh yes. Flies are everywhere and they like moist things, especially those things that smell strong. That's why they like our food and our skin...and our eyes! But just think, they love to eat from rubbish piles and animal droppings. So they pick up germs from these things on their feet.

Tammy: ...and wherever they stand, they carry those germs on their feet. I don't want to think about where the flies have been!!

Carol: Me either! But it *is* important to think about it. Those flies will sit and eat from the rubbish pile and then crawl all over a little boy's eyes.

Tammy: Flies are certainly a much bigger problem than we think.

Carol: Yes they are. But the good news is that we can keep flies away from our face pretty easily. We mustn't let them land on our face, but shoo them away.

Tammy: I'm sure when you're walking somewhere in the daytime and there are flies buzzing around, you would carry a little branch with leaves on it to shoo them away wouldn't you? It's that simple!

Carol: And we need to teach our children why it's important not to let the flies crawl all over their faces. We can't *always* be with them to shoo the flies away. Now, there's *one* more thing about eye

infections that we need to know. Eye infections are *contagious!* They can be spread easily, not just by a dirty towel or dirty flies. They can be spread from one person to another.

Tammy: I've seen that happen. My friend's daughter had an eye infection called 'pink eye' and because of that she wasn't allowed to go to school until it had gone away.

Carol: That's right... *Pink eye* or *conjunctivitis*, makes the eye turn very red and weep a lot. It looks watery. And there's usually a sticky substance that sticks the eyelids together after sleeping. It's easy to imagine a little child who has pink eye playing with friends... They rub their eyes because they itch...then they play, they hold hands with their friends or hug them. And soon their friend has the infection too.

Tammy: That's why my friend's daughter had to stay home from school of course! We need to protect our eyes against infections. So, let's wash our faces every day, and our hands lots of times in the day.

Carol: ...and keep flies off our face!!

Tammy: That's right!!

Carol: And let's be very careful not to spread the germs from someone whose eye is already infected, to others. If we have small children we should not use the same cloth to wipe each of their faces. If we do, we will pass on any germs from their eyes or noses to each other. Make sure they have a clean one each if you can...and try to put out a clean hand towel each day too. And of course if one of them *does* get an eye infection be very careful not to use the same cloth on their faces.

Tammy: So let's see, those are things to *prevent* an eye infection. But lets talk about what to do if a child already has an eye infection.

Carol: Here is a very simple way to fight infections: Just boil some water, and add a little salt. When it's cooled down and is just warm, put some into the eye with an eye-dropper. If the infection continues after that, take the child to see the doctor or health care worker.

Tammy: Our eyes are very fragile and so important to us...so we need to care for them *very* carefully.

Carol: That's true. You know...it sounds strange that washing our hands and face stops the spread of eye infections...but it *really* does.

We've been talking about our eyes and how we need to look after them carefully.

Tammy: You know what this reminds me of Carol? ...a story of Jesus Christ, God's son, and a man called Bartimaeus? Do you remember that story?

Carol: Yes I remember. Why don't you tell us the story?

Tammy: Sure...it happened when Jesus lived in Israel over 2000 years ago. Here's the story from God's word, the Bible, from Mark (Mark 10:46-52).

'As Jesus and his followers left a town called Jericho, a large crowd followed them. A blind beggar named Bartimaeus was sitting beside the road. When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus of Nazareth was nearby, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

"Be quiet!" many of the people yelled at him.

But he only shouted louder, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

When Jesus heard him, he stopped and said, "Tell him to come here."

So they said to the blind man, "Cheer up...come on, Jesus is calling you!"

Bartimaeus threw aside his coat, jumped up, and came to Jesus.

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked.

"My teacher," the blind man said, "I want to see!"

And Jesus said to him, "Go...for your faith has healed you." Instantly the man could see, and he followed Jesus down the road.'

That's the end of the story from God's word.

Carol: I love hearing stories like this about what Jesus did. We not only learn about his healing power but see the compassion He had on those who were suffering.

Tammy: Oh yes...everywhere Jesus went people would go with him. Some became his friends. Others were just curious to hear him...and see what he would do. He was pretty well known in the area.

Carol: Now Bartimaeus, being a blind man...and a beggar would have a pretty hard life...sitting by the side of the road...

Tammy: Yes...all day long...waiting for people to give him money. I don't think he would have had much to eat each day would he?

Carol: No...and I wonder where he lived? And if someone helped him walk to this spot to beg each day?

Tammy: We don't know...the Bible doesn't tell us that. But as a blind person I'm sure he had to depend on others to help him walk down the road...not being able to see the holes in the road...or the herd of sheep coming towards him. That blind man had many difficulties, that's for sure.

Carol: So, here is Bartimaeus, sitting by the road and he hears that Jesus is nearby. Tammy, lets put ourselves in his shoes. What do you think he knew about Jesus?

Tammy: We don't know exactly. But his words to Jesus let us know a little bit about what he knew. Do you remember that he said,
"Jesus, *Son of David*, have mercy on me."

Carol: That's right. He *did* say that. ...So Bartimaeus knew Jesus' name. And then he called him 'Son of David'...so he knew that Jesus was from the family line of King David.

Tammy: He did...and being from the family of King David, was a sign that Jesus was the 'chosen one'...

So when he called Jesus "The son of David...King David," he was really saying something more important. He was saying, "Jesus, I know who you are...you are the chosen one who will save my people."

Carol: Wow! That would have been a dangerous thing to say in this crowd wouldn't it? Why do you think Bartimaeus gave Jesus such an honorable title?

Tammy: I think the story holds the answer. You see, when he called this out, they told him to be quiet! But he would not! He just called out to Jesus even louder!

Carol: He really wanted Jesus to hear him, didn't he?

Tammy: Oh yes, he desperately wanted Jesus to hear him...so much so that he was willing to say things that the people around him might not like or agree with.

Carol: He also asked for Jesus to 'have mercy on him'. That's not something we would usually say today is it?

Tammy: No, but he was asking Jesus to show him compassion right there and then! He knew Jesus was his last chance to be healed...to be able to see again!

Carol: And he was right...Jesus did heal him!

Tammy: I love what Jesus said: He asked him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' Im sure everyone listening knew what his answer would be...the one thing he needed more than anything in the world: He said, 'My Teacher, I want to see.'

I think Jesus wanted Bartimaeus to say this to show his faith in Jesus...to show that he *knew* Jesus could do it don't you?

Carol: Yes. And you know friend, that's just like Jesus! He loves to see our faith and to honor it!

Tammy: And so Jesus showed compassion, and healed him saying that it was because of *his* faith that he was healed and given back his sight!!

Carol: Imagine how he must have felt...what an amazing day for him!

Tammy: Because Jesus *was* the son of God, he had the power to heal people. He always showed compassion for the hurting...the suffering. The Bible is full of stories like this...Jesus showing

compassion by healing people in need...no matter who they were. He even showed this blind beggar how important he was to God.

Carol: You're listening to *Women of Hope*, and to the story of Jesus' love to a blind man called Bartimaeus...a story of faith and compassion that's written in God's word, the Bible.

Tammy: You know Carol, the story didn't end here did it? After Jesus healed him he joined the crowd and *followed* Jesus down the road. What a day for Bartimaeus! He talks with Jesus...is healed by him...and then becomes one of his followers.

Carol: Yes, a follower of Jesus... We all follow people don't we? Who do you follow, or try to *copy* in the way that you live your life? Perhaps you want to be a good cook like your mother... You would spend time with her and learn her ways of cooking, so that your food would taste like hers, wouldn't you? I did that – I loved learning to cook. But it takes a lot of time to learn something new doesn't it?

Tammy: It does. When your mother was teaching you to cook, I'm sure you would watch what she did... and did she explain to you why she did certain things?

Carol: Yes she did. I learnt to *cook* like my mother, but I also learnt a lot *about* her... I got to know *her* better. I followed her ways.

Tammy: Just like Bartimaeus following Jesus... Bartimaeus had heard about Jesus and then met him. When that happened, it totally changed his life. To know more *about* Jesus he decided to spend time with him and to follow Jesus. He knew that he was not an ordinary man!

Carol: I'm a lot like Bartimaeus actually. I too am a follower of Jesus. Since Jesus does not walk on this Earth anymore, I spend time reading the stories about him in the Bible. These stories show me a lot about his power...his character...and his love for me.

I spend time thinking about these stories. I feel like I know Jesus better now, and I have come to understand the reasons for what he did. And you know, it's funny, but the more time I spend learning about Jesus, the more *my* life and *my* decisions start to look like *his*.

Tammy: I know what you mean but lets talk about that a bit more.

Carol: Well for example, think about the compassion Jesus showed to this blind beggar. Jesus heard his call for help, he stopped and spoke to him and then healed him of his blindness. Jesus showed real *care* for Bartimaeus.

I can be like Jesus when I *act* like him...showing compassion for the people around me who are in need. Maybe the beggars on the street...or a neighbor who is sick and needs help.

Tammy: To show compassion is so important. It tells people by our actions that we love them...that they are important to us.

Carol: In God's word we read how compassionate God is. Tammy could you read to us from Psalm 145? This one is a song that was written by King David – the one Bartimaeus knew was an ancestor of Jesus:

(Parts of Psalm 145: 8-18)

Tammy: The Lord is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. The Lord is good to everyone. He showers compassion on all his creation. All of your works will thank you, Lord, and your faithful followers will praise you. The Lord always keeps his promises. He is gracious in all he does.

The Lord is righteous in everything he does; he is filled with kindness. The Lord is close to all who call on him, yes, to all who call on him in truth.

Tammy: That is from Psalm 145. My friend remember when Bartimaeus called Jesus name? He answered and came to him. If you call on him today he will hear you too. He *knows* what you need, just as he knew what Bartimaeus needed. But he is just waiting for *you* to call on him *too*. Tell him what *you* need and *trust* him to show compassion to *you too*.

Carol: I want to pray now and ask God to listen to your call. Have faith in him just as Bartimaeus did...and you will see how he will answer you today. Would you pray with me?

Dear Father, God. Thank you for your power and compassion that we've heard about today. In many ways we are like Bartimaeus. Please help us to call out to you...to tell you what we need...and to trust you to answer and show us your compassion and love. We pray this in the name of your son, Jesus, Amen

Tammy: We would love to hear from you. If you have any questions, or if you want us to pray for you, or if you want to tell us *your* story, please write to us. Our email address is TWRWomenofHope@TWR.org. If you want to hear a program again, please visit our website at TWRWomenofHope.org. You can also visit our Facebook page. We do hope you will be with us again. Have a great week!

© Copyright Trans World Radio 2009