

# Call to Discipleship

Prof. Joseph Madappilly

Jesus is the light; those who look at Jesus will become radiant.

Jesus has come to give sight to the blind (Lk 4:8). The miracle of giving sight to

the blind is mentioned in all four gospels. Mathew's gospel mentions the healing of blindness of two men. Mark's gospel says that the name of the blind man is Berthameus. John's gospel speaks about healing a man who was born blind. The miracle of healing the blind takes place when Jesus was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho. Jerusalem is on a higher plat form and Jericho is a low lying land. This is an indication that Jesus was the one who came from above looking out for the sinners.

The blind man who sat on the roadside cried out, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" The truth that Jesus the Saviour is a descendant of David is evident in that. He seeks God's mercy. The corresponding word for 'mercy' in Greek is 'Elios'. This word doesn't just mean compassion. It means the compassion that lead to a kind deed. This is equal to 'Esplaguenon', the aspect we see in Luke 10:34.

This blind man sits by the side of the road. He does not know the way. A disciple is the one who knows the way; and Jesus is the way. Jesus is the light (Jn 8:12). The blindman wants light. The Gospels of Mark and Luke say that the blind man wants to be healed of his blindness. Apart from the healing of physical blindness he also wishes to gain inner sight. He wants to experience Jesus' mercy, grace and kindness. This was a frank confession - calling out to God for liberation making his pathetic condition explicit. Jesus heard this and stopped in his path abruptly. This shows that prayer has the power to stop Jesus even on his track. Jesus stood there which means he was willing to listen to him and help him. Jesus is close to those who call out him. "For what other great nation has a God so near to it, as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him?" (Deut 4:7). This verse is fulfilled on that day on the roadside. Jesus asked him what kind of deed should He do for him? The blind man wanted to get sight, he must be able to see his way, he

should be able to walk in that path. Jesus is the light; those who look at Jesus will become radiant (Ps 34:5). He received the light from Jesus. He saw the way. He recognised the way. He followed Jesus, the way. He threw away his cloak - he abandoned the security offered by the external world. He decided to walk in the path shown by the one who is the 'way'. He became his disciple.

The Greek word for blindness is 'Tooflos'. That could be external or internal blindness. The inner blindness is mentioned in various biblical passages (Rom 2:19; 2 Peter 1:9; Jn 12:40; 2 Cor 4:4; 1 Jn 2:11). 'Tooflo' means smoke screen. Blindness is a sort of cover with smoke, which means not able to see what one must see. Blindness causes darkness, figuratively speaking, it is ignorance. Indian philosophy says 'ignorance is sin'. When a blind man receives sight, he becomes knowledgeable. He becomes the one 'to be sent'. 'Seeloha' - the one who must receive power from Jesus, the one who was sent.

In this, we can see every aspect a disciple must go through. The one who was sitting by the wayside finds the way; follows the one who is the way, the truth and the life and becomes a disciple. The one who receives the inner light can not sit back and relax. Those who receive light from Jesus, who is the light, must become the light of the world (Mt 5:14). Jesus is the light that illuminates everyone (Jn 1:9). Not accepting this light is an offence. **"And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light .... But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God"** (Jn 3:19-21). Aren't there many incidents in our lives when God intervened miraculously and wiped off the darkness from our lives and led us to the light of life? He wishes that all those who received his blessings should become his dear disciples. Let us realise that our shortcomings and weaknesses are perhaps the means and a call to be witnesses to Christ.

*( August 2008 TABOR VOICE )*