

MARK 10:46-52
LET ME SEE! LET ME SEE!

Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you." And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight." Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well [saved you]." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

Did you ever say, "Let me see! Let me see!" Maybe it was when you were a child. The big people were looking at a photo that had just come in the mail. Or maybe they were looking beyond a wooden fence at the new colt, but you were too short. Imagine being in those shoes all your life, no one stooping down to show you, or to boost you up to see--because you were blind. So many things missed. That's the situation in our text.

Mark has been telling us the many places Jesus was traveling, bringing God's mercy, forgiveness, and help to sinners. His time of suffering and death for every wayward soul—for you and me—was drawing closer. Let's pick it up in Mark 7 (our text is from Mark 10, and Palm Sunday, Mark 11). Jesus was at Tyre and Sidon, outside of Jew lands, where He cast out a demon from a Canaanite woman's daughter; then in another non-Jewish region, Decapolis, where He healed a deaf and "dumb" man; next in the open country with a hungry multitude He fed 4,000; in the Jewish city of Bethsaida, He healed a blind man; in the non-Jewish region of Caesarea Philippi, where He told His disciples clearly that He was the Promised One and that He must go to Jerusalem to be killed, and rise again; then to a "high mountain" where He was transfigured in all His glory before Peter, James, and John; then in our text to Jericho, which was about 15 miles from Jerusalem. After that He would go Bethany (3 miles from Jerusalem) where His Palm Sunday ride on a donkey into Jerusalem would begin; and finally Jerusalem itself for the end.

Jesus was at Jericho. Jericho is quite a well-known city to Bible readers, but not a very "dear" city. In the Old Testament it was the first idol-worshiping Canaanite city of the Promised Land that the Israelites needed to capture—God made the walls fall down flat. There God warned them never to rebuild the city. 500 years later a man named Hiel did rebuild it, at the cost of the lives of two of his sons. In the New Testament, Jericho was part of Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, in which robbers were waiting along the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Scripture does not paint a very desirable picture of Jericho. Yet Jesus made it a point to go there. He had come for all, even those living in less than godly cities and regions.

In the Mathew chapter 20 account of this incident, Mathew tells of two blind men; Mark mentions only the one. In Luke 18, Luke says this healing took place on the way out of Jericho. Matthew and Mark say on the way "in." The difference may be the "old Jericho" and the "new Jericho" the blind man (men) being in between. Luke also tells us of a tax collector named Zachaeus. Jesus searches out each lost sheep. Bartimaeus was the son of Timaeus. The letters "bar" in "Bat"imaeus mean "son of." This Bartimaeus was blind and a beggar. He could not work and had to beg at the side of the road for handouts and money. We don't know how old he was nor how long he had been blind. Imagine, every day begging for handouts in order to live. It's hard enough for our-pride to ask for a ride! Likely Bartimaeus was not well-dressed either. He couldn't see how he looked or the tidiness of his garments. Perhaps people would sigh and take a different route to evade him. Or perhaps they would walk past and ignore him. Do you ever walk past someone—maybe in a nursing home—calling out to each who passes by? You're busy and you know they do that all day long; it seems right to ignore them. I too have been there, done that. But how does it make the one calling-out feel?

Matthew and Luke tell us that Bartimaeus heard the crowd passing by, inquired, and learned that it was Jesus of Nazareth! Previously he must have heard about Jesus of Nazareth. What an opportunity! Without physical sight, he could “see” that Jesus of Nazareth was the Rescuer and Redeemer, whom God had promised to send to deliver His people from sin and woe! Bartimaeus knew by faith that this Jesus was the king coming from King David’s royal line to rescue and rule God’s people forever. With an opportunity! Unabashed, he cried out, “*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*” The people around him were embarrassed, or felt his calling-out was inappropriate, and urged him to keep still! But he cried out louder/ He needed Jesus. It didn’t matter who was saying No or who was being embarrassed! He needed Jesus!

How’s your life going? Do you need Jesus because of vision problems? Or big-time and small-time health problems, old-age problems, children problems, bad-habits problems, making-dumb-mistakes problems, making-bad-choices problems sometimes on purpose, temper problems, sin problems? You need Jesus as much as Bartimaeus did! Do not let opportunities to draw near to Christ slip away. “Redeem the time!” (Ephesians 5:16). Do not let opportunities to grow in Christ slip away. Do not be talked out of them. Do not lose today’s opportunity, to grow in His Word and in your faith, slip away. “*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*” In Christ you are forgiven and are held as His special child!

Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, “Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.” And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. Jesus was interested in blind beggarly Bartimaeus. He is interested in you! Suddenly the crowd changed its tune. They encouraged Bartimaeus to take heart, for Jesus was calling him. Fickle crowd, right? But they learned their error and were not about to continue in it. They urge Bartimaeus to go to Jesus. ----- Jesus is also calling out to you today. “Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest—rest for your souls!” (Matthew 11:28-30). Are you beset and besieged by troubles, by sins, by this sinful life, and can’t fix any of them on your own? Bartimaeus couldn’t. Go through Jesus calls you. He seeks every struggling sheep and lamb.

Bartimaeus, *throwing aside his garment, rose and came to Jesus.* You also, let nothing stand in the way. Do not hide behind crippling by pride or towering possessions. You need Jesus—“Let me see! Let me see!”

So Jesus answered and said to him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” The blind man said to Him, “Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.” “Rabboni” means “my great one, my master, my teacher.” Jesus said, “*What do you want Me to do for you?*” Jesus, who is true God, already knew what Bartimaeus wanted to ask; no doubt the other people knew too. Why did Jesus make him tell? 1.) For his own sake--that he would not fear asking Jesus for help and learn to pray to Him. 2.) For others’ sake—that Bartimaeus would display simple yet strong faith in Jesu before their eyes to help them learn the wonderful relationship between Savior and helpless sinner. “Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me” (Psalm 50:15). Are you having trouble? Do you want to “see” Jesus? The Bible points you to Him.

Then Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well. And immediately he received his sight. Jesus healed him on the spot. No list of conditions to be met, no deals to be made. God’s grace—His kindness and pardon granted as a sheer gift of love. He likewise grants His grace to you in your needs ----- *Your faith has made you well.* Bartimaeus’ healing was not self-merited, but by faith. It is significant that the words “your faith has made you well” can just as accurately be translated “has saved you.” In Jesus, both are true and inter-related. Through faith in Him, every malady you face is made better and healed—healed in the way that He knows is best for you. The Apostle Paul was beset by a “thorn” in the flesh and earnestly pleaded with the Lord to take it away, but the Lord said, “My grace is sufficient for you, My strength is made perfect in [your] weakness” (II Corinthians 12:9). God’s “No” answer would lead Paul to trust Him more. It is the same with you. Trust Jesu! You are healed from the malady of sin, from the malady of “Death,” from the malady of eternal punishment. By faith in Jesus, you are made well / saved!

Go your way, Jesus says. Go about your life, My lamb. You have been rescued and all will be well. *Immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus on the road.* Bartimaeus new life was not “business as usual.” *He followed Jesus on the road.* Here was his joy! In a few days, Jesus would go to Bethany, then ride from Bethany to Jerusalem on the donkey—Palm Sunday! Perhaps Bartimaeus was with the Palm Sunday crowd, “Hosannah to the Son of David!” Perhaps he was even in Jerusalem yet one more week to hear the stunning news, “He is risen!” What Bartimaeus could see! Let Jesus be your joy and your life too—all by faith. “Let me see! Let me see!” In Jesus, you do!

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---