

Mark 10:46-52  
“Take Heart . . . He is Calling You”  
WRCoB 2.25.24

Recently, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders

At Wheaton (IL) Christian Grammar School

Were asked to complete the following sentence:

“By faith, I know that God is . . .”

From Amanda: *“forgiving, because he forgave in the Bible, and he forgave me when I went in the road on my bike without one of my parents.”*

From Brandon: *“A provider, because he dropped manna for Moses and the people, and he gave my dad a job.”*

This from Paul: *“caring, because he made the blind man see, and he made me catch a very fast line drive that could have hurt me. He probably sent an angel down.”*

From Jeremy: *“merciful, because my brother has been nice to me for a whole year.”*

Here’s one who wanted to remain anonymous: *“faithful, because the school bill came, and my mom didn’t know how we were going to pay it. Two minutes later, my dad called, and he just got a bonus check. My mom was in tears.”*

And lastly from Hannah: *“sweet, because he gave me a dog. God tells me not to do things that are bad. I need someone like that.”*

And don't we all need someone like that?

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Last week, I preached on the rich, young ruler  
Someone who had everything he wanted  
But nothing he really cared for.

We never knew his name.

Today we look at the story of a blind beggar  
Someone who had nothing  
But ended up with everything he ever desired!

We know his name!

Bartimaeus

And his name is recorded  
For all time in the Holy Scriptures

Interesting isn't it?  
It speaks to Jesus' teaching  
That the first shall be last and the last be first!

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The story of the healing of Bartimaeus  
Follows the third of Jesus' predictions  
Read in our first Lesson today.

Jesus would be betrayed, condemned to death  
Handed over to the Gentiles

Mocked, spat upon, flogged, and killed  
But that he would rise three days later.

He shares the prediction  
Not only to prepare them for what's to come  
But to share the anguish welling up inside.

But instead of the disciples' support and understanding  
We have James and John arguing over  
Who might sit by his side in glory!

Jesus really did have to walk that lonesome valley  
He had to walk it by himself  
Oh nobody else could walk it for him  
He had to walk it himself

~~

And so, as they were on their way to Jerusalem  
They came to Jericho.

And as they were leaving Jericho a large crowd gathered.

Everywhere that Jesus went they surrounded him.

And he patiently healed  
He lovingly blessed  
And he carefully taught.

And as they were leaving the city  
The crowd descended on a blind beggar  
Sitting by the side of the road.

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Being blind in any time and place is not an easy thing.

Being blind without family in biblical times was horrible.

You were completely at the mercy of those around you  
The only way to survive is to beg.

You take your place alongside the others  
The cripple, the lame, and the widow.

Spending years by the roadside  
In hopes that someone passing by  
Would take pity on you.

On that day, Bartimaeus was sitting at his usual place.

He knew of this Jesus of Nazareth.

And so, as the crowd descended down upon him  
And hearing that Jesus was among them

The poor, blind, beggar shouted at the top of his lungs  
*“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”*

Keep quiet, beggar! They all said. Leave Jesus alone.

But this was his only chance.

Again, only shouting louder.

*“Son of David, have mercy on me!”*

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A plea rising from the deepest depths of despair.

From the lips of all who lay by the roadside of life  
Broken, and beaten, and spent.

Pleas like this, are found throughout the Bible  
From King David to Blind Bartimaeus.

It's become known as *“The Jesus Prayer”*

It is a combination of two verses in the Bible.

The one here from Blind Bartimaeus  
The other, in a passage found in Luke.

A tax collector stood next to a Pharisee  
While they were praying in the temple.

The Pharisee prayed thanking God  
That he was not like the tax collector  
Standing next to him.

While the Pharisee prayed his prayer  
The tax collector prayed his.

**Luke 18:13 NRSV God, be merciful to me a sinner!**

When you combine the two phrases, you end up with

*"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."*

The prayer of the contrite and remorseful heart  
Is one God always hears.

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And so Bartimaeus cried as loud as he could.

And as incredible as it seems, focused as he was  
On his journey to the cross.

Hearing Bartimaeus' anguished cry, Jesus stops!

He tells his disciples, "call him here!"

And the sweetest words ever to be heard  
By any who sit on the side of the road  
Is heard now by Blind Bartimaeus.

*"Take heart! . . . . He is calling you!"*

Imagine . . .

Imagine the hope that rises within him  
Hearing those words.

Is it really possible his prayers could be answered?

Throwing off his coat he sprang up and went to Jesus.

And Jesus asked “What do you want me to do for you?”

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For years he ate the dust from the travelers’ foot  
As they passed him by  
Grateful for a coin tossed his way.

For years, downtrodden, beaten, and oppressed

For years, just trying to survive

For years, he prayed for healing  
Years, a blessing from God.

And now Jesus stands before him  
Prepared to answer his deepest yearnings.

“What do you want me to do?”

“O Jesus, heal me. Oh, Sweet Jesus, heal me  
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, make me whole again!”

~~

And Bartimaeus  
Who once was blind who now can see

Is healed with the words ringing in his ears  
“*Go your way, your faith has made you well.*”

“Go your way,” Jesus says to Bartimaeus,  
“Go your way.”

And which way does Bartimaeus go?

**Mark 10:52 NRSV**

**<sup>52</sup> Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.**

The rich, young ruler, our passage last week  
Went his way right into oblivion.

And that is why we know the name of Bartimaeus  
And not the name of the rich, young ruler!

Bartimaeus became a follower of Jesus  
And followed him to Jerusalem.

Bartimaeus who had been sitting **by** the way  
Now followed Jesus **in** the way.

And that, brothers and sisters is the way of the gospel.

For the story of Blind Bartimaeus is not only a story  
Of a blind beggar from Jericho  
Who was healed by Jesus

It is the gospel story about you, and me.

Because, **WE** are the ones  
Sitting by the roadway of life  
Beaten, and broken and blind.

**WE** are the ones blind from birth, praying for wholeness  
Yearning for peace, crying in the night to be saved.

**WE** are the ones

Who begged until our voices are hoarse  
And our tears are no more

“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

And then to hear those sweet words ringing in our ear.

“Take heart . . . Jesus is calling!”

He is calling you.

He is calling me.

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling

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And so which way will it be, sojourner?

Which way will you go?

Will you go the way of the rich, young ruler  
The one with everything but nothing?

Will you go his way?

Will you go the way you came?  
Nameless, known only by your wealth  
And rejection of Jesus?

Or will you go the way of Jesus?

Named, chosen, and saved  
Walking in His way.

The Season of Lent is a season for self-examination.  
A time to evaluate our relationship with Christ.

If you are here today  
And the Holy Spirit has placed on your heart  
That you need Jesus in your life.

That maybe for the first time you get it  
You get who Jesus is  
And what he came to do

But you've never confessed Jesus as Lord.

I invite you in just a moment  
To pray a prayer with me.

If you are here today  
And you have confessed Jesus as Lord  
But your faith seems stale  
And Jesus distant.

Maybe the Holy Spirit is nudging you  
To recommit your life to Jesus  
And be revived through his HS

I invite you to pray the same prayer.

Those who come dedicatedly every Sunday  
And follow our Lord Jesus the best they can  
You too are invited to pray this prayer.

Following our prayer

We will close with our Hymn of Invitation

If the Holy Spirit is saying to you

Take heart . . . Jesus is calling you

I invite you come forward as led by the Spirit

And let me pray with you.

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*“Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner! I believe you are the Son of God. That you love me and came into this world, and taught how to live with meaning and purpose, who died on the cross and rose again for the forgiveness of sin.*

*Lord, I am a sinner and I am sorry. Please forgive me. Come into my life. Fill me with your Holy Spirit. Help me to follow you as Lord of my life.*

*Thank you, Jesus my Lord, for saving me and giving me eternal life and filling me with your Spirit. In your name I pray, Amen.”*